

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 8th March 2011 at 7.00 pm
At Hobgreen Primary School, Hobgreen Road, Stourbridge

PRESENT:-

Councillor Kettle (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Cowell (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Banks, Barlow, Hanif, L Jones, Lowe, Knowles, Mrs Rogers, A Turner,
Mrs P Martin and Mrs Walker.

OFFICERS:-

The Acting Director of Children's Services (Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director, Regeneration, Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Assistant Director Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning (Directorate of Adult, Housing and Community Services), Group Accountant, Mr T Holder - Solicitor and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Corporate Resources)

Also in attendance:-

Inspector E Boyle (West Midlands Police) Mr P Higgins (West Midlands Ambulance Service, NHS Trust), together with approximately 30 members of the public.

80 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Adams, Attwood, and C Wilson and Mr G Downing.

81 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Rogers declared a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item number 16 (Issues Raised by Members of the Committee), in view of her Chairmanship of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park and Swinford Common.

82 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17th January 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed.

83 **RECEIPT OF PETITIONS**

It was reported that no petitions had been received prior to the meeting and none were submitted at the meeting.

84 YOUTH ISSUES

In the absence of a representative of young people, no issues were raised.

85 PUBLIC FORUM

1. A member of the public expressed concerns that the lights, including two Lanterns, at Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge were switched on at 4.30 pm on the previous afternoon. The Assistant Director, Regeneration undertook to investigate and send a written response to the questioner,
2. A member of the public requested that consideration be given to the introduction of traffic calming measures at the junction of the Bridgnorth Road, and High Park Avenue, for safety concerns relating to inconsiderate parking on the bend.

The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate the matter.

3. A member of the public requested that coat hooks be installed on the backs of the doors in the ladies toilets in Stourbridge town centre.

The Assistant Director, Regeneration undertook to investigate and send a written response to the questioner.

4. Referring to a recent written response to a previously asked question, a member of the public queried what precautions, if any, would be put in place by the Council to prevent setting a precedent in the event of the occurrence of a similar situation in the future.

In response, a Member of the Committee advised that no precedent had been set, as the correct procedure had been followed in respect of the situation referred to and which had been signed off by the Cabinet Member for Personnel, Legal and Property.

Another Member of the Committee advised that, as Cabinet Member for Personnel, Legal and Property, he was not prepared to discuss the matter, publicly, although he was well aware of the situation being referred to. He also confirmed that correct procedures had been followed.

5. A member of the public commented on the suggested work required for the bridge in Vicarage Road, and thanked the Members of the Committee for intervening in the commencement of the work, until consultation had taken place. He circulated a computer aided photograph of a suggestion of an alternative to the current proposals for consideration.

Ward Members advised that the Officers of the Council were reconsidering the matter and further consultation would take place when a suitable alternative had been determined.

6. A Member of the public expressed concerns that large groups of cyclists were travelling three or four abreast down the main drive of Mary Stevens Park, making it difficult for walkers, small children and the elderly. She requested that all cyclists be required to dismount once they were in Mary Stevens Park.

At this juncture, the Chairman agreed that a Member of the Committee express her views at this stage, instead of under agenda item 16 (Issues raised by Members of the Committee), as her views were related to the concerns expressed above.

The Member of the Committee expressed concerns regarding the dangers to the elderly, young children and disabled visitors to the park from large groups of cyclists cycling too fast and inconsiderately in the park. She also commented on the large numbers of cyclists meeting and socialising at the Café. She requested that cyclists be required to dismount and walk through the park, in the interests of safety to all park users.

The Member of the Committee requested that the decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture scheduled for 16th March be delayed and suggested that the Cabinet Member be requested to consider the issue of cycle paths, as part of the healthy hubs at Mary Stevens Park, separately to that of the other parks and to allow time for Members of the Committee to visit the park and make a decision regarding the issues raised. She also expressed concerns that the Committee, as trustees of Mary Stevens Park had not been consulted on the issue.

Other comments regarding the proposals included:

- The need for consideration for wheelchair users
- That no accidents had been reported.
- Use of the park by-laws to prohibit cycling at certain times
- That cyclists be requested to cycle no more than 1/2 abreast in the park
- That a partition be erected to keep cyclist separate to walkers
- That cyclists be requested to be mindful of young children in the park

The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety undertook to convey all the views expressed regarding the cycle paths in the Healthy Hub at Mary Stevens Park to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture prior to his decision on this matter.

Mr Phil Higgins, Trust Secretary, gave a brief presentation on the proposals of the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust to become an NHS Foundation Trust. He explained that the Foundation Trust would still very much be part of the National Health Service and that all NHS Trusts would need to become a Foundation Trust by 2013.

Mr Higgins encouraged those present to complete and return application forms to become members of the new Foundation Trust.

In response to questions from those present, Mr Higgins advised that:

It was anticipated that 7500 members would be elected over the next five years, although no specific targets for the number of members had been set.

All local authorities in the West Midlands had been written to and presentations given at all area committees, as part of the public consultation.

The Foundation Trust would be accountable to local people, and that Private Financial Initiatives had been abolished.

Although agencies from outside the United Kingdom could tender for services within the Trust, controls would be established to protect local people.

RESOLVED

That the oral presentation on the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust be noted.

87 FIRE SERVICE MATTERS

In the absence of a representative of the West Midlands Fire Service, this matter was withdrawn.

88 POLICE MATTERS

Inspector Boyle gave an oral presentation on police matters in the Stourbridge Area, advising that crime in Stourbridge Sector had been reduced.

Inspector Boyle reported on Operation Intrusive, which was ongoing; the Proceeds of Crime Act and the Alcohol Exclusion Zone. Inspector Boyle advised that funding for the signage of the extension to the Alcohol Exclusion Zone had been obtained from the Joint Activities Group and therefore an application would not be submitted to the Committee. He advised that despite the budgetary constraints facing the Police and Local Authority, that Police staffing levels for Stourbridge would remain the same. He also circulated a list of the dates of future Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings.

RESOLVED

That the oral report on Police matters be noted.

89

PROPOSED WARD NAME CHANGE OF THE LYE AND WOLLESCOTE WARD

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on a proposal to change the name of the Lye and Wollescote ward to Lye and Stourbridge North on account of the majority of Wollescote falling within the Cradley and Foxcote ward and not Lye and Wollescote.

The Chief Executive advised that this was a change of name only and that the boundaries of both wards would not be changed as a result of the proposal. The final decision on the proposal was due to be taken at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council to be held on the 22nd March 2011 and if approved would be used in the local elections and referendum on May 5th, 2011. He also advised that he would be happy to receive by e-mail any comments on the proposed changes.

Ward Members advised that, of the responses received so far, the preferred option was for Lye and Stourbridge North, with residents stating the importance of retaining the name of Lye. Some residents had stated a preference for Stourbridge North and Lye, whilst others had suggested Lye and Stour Valley, which had been suggested previously.

Other Members of the Committee indicated their support for a name change, whilst others indicated their wish to reserve their position until the period of public consultation closed on 11th March.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the content of the report on the proposed ward name change for the Lye and Wollescote ward be noted.
 - (2) That the Chief Executive be advised of the Committee's support for the proposed name change for the Lye and Wollescote Ward.
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90

ERNEST STEVENS TRUST – APPLICATIONS FOR A GRANT

A report of the Treasurer was submitted on two applications for funding from the Ernest Stevens Trust. In presenting the report, the Group Accountant advised that the application by St Mary's Church, Oldswinford had been withdrawn.

RESOLVED

That the application made by the 15th Stourbridge (North and St Michaels) Scout Group for an extension to their time to claim the grant be approved to enable them to claim the funding and that the time be extended up to and including September 8th 2011.

91

STOURBRIDGE WAR MEMORIAL

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on an alteration to the Stourbridge War Memorial by the addition of a name to the roll of honour to commemorate Private Shaun Patrick Taylor who was killed in the Gulf War in 1991 following a service of dedication which took place on the 27th February 2011.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report submitted be noted.

92

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on three applications for funding from the Capital Allocations Grant.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that a letter of thanks had been received from the No Limits Project, who had also advised that, due to a donation of some equipment required, they were now unable to spend £426.96 of the grant awarded previously and this amount would therefore be returned to the pot. She also advised on the following two late applications:

- a) From the Stourbridge and District Chamber of Trade Stourbridge in Bloom for £3,500 towards a project costing £7,500 for further barrier baskets, two large planters and two small planters to complete the Stourbridge Ring Road displays. The organisation had indicated that, should the application be successful, they would not require further support from the Committee for at least two years and then only for a completely new project.
- b) From Stourbridge Glassboys Under 7 Football Team £813.84 to purchase football goals, a barrier and footballs for the newly established club.

Some Members of the Committee questioned why the applications had been received late and expressed concerns that a precedent could be seen to be set when giving consideration to late applications.

A Member of the Committee also expressed concerns that a review of the criteria for allocating the Committee's capital allocations budget had not yet taken place.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the application by the Stourbridge and District Scout Council for £1300 towards the cost of purchasing IT equipment and secure storage for the equipment be approved.
- (2) That the application from Quarry Bank Methodist Church for £350 for the purchase of football strips, balls and equipment be approved.
- (3) That the application by the 15th Stourbridge (North and St Michaels) Scout Group for an extension to the time to claim the grant be approved, and that the time be extended up to and including September 8th 2011.

- (4) That the application by the Stourbridge and District Chamber of Trade Stourbridge in Bloom for £3,500 towards a project costing £7,500 for further barrier baskets, two large planters and two small planters to complete the Stourbridge Ring Road displays be approved.
 - (5) That the application by Stourbridge Glassboys Under 7 Football Team for £813.84 to purchase football goals and barrier and footballs be approved.
 - (6) That the Area Liaison Officer be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee reviewing the criteria for awarding grants from the Committee's Capital Allocations budget.
 - (7) That the sum of £426.96, awarded to the No Limits Project, be returned to the capital allocations pot for use by other organisations.
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93 PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE FURTHER WAITING PROHIBITIONS IN BROOK ROAD, OLDSWINFORD, STOURBRIDGE

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking support for the introduction of prohibited waiting (double yellow lines) to control obstructive parking in Brook Road, Stourbridge, as indicated on the plan attached to the report submitted.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be advised of the Committee's support for the scheme for the introduction of prohibition of waiting (double yellow lines) in Brook Road, Stourbridge, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted.

94 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on questions sent in response to questions raised at previous meetings. The Area Liaison Officer referred to an addendum to the report, which was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report and addendum be noted.

95 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillors Mrs Cowell and Mrs Rogers raised concerns that the War Memorial in Mary Stevens Park was to be moved from its present position to the Centre of the Avenue, which would cause problems for future Memorial services.

The Assistant Director, Regeneration undertook to investigate the concerns and arrange for a report on the issue to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

96 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

RESOLVED

That the dates and venues of future meetings of all Select Committees held at the Council House, Dudley, be noted.

97 DATES AND VENUES OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the dates and venues of future meetings of the Committee be advised when determined within the new municipal year.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

CHAIRMAN