

Central Dudley Area Committee – 2nd October 2012

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Matters raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 12th June, 2012 other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment

Purpose of Report

1. To note progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 12th June, 2012, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Background

2. The issues set out in paragraphs 3 to 6 (inclusive) below were raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 12th June, 2012, progress on which is as follows:

3. **Dudley MBC - Corporate Policy on response times**

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

In relation to the Council's policy on response times, the following response has been given:-

"The Council's corporate policy on response times, this is to reply to letters within ten working days where a response is appropriate. It is not always possible to provide a substantive response, however, in which case a holding response should be issued within ten workings days."

4. **Closure of Quarry Bank Health Centre and Relocation of Podiatry Service**

A Member of the Committee referred to the nail cutting service provided for elderly and disabled people in Quarry Bank in consequence of the closure of the Health Centre in Sheffield Street. He indicated that the alternative provision in Brierley Hill was too far and too difficult for disabled, frail and elderly people to travel to get their nails cut. He requested that consideration be given to providing a nail cutting service for elderly and disabled residents of Quarry Bank through the peripatetic service provided to wheelchair users at Woodhouse Court.

Nail Cutting is not provided by the Council, and therefore the issue has been referred to the appropriate agencies for their consideration.

The Deputy Director of Community and Integrated Services, Dudley Group of Hospitals has responded as follows:-

“The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust Podiatry Service previously provided from the Quarry Bank Health Centre ceased to operate from the centre in May 2012 due to being served notice by NHS Dudley that the building was not fit for purpose. As a tenant in the building the service was obliged to comply with the request. The Podiatry Service was given a short notice period therefore only a small number of patients could be informed at the time of their appointment that they would need to move to another clinic/Health Centre. All the patients scheduled to receive their treatment after the date of the closure were written to offering them an alternate appointment at a different clinic (Halesowen Health Centre, The Limes, Stourbridge Health and Social Care Centre or Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre). The choice of clinic was initially indicated by the service based on the closest clinic to the individual’s home address. Patients were informed that if the date, time or location of the appointment was inconvenient they should contact the service to arrange a more convenient time or change the location if they wished. A small number of patients have contacted the service to ask for either a change of date/time or location. The service has not received any complaints during this process. Patients that would not be able to travel the short distance to an alternate clinic and who meet the access criteria can be offered transport using the Ambuline Service. All staff are aware of the use of Ambuline and are instructed where appropriate to use this service. It is always preferable for a patient to receive podiatry treatment in a clinic setting however domiciliary visits are offered if the travel to the clinic is detrimental to the health and well being of the individual.

The issue of patients being able to attend Woodhouse Court for their treatment was raised. The Podiatry Service does provide a domiciliary service to residents of Woodhouse Court that were unable to travel to the Quarry Bank Clinic providing the treatment in their own rooms. Woodhouse Court does not have a clinic facility from which to undertake podiatry treatment for non-residents.

It is unfortunate that the Podiatry Service is no longer able to provide treatment at Quarry Bank however the decision was outside of the service’s and Trust’s control.”

5. **Anti-social behaviour – Milking Bank**

A Member of the Committee referred to anti-social behaviour on the park at the back of the school in Milking Bank and requested that this matter be investigated. The matter has been referred to the local neighbourhood policing team with a view to resolving the issue.

6. **Woodside Estate – Heating System**

A Member of the Council drew attention to the heating system currently used in homes on the Woodside Estate and requested that consideration be given to installing up-to-date heating systems in the area.

The Construction Manager, Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services responded as follows:-

“The Woodside Estate includes 437 Council owned properties. Of these, 347 have gas central heating installed. 66 properties (15%) have electric night storage heaters installed. This percentage is comparable with the borough wide average of 16% (3663 properties), where properties use electric night heating.

In addition, 24 properties (5.5%) have no form of whole house heating. However, all of these customers have been offered a central heating installation on more than one occasion, but have exercised their right to refuse. Should any of these customers wish to have a new heating installation, they can contact our Repairs Management Centre where this will be arranged.

The Council does currently have a borough wide programme to replace electric storage heaters, where there is a live gas service. The programme deals with around 150 properties each year and current approved budgets will replace around 750 systems with a modern gas heating system over the next 5 years. We also seek to secure additional funding to increase this programme using various government initiatives such as CERT (Carbon Emission Reduction Target), CESP (Community Energy Savings Programme) and the forthcoming ECO programme (Energy Company Obligations) that flows from the Government's Green Deal initiative.

A criteria exists to prioritise these replacement installations which is based on the property's energy efficiency rating, age of the electric heating system and property type. Within the Woodside Estate 33 electrically heated properties, which are mainly bungalows, are currently identified to be replaced within the current 5 year programme.

Should you become aware of individual customers who may be experiencing any particular difficulty with the operation or effectiveness of their heating system, please encourage them to contact our Repairs Management Centre on 0300 555 8283, that is open 8am-8pm 7 days per week and they will arrange any necessary service calls or energy efficiency advice.”

Finance

7. This report has no direct financial implications.

Law

8. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

9. This report complies with the policies of the Council on Equality and Diversity.
10. Children and young people have not been consulted on the preparation of this report, as report seeks only to note progress on issues raised at its previous meetings.

Recommendation

11. That the report be noted.



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List of Background Papers Minutes of the meeting of the Central Dudley Area
Committee held on 12th June, 2012