

## **CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2012 at 6.30 p.m.  
at Saltwells Education Development Centre, Bowling Green Road,  
Netherton, Dudley

### **PRESENT: -**

Councillor K Finch (Chair)  
Councillor Zada (Vice-Chair)

Councillors A Ahmed, Ali, Arshad, M Aston, Cotterill, Cowell, Duckworth, Waltho and Wood; Ms Little, Mrs Oakes and Mr Rodney

### **OFFICERS:**

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (as Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director (Environmental Management), the Group Engineer – both Directorate of the Urban Environment; the Policy Analyst for Communities and Resources – Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services; Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision – Directorate of Children's Services; Senior Solicitor and Mrs K Griffiths – both Directorate of Corporate Resources

### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Julie Winpenny, West Midlands Fire Service – for Agenda Item No. 6

Councillor Tyler – for Agenda Item No. 10

7 Members of the public

---

#### **24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors K Ahmed, A Finch, Roberts, Sparks and Mr Lawley.

---

#### **25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Ms Little declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 11 (Area Committee Grants) in view of the fact that she is a Governor at Castle High School.

Mr Rodney declared a pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 11 (Area Committee Grants) in view of the fact that he is the Chief Executive of the Centre for Equality and Diversity.

---

26.

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed.

---

27.

YOUTH SERVICE

The Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision gave an oral update on new projects being undertaken by the Youth Service for young people to participate in, details of which were included in handouts circulated prior to the meeting.

She referred, in particular, to the successful summer youth provision which provided young people with a variety of activities to take part in, such as, fitness workshops, two residentials, a trip to an international cricket match, theme park trips, a football competition, DJ workshops, ice skating trips, educational workshops, participation activities, girls well-being events and the redecoration project of Russells Hall Youth Centre. She stated that all activities had been well attended by local young people.

During the presentation, the Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision indicated that the Detached Team would be arranging an extra SRE and C card drop in at local venues. She stated that the detached team were continuing to work with groups and also engaging with new groups in different areas.

In referring to the Russells Hall Youth Centre, the Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision reported that the Youth Centre had received a revamp of the main hall over the summer, which young people had been involved in with the planning, design and actual work carried out. In total, she indicated that a total number of sixteen young people had helped with the painting of the hall over a five-day period. She stated that the appearance of the hall had improved and was currently waiting for some equipment to arrive and be installed to complete the project.

Reference was then made to Meadow Road Youth Centre, which was reported to have had an influx of young members accessing the Centre over the summer months. The Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision indicated that staff at the Centre had been working with the young people designing programmes and activities that they would like to participate in.

In referring to future developments, the Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision indicated that the Youth Services would be electing representatives to sit on Dudley Youth Council from the youth forum, which would hopefully generate interest by young people wishing to stand for UKYP. She indicated that if any Councillors would like to meet the youth forum, would they contact her direct and she would arrange for them to attend one of their meetings.

The Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision then indicated that courses were currently being delivered in the daytime around mentoring, drugs awareness and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at Dudley College. This enabled the Youth Services to make new contacts with different groups of young people. She stated that the Youth Services was currently waiting for local secondary schools to contact them to confirm what areas of work the Youth Service could help them deliver.

In concluding, the Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision referred to the programme of activities to be undertaken in the Borough during the October half term. She stated that copies of the programme of activities would be available to Members on request.

Following the presentation, Members of the Committee expressed appreciation for all the work that had been carried out by the Youth Team to ensure that youth provision was being offered at Meadow Road Youth Centre.

A Member of the Committee referred to the good work Champions Church in Netherton carried out with young people and asked if the Youth Service would be able to provide support to the Church. The Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision suggested that the Member speak to her following the meeting to discuss the issue further.

In responding to a question from a Member, the Area Team Leader for Central and Safe Provision indicated that Meadow Road Youth Centre was currently not open on Friday evenings, however, the Youth Service was looking at options to extend the opening days of the Centre.

#### RESOLVED

That the information, as circulated prior to the meeting and reported orally, be noted.

---

28.

#### POLICE ISSUES

It was noted that there was no representative from the Police to update the Committee on current police issues in the area of the Committee.

---

29.

FIRE SERVICE ISSUES

Ms Winpenny of West Midlands Fire Service reported on fire issues in the Central Dudley area. She indicated that the number of reported incidents had reduced compared to this time last year, although numbers of reported accidental fires in dwellings had slightly increased.

It was noted that a written question had been received prior to the meeting by a Member of the Committee in relation to obstructions to communal stairwells of high-rise flats and the input the Fire Service had had in relation to what constitutes an obstruction. Ms Winpenny apologised for not being able to provide a response on the evening, however, she undertook to investigate the issue and respond to all Members of the Committee direct.

RESOLVED

- (1) That Ms Winpenny be thanked for her presentation and that the information reported be received and noted.
- (2) That Ms Winpenny be requested to investigate what input the Fire Service had had in relation to what constitutes an obstruction in stairwells of high-rise flats and respond to all Members of the Committee direct.

---

30.

PETITIONS

A petition had been received from residents in relation to tenancy issues. It was noted that the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services was dealing with the Petition as a complaint.

The Area Liaison Officer reported that following a meeting held to discuss this matter, a number of issues had been identified and actions discussed to solve the problem. She indicated that a further meeting had been arranged for sometime in October to discuss this further.

A petition was received from residents of New Village and surrounding areas requesting that speed bumps be introduced in New Village to slow moving vehicles down, in view of the serious accident, which had recently occurred on that road. It was noted that the petition would be referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for consideration and response direct to the petition organiser/first named petitioner.

- (1) A member of the public asked whether any positive measures had been taken to improve the traffic problems concerning Oakham Road. In responding, the Group Engineer indicated that Ward Members and officers had recently visited Oakham Road to discuss a number of possible safety measures. He confirmed that proposals were currently being considered and would be reported to Ward Members in due course. He stated that he hoped that the proposals would be incorporated in the current Local Safety Scheme. Councillor Ali reported that positive measures were being considered to improve the safety along the Oakham Road and indicated that residents would be consulted on proposals.
- (2) A member of the public expressed concern at the recent decision that Housing Officers would only be able to attend voluntary Tenants and Residents Association meetings for the first twenty minutes. He feared questions raised under any other business would either not be answered or an incorrect answer given. In responding, the Area Liaison Officer indicated that difficulties had been experienced relating to the Terms and Conditions for staff, however, she confirmed that the issue had now been addressed. She undertook to investigate the matter further and provide a written response to the questioner.
- (3) A member of the public submitted a question in relation to the introduction of three black sacks per household per week with only limited recycling facilities and whether this had impacted on fly tipping given the increase in figures reported. In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) indicated that the current statistics submitted to DEFRA had been correct and confirmed that fly tipping had reduced, however, some of the information provided by the Council had been misinterpreted. He stated that ways of improving figures further were continually being looked at. He stated that a substantial bid had been submitted and if successful, the money would be used to collect card and plastic all over the Borough with a view to improving recycling figures.

A Member of the Committee confirmed that the Local Authority was working closely with the Police prosecuting perpetrators of fly tipping.

Concerns were then raised in relation to the figures submitted and Members of the Committee and public stated that the figures should be challenged if incorrect as these figures were in the public domain.

- (4) Questions were raised by two members of the public in relation to increasing the number of Area Committee meetings per year. In responding, the Chair indicated that this issue would be discussed later at Agenda Item No. 10 (Consultation on the Review of Area Committees).
- (5) A member of the public submitted a question in relation to Netherton Library. In responding, the Area Liaison Officer indicated that there had been adequate consultation on Netherton Library and stated that she would be happy to provide the information surrounding the consultation to the questioner.
- (6) The same member of the public submitted a question in relation to the future of Netherton Arts Centre. In responding, the Area Liaison Officer undertook to arrange for a written response to be submitted to the questioner.
- (7) The same member of the public referred to the closure of Netherton toilets and asked whether there were any plans for the toilets to be re-opened. In responding, the Chair assured the questioner that serious consideration was currently being given to the re-opening of a number of toilet facilities around the Borough.
- (8) A member of the public referred to the collapsed covers of a large utilities manhole on the corner of Highfield Road and Corporation Road following a juggernaut lorry attempting to reverse his trailer into a section of Highfield Road. He stated that he had reported the incident, and although he was grateful that officers had attended the site to erect barriers, he stated that no further action had been taken. His first question referred to the timescale involved in repairing the damaged manhole and in his second question he asked whether consideration could be given to changing the location of the current 7.5 ton restriction sign in order that it could be visible to oncoming traffic.

In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) undertook to investigate the issue of the damaged manhole and respond to the questioner direct. In relation to his second question, the Group Engineer offered to meet with him on-site to discuss the possibility of changing the location of the current sign.

---

## 32. WARD ISSUES

- (a) Councillor Zada raised concerns regarding issues and incidents in relation to the Netherton area and suggested that Traffic Wardens increase surveillance.
- (b) Councillors Duckworth and Wood expressed their objection to the Hope Tavern's application to extend their licensing hours to 2.00am.

- (c) Councillor Waltho referred to the concern raised by a member of the public in relation to the collapsed covers of a large utilities manhole in Corporation Road and indicated that he had e-mailed an officer regarding the matter, however, he had received no response.
- (d) Ms Little referred to flu vaccination and urged all persons eligible to be vaccinated.
- (e) Ms Little referred to the recent introduction of a temporary vaccination programme to immunise pregnant women against whooping cough. She urged all persons eligible to be vaccinated.

At the request of the Chair, Ms Little briefly explained her role to the Committee.

Councillor Cotterill referred to his concern raised at the previous meeting in relation to the nail cutting service provided for elderly and disabled people in Quarry Bank. Ms Little indicated that she would remind officers to respond to the Member direct by the end of October.

---

### 33. CONSULTATION ON THE REVIEW OF AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Scrutiny Chairs was submitted on the proposals for a review of Area Committees. It was noted that the proposals were subject to a consultation period from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 with recommendations submitted to the Cabinet and Council in November, 2012.

The proposals would see nine new forums meeting five times throughout the year focusing on issues raised by the public, making it easier for people to report and discuss issues with the Council and elected members.

Following a brief presentation by Councillor Tyler a number of issues were raised in relation to the proposals set out in the report submitted to the meeting.

A member of the public indicated that although the new proposed Community Forums were a great idea in principle, he raised concerns as to how these new forums would be publicised. In responding, Councillor Tyler reported that the Council would be using a number of social media sites to advertise the Forums such as Twitter, Facebook, media releases and also relying on Ward Members to promote the meetings. He stated that the proposals were about giving public meetings back to the public, by making them simpler and more accessible and where the public attending them would set the agenda by the issues they raised.

The possibility of extending the consultation period was raised, however Councillor Tyler reported that this was not an option and stated that the new arrangements needed to be set up by January 2013. The Chair of the Committee supported the comments made.

A member of the public queried whether the Area Committee meeting scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 would still take place. In responding, Councillor Tyler confirmed that the meeting would not go ahead and indicated that dates for the Community Forums had not yet been programmed, however, it was envisaged that these would commence in February and would possibly be held over a two week period each cycle.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That comments on developing the proposals in the report submitted to the meeting on the review of Area Committees be submitted to the Director of Corporate Resources by the deadline of 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2012.
- (2) That comments and views received during the consultation period be collated and considered by the Cabinet and Council during November, 2012.

---

34.

#### RUSSELLS HALL TRAFFIC WORKING GROUP

The Group Engineer gave a verbal update on the progress of the Traffic Regulation Orders for various roads in the Russells Hall area.

He indicated that four types of Traffic Regulation Order had been introduced to reduce the effects of intrusive parking associated with the Hospital.

- No Waiting, Monday to Friday, 10.00am to 11.00am and 2.00pm to 3.00pm.
- No entry to a street unless the driver is visiting a property in that street.
- A peak hours loading ban in Pensnett High Street.
- A two-hour limited waiting bay, daytime, Monday to Saturday in Pensnett Road.

The Group Engineer reported that the decision sheet authorising the introduction of the Russells Hall Traffic Regulation Orders had been signed by the Cabinet Member for Transportation in December, 2011; the Legal Order had been sealed in January, 2012 and the legal date of implementation was January, 2012. He stated that it had been agreed that no double yellow lines would be introduced on Middlepark Road, Ashenhurst Road and The Oval until Ward Members had carried out consultations to ascertain residents' views about the waiting restrictions proposed for their streets. He further stated that the proposals had been included in the sealed Traffic Regulation Order, for possible implementation in a future year.



The Group Engineer indicated that the Police would enforce the moving traffic order, no entry, except for access; however, the Police had indicated that this type of moving traffic offence would be given less priority than other police duties. He reported that arrangements had been made for Police officers and Council officers to meet and discuss the Traffic Regulation Orders surrounding Russells Hall Hospital.

The Group Engineer indicated that the Council's own Parking Enforcement Officers would enforce the yellow line "No waiting during two hours on week days", and "peak times no loading", in line with their patrol routes. He also outlined the number of penalty charge notices that had been issued for the twelve months up to 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2012 in a number of streets in the area.

In concluding, the Group Engineer indicated that it was understood that Russells Hall Hospital was considering expanding its staff car parking facilities, however, he stated that any planning application would be carefully considered by the Council.

RESOLVED

That the information, as reported orally, be noted.

---

35. AREA COMMITTEE GRANTS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on proposals for the allocation of expenditure from the delegated budget of the Committee for the 2012/13 municipal year.

The Policy Analyst for Communities and Resources indicated that a supplementary paper in relation to a further grant application had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That grants to the organisations indicated below for the purposes, and in the sums indicated, be approved:

(a) ST JAMES'S WARD

(i) Centre for Equality and Diversity

The sum of £2,680 to contribute towards the cost of a project to provide:-

- A four-day training course for members of migrant communities to learn basic skills in how to use video recording, filmmaking and sound engineering equipment.
- The production of a thirty-minute long documentary highlighting the experiences of refugees and other migrants within the central area of Dudley.
- The cost of a migrant information event to be held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 and launch of documentary.
- The cost of publishing three editions of Dudley Migrant voices newsletter over a six-month period.

(b) NETHERTON, WOODSIDE AND ST ANDREW'S WARD

(i) Age Concern Dudley (t/a Age UK Dudley)

The sum of £740 to contribute towards the replacement and update of IT equipment at the Netherton Head Office to support the administration of the Age UK service within the Borough of Dudley.

(c) ST THOMAS'S WARD

(i) Friends and Residents of Buffery Park

The sum of £3,695 to support the installation of double-glazing, new security shutters and loft insulation and that in view of the very small amount of income available to the organisation, the grant money be paid immediately.

(d) QUARRY BANK AND DUDLEY WOOD WARD

(i) Friends of Stevens Park, Quarry Bank

The sum of £5,000 to support the installation of park benches to provide additional seating for users of the park and that in view of the very small amount of income available to the organisation, the grant money be paid immediately.

(ii) Friends of Quarry Bank Community Facilities

The sum of £1,000 to contribute towards the cost of putting up and taking down festive lighting on Quarry Bank high Street for the festive period 2012/13.

(e) VARIOUS WARDS

(i) Dudley MBC – Environmental Management Division

The sum of £4,770.45 to fund the provision of Christmas Trees for Christmas 2012 at key locations identified in the Central Dudley area.

- (2) That, as no further instruction had been received despite numerous requests, the grant awarded to Castle High School out of Hours Gardening Club in the sum of £1,800 for the purchase of a greenhouse, shed and associated gardening equipment to support the schools out of hours Gardening Club be not proceeded with and that should the applicant wish to pursue the application, given the amount of time that had elapsed, the applicant be required to submit a new application.
- (3) That the action taken by the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and the relevant Ward Members, in approving the application by North Priory Community Association, in the sum of £5,000 to contribute towards the costs of a part time project manager to help develop a business case and funding applications for a new community centre for the North Priory area, in accordance with the urgency provisions as set out in the Constitution, be noted.
- (4) That the action taken by the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and the relevant Ward Members, in approving the application by Lunch on the Run – St Francis Parish Centre and Church Community Cafe, in the sum of £5,000 to contribute towards the costs of rent at St Francis Parish Centre and Church for the Community Cafe, in accordance with the urgency provisions as set out in the Constitution, be noted.
- (5) That the action taken by the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and the relevant Ward Members, in approving, subject to the applicant providing certain further information, the application by Wrens Nest Community Centre, in the sum of £3,311.98 to contribute towards the costs of kitchen equipment to support the work of the community kitchen at the Wrens Nest Community Centre, in accordance with the urgency provisions as set out in the Constitution, be noted.
- (6) That the action taken by the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and the relevant Ward Members, in approving the application by Revival Fires, in the sum of £1,000 to contribute towards the applicants Family Transformation Centre refurbishment project, in accordance with the urgency provisions as set out in the Constitution, be noted.

- (7) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to implement the above actions in accordance with the agreed control procedures.
- 

36. **MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2012 RELATING TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

---

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at the meeting of the Central Dudley Area Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, with regard to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

In referring to paragraph 20 of Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the meeting, a Member of the Committee requested a date for when the whole of Hockley Lane would be resurfaced. In responding, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) undertook to investigate and respond to the Member direct.

In referring to paragraph 10 of Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the meeting, a Member of the Committee again requested that the build outs situated in Victoria Road be removed. The Group Engineer indicated that he would meet the Member on site later in the year to discuss the issue further.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

---

37. **MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2012 OTHER THAN THOSE RELATING TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

---

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

In referring to paragraph 6 of the report submitted to the meeting, a Member of the Committee queried why 5.5% (24 properties) on the Woodside Estate did not have any form of heating. In responding, the Area Liaison Officer indicated that 24 properties currently had no form of heating installed, however, she confirmed the reason for this was due to residents refusing to have heating installed, despite numerous attempts by officers to try to convince them to have heating. She further stated that because Council officers could not legally access the property unless they were invited to do so, there was little the Council could do. However, she assured the Committee that every effort was being made to persuade residents to take up the offer of installing heating in their properties.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

---

38. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of meetings of Scrutiny Committees for the remainder of the current municipal year were noted.

---

39. DATE OF FUTURE MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE

It was noted that the meeting of the Committee arranged for 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013, was unlikely to go ahead in the light of the review of Area Committees discussed earlier in the meeting.

---

The meeting ended at 7.50pm.

CHAIR