

## **NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE**

Monday 29th March 2010 at 6.30 pm  
At Lower Gornal Youth Academy, Temple Street,  
Lower Gornal

### **PRESENT**

Councillor Wright (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Ameson (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Caunt, G Davies, Evans, Mrs Millward, Mrs Ridley, Ryder,  
Simms and Stanley

### **Officers**

The Director of Corporate Resources (as Area Liaison Officer); Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure and Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety (both Directorate of the Urban Environment); Head of Housing Management (North) and Area Community Renewal Officer – North Dudley (both Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services); Area Youth Worker (Directorate of Children's Services); Community Safety Witness Officer (Community Safety Team) (Chief Executive's Directorate) and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources)

### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Inspector R. Jones (West Midlands Police), Mr S Vincent and Ms J Winpenny (West Midlands Fire Service), together with approximately 25 Members of the public.

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### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mottram and Miss G Heeley.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Wright declared a personal and prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in relation to any item raised in respect of Ellowes Hall School as he is a governor of that school.

Councillor Mrs Millward declared a personal and prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of any matter raised relating to Ellowes Hall School in view of her previous association with the school as a governor.

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84                    MINUTES

RESOLVED

That, subject to the addition of Councillor Mrs Millward as an attendee at the meeting, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2010, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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85                    PETITIONS

A petition was submitted by residents of Barnesmeadow Place requesting the closure/gating of the footpath that adjoins their properties because of constant anti-social behaviour they were experiencing. As the issue of anti-social behaviour at Barnesmeadow Place, Coseley was a separate item for consideration later in the meeting, it was noted that the petition would be considered at that juncture.

A petition was also submitted in respect of a campaign to make Gornal an alcohol free zone. It was noted that this matter would receive further consideration at the meeting and that the petition would be forwarded to the Director of Corporate Resources and West Midlands Police in view of the work that had previously been undertaken in respect of this matter.

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86                    YOUTH ISSUES

The Area Youth Worker gave an oral report on youth issues affecting the Dudley North area.

In respect of comments made about the new youth centre in Coseley, copies of artwork in respect of three designs for the youth centre logo were circulated at the meeting together with a copy of the design to be used.

A copy of the youth issues report would be made available on the Council's Committee Management Information System and be available on request from Democratic Services.

Regarding the new Coseley Youth Centre, Councillor Mrs Ridney indicated that she was pleased that the work had finished on time and that the Council were able to supply a youth centre in Coseley.

## RESOLVED

That the information reported orally on youth issues affecting the Dudley North area be noted.

## POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Jones, one of the new inspectors who would be taking up a post in Dudley with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2010, introduced himself to the Committee and gave a presentation on the implications of Operation Paragon which would lead to a reorganisation of policing in the borough.

The organisational changes would lead to the introduction of four inspectors each controlling a local policing unit with Inspector Jones being the relevant inspector for Dudley North. Other inspectors would cover Dudley South, Stourbridge and Halesowen. Beneath these four sectors sergeants had been appointed to serve an area coterminous with ward boundaries of the Council. Details were also given of the senior leadership team that would be operating in the borough with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010. Other aspects of the changes in relation to PACT meetings, Operation "Staysafe" and communications were also referred to.

Details of the presentation given would, in due course, be put on the Council's Committee Management Information System and would be available on request from Democratic Services.

Inspector Jones then referred to a number of policing issues, some of which had been referred to at recent meetings of the Committee and had already been raised at this meeting of the Committee. Reference was made in particular to a number of anti-social behaviour incidents and the measures that had been taken to alleviate them; incidents of distraction burglaries in the area and the need for neighbours to look out for those who were particularly vulnerable; the recovery of approximately £50,000 worth of beer kegs and in relation to the petition referred to earlier regarding an alcohol free zone in Gornal he indicated that he would investigate this matter further.

In concluding his comments he indicated that he would be based in Dudley and Sedgley and had been pleased for this opportunity to meet with members and residents prior to taking up his appointment in April.

Arising from the presentation and comments made by Inspector Jones a number of questions were raised and responded to by him arising from which he indicated that he would follow up the comments made regarding the presence of Police Community Service Officers on the Wallbrook Estate; that if members of the public wished to contact the Police the relevant numbers were on their external website; that he would expect officers to be visible, not just patrolling on main roads but in all areas and that if there were incidences of anti-social behaviour they would respond.

In relation to making Gornal an alcohol free zone it was noted that this issue had been raised with Inspector Willis, the current sector inspector, and that in addition to any alcohol ban there was a need for education and for all incidences relating to alcohol fuelled nuisance to be reported to the Police so that they could be recorded and strengthen any case for a ban.

Further comments were also made that, in respect of the specific call for an alcohol free zone in Gornal, whilst there had been an issue with one particular off licence, this issue, it was considered, had now been dealt with and that there was not a particular problem now in the area.

#### RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation and comments made by Inspector Jones and the responses given to questions raised be noted.

#### FIRE ISSUES

Mr Vincent, West Midlands Fire Service, reported orally on issues in relation to the activities of that service with particular reference to secondary fires, anti-social behaviour and aspects in relation to rubbish and vehicles. In respect of secondary fires he asked that, in the forthcoming months, people be vigilant to prevent such fires from spreading. He also commented that overall the service was working well and in this regard indicated the work that was ongoing with housing managers in relation to new tenants.

A copy of a booklet entitled "Supporting Dudley together", prepared by the Fire Service, was also circulated at the meeting.

#### RESOLVED

That the oral report given on fire issues be noted.

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TRANSPORT ISSUES

Reference was made to the repositioning of the bus stop in Green Street, Coseley and the group engineer – Traffic and Road Safety indicated that this would be done at the beginning of the next financial year.

**RESOLVED**

That the information reported on be noted.

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ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – BARNESMEADOW PLACE, COSELEY

The Community Safety Witness Officer, Mr Paul Jonson of the Community Safety Team, Chief Executive's Directorate, reported on the current position in relation to this matter arising from the consideration given to it at the last meeting of the Committee.

He reported in particular that a security fence had now been erected and that follow up work to investigate the related anti-social behaviour by youths would be undertaken. He also referred to a survey of residents in Barnesmeadow Place to which 50% of residents had responded, and reported that those who had not responded would be followed up. Of those who had responded a number still had concerns regarding the public right of way whilst a greater number indicated that they used the public right of way on a regular basis. It was also noted that everyone had not had the same problems as the residents concerned and whilst the possible reasons for this were referred to it was considered that now that the fencing had been erected this should go some way to alleviating the problem experienced. It was therefore considered that overall there was no evidence of ongoing serious anti-social behaviour. However if there was further evidence the residents concerned now had contact numbers for the Council's out of hours team and the Council would continue to work with the Police and take the action required.

Arising from the comments made a number of points were raised relating to the particular issue raised and related matters. One related matter was the concern expressed about motorcycles using the area as a short cut. Relevant details have been given to the Police and Inspector Jones indicated that he would arrange for off-road police units to be available and would link up with the relevant Local Authority officers to pursue this matter. Other related concerns were that instances of anti-social behaviour were still occurring and in response to this it was noted that there would be continual liaison between all the agencies involved to tackle issues.

The issue of a possible chicane or barriers to prevent access to motorcycles, but enable pushchairs and similar conveyances to proceed, was also considered, and it was suggested that the use of different types of barrier which may be suitable for placing in Barnesmeadow Place be further investigated. In response Mr Jonson undertook to arrange for further consideration, in consultation with appropriate officers, to be given to this matter.

#### RESOLVED

That the oral comments made and responses given to questions raised arising therefrom in relation to anti-social behaviour at Barnesmeadow Place, Coseley, be noted and that the appropriate officers be requested to further pursue the various issues indicated above.

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#### DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on standing authorisations and procedures for distributing capital funds delegated to this area committee and in respect of two applications for consideration.

Arising from the consideration given to these issues it was

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the standing authorisations/procedures for considering capital allocations, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report submitted with particular reference to the consideration of applications in the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chairman at the first meeting of the Area Committee, be confirmed.
- (2) That, in respect of the applications received:-
  - (a) Approval be given to the application made by Sedgley and District Community Association in the sum of £3859.88 for the supply and construction of fencing between the clinic car park and community centre land; and
  - (b) That the application received from the Summerhill Community Association be refused given a previous application for funding made by this Association.

PUBLIC FORUM

Questions and answers were given to matters raised from the public, as follows:-

1. In relation to a question received about pot holes in Central Drive, Coseley the Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety indicated that work in respect of these pot holes would be included in a future programme and that as the questioner had indicated that she had not received a letter that he had sent to her he would arrange for a copy of the letter to be forwarded to her.
2. Regarding a question about the public having to pay for parking and admission to the archives following any move to the Black Country Living Museum site, Councillor Simms reported that there would be no charge made for car parking and that the only charges to be made would be those currently in force.
3.
  - (a) In response to a question regarding ongoing problems with speeding traffic through the White City housing estate the Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety indicated that he would meet with the questioner on site so that the various concerns raised could receive further consideration.
  - (b) Regarding concerns raised about a taxi rank, enforcement activities and the activities of the Police were referred to and on this latter matter Inspector Jones undertook to investigate the position and speak to the questioner direct. An indication was also given that the Police and Licensing Officers working together in partnership was, it was considered, a good way in which the concerns raised could be alleviated.
4. In response to a question asked as to the total cost of the demolition and clearance of the site of Coseley baths the Area Liaison Officer reported that he would arrange for a written response to be sent to the questioner.
5. Councillor Stanley responded to a question raised as to why Coseley baths could not be mothballed until funding was found for the alleged repairs.

6. In response to a question relating to the spending of £1.3 million to fund television viewing, Councillor Simms reported that this amount was to replace communal aerials on the Council's tower blocks so that tenants could receive digital television programmes. The provision of such aerials was a service that had always been provided for tenants. The monies for this work were also from the Housing Revenue Account and as such could only be used for repairs/maintenance of council property and were not therefore available for any other purpose.
7. In response to a question as to whether there would be public consultation with regard to plans for the reuse of the land left vacant by the demolition of Coseley swimming pool, it was reported that when such plans had been formulated ward members would be notified. One of the relevant ward members requested that, when such plans were being formulated, consideration be given to the provision of a community facility on the site.
8. In response to a question asked about the ongoing "illegal parking in Bradleys Lane" reference was made to a meeting held between the questioner and the Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety in relation to those ongoing concerns and the comment made that the position would continue to be monitored. In relation to possible Police intervention to alleviate the concerns expressed Inspector Jones indicated that he would investigate this matter.

(As the following questions related to Ellowes Hall School the Chairman and Councillor Mrs Millward, having previously declared personal and prejudicial interests in relation to any matter raised in respect of Ellowes Hall School left the meeting for the duration of the consideration of these items)

(Councillor Mrs Ameson – Vice-Chairman – in the Chair)

9. Three related questions were raised in respect of the football pitches at Ellowes Hall School and anti-social behaviour; about the funding for the football pitches and swimming pool at Ellowes Hall and regarding the number of exits that would be in use from the school grounds after the football had finished and whether any such exits would encroach into the nature reserve together with a request as to whether extra policing would be made available to ensure the peace and well being of the residents who lived in the surrounding areas.



In relation to funding issues it was reported that the football pitches would be mainly funded from a grant from the Department for Children and Families whilst the swimming pool improvements had been funded from Corporate Property Services, Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources with top up funding from the Directorate of the Urban Environment through the free swimming grant provided by the government.

In relation to the overall scheme including the reference made to exits it was noted that at a recent meeting the application that had been made had been withdrawn and the matter was now with the school as to how they would proceed. Therefore at this time there were no specific issues that could be commented upon. As regards exits though it was considered that there would only be the one exit to be used for ingress and egress.

Arising from the points made questions were asked relating in particular to a breakdown of the funding that the Council would provide for the football pitches and swimming pool at Ellowes Hall and in response to this the Area Liaison Officer undertook to arrange for a written response to be sent to the questioner.

As regards the overall proposal concerns were also raised about the traffic that would be generated from the proposal and a request made that detailed consideration be given to traffic issues and the likely impact on the surrounding area.

(At the conclusion of this item the Chairman and Councillor Mrs Millward returned to the meeting)

(Councillor Wright – in the Chair)

#### EMPTY SHOPS GRANT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the Government's Empty Shops Grant Initiative and on member's views as to the allocation of funding under this programme.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the consideration of suitable projects that may benefit from the Empty Shops Grant Initiative and to the agreement in principle to supporting the initiative with match funding available from the Committee's Delegated Capital Allocations Budget for the district and local centres of Gornal Wood, Roseville (Coseley), Sedgley and Upper Gornal, as identified in paragraph 7 of the report submitted, with the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, being authorised to agree the specific allocation on a scheme by scheme basis up to an agreed maximum.

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#### COMMUNITY RENEWAL WORKING GROUP

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the progress to date of the Working Group and on the monitoring of the North Dudley Area Committee Community Renewal Plan.

Following the presentation of the content of the report by the Area Community Renewal Officer – North Dudley it was reported that the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March in respect of the youth café had been held at the Upper Gornal voluntary recreational association building.

#### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the work of the Community Renewal Team working in community relations, be noted and that the work of the team continue to be supported.

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#### WARD ISSUES

- (1) Councillor Evans commented on the good partnership working that had been carried out in the Sedgley area in relation to the alcohol ban in that area and referred to the latest such proposal for Gornal. In so doing he echoed previous comments made regarding the work that had already been undertaken by various agencies to tackle the problem of nuisance drinking in Gornal.
  - (2) Councillor Caunt referred to a request he had made to the Chairman of the Coseley Civic Trust regarding the membership of the Trust and noted that he was still awaiting a response.
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## RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on responses to questions raised at the previous meeting of the Committee. In relation to the third point under the heading Public Forum at Appendix 1 to the report submitted it was reported that Abstract, a company based in London, were the owners of Cavendish House.

### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix 1 to the report, submitted be noted.

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## SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

Information was given regarding the dates of meetings of Select Committees, held at the Council House, Dudley, to which members of the public were invited and were welcome to attend.

### RESOLVED

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

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## DATES AND VENUES OF MEETINGS

It was noted that the dates and venues of meetings in the new municipal year would be advertised following determination of the dates of meetings at the Annual Council meeting to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2010.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm

CHAIRMAN