

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Thursday, 28th June, 2012 at 7.00 pm
at The Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Bank Street, Brierley Hill

PRESENT: -

Councillors Mrs Billingham, Blood, Boleyn, Foster, Harley, Harris, Hemingsley, Islam, J T Jones, Jordan, J Martin, Miller, Mrs Simms, Tyler and M Wilson.

Officers: -

The Director of Corporate Resources (as Acting Area Liaison Officer), Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Head of Economic Development, Planning Policy Manager, Manager, Executive Support Team, Head of Traffic and Transportation and Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) (all Directorate of the Urban Environment); Head of Service (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services); Detached Youth Worker (Directorate of Children's Services); Senior Account Manager (Chief Executive's Directorate) and Miss K Fellows (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

together with Inspector E Boyle, West Midlands Police and Mr C Newton, Station Commander West Midlands Fire Service and 17 members of the public.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Councillor Jordan be elected Chair of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Councillor Jordan in the Chair)

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Councillor Hemingsley be appointed Vice Chair of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harris declared a personal interest in Agenda Item number 15 – Brierley Hill High Street Working Group – High Street Enhancements – in so far as the report

related to enhancements to High Street, Brierley Hill as part of the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network major scheme as she was Honorary Treasurer of the Brierley Hill Civic Society.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8th March 2012, be approved as a correct record and signed.

5 OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIR

The Chairman welcomed newly Elected Members and thanked those former Councillors who had not been re-elected for their contribution to the work of the Council, in particular referring to Councillor Southall's contribution and work in relation to the Brierley Hill Area Committee.

6 PETITIONS

No Petitions had been received since the last meeting and no further Petitions were presented at this meeting.

7 YOUTH ISSUES.

The Area Team Leader, Early Years, Youth and Education Services gave a verbal presentation of the youth service activities which were taking place in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area making particular reference to the following:-

Activities at the Kingswinford Youth Centre, local schools and private individuals and church groups that offered a variety of activities ranging from kick boxing, zumba, karate, performing arts, youth activities as well as the Gold DofE Award scheme.

It was reported that the Kingswinford Youth Centre would be launching a new gymnasium and offering activities in relation to the indoor climbing wall, with Summer activities at the Youth Centre being scheduled for week commencing 30th July, 2012.

In relation to the Pensnett Youth Club that this continued to meet every week on Mondays and Thursdays. That attendance numbers were beginning to rise with new members joining each week. It was noted that the Junior Sports Leaders Awards would commence at the Youth Club on week commencing 13th August, 2012.

The Dell football project was referred to including details of the weekly attendance, the League that those attending were involved with, the provision of football strips and that the local young people were committed to the project, developing their football and team working skills. Details of the 30 hour ASDAN activity award were also noted.

The Detached Youth Worker reported on the Brierley Hill Detached Project which was organised by her, whereby the development of a residential project during the summer period would provide young people with the opportunity of working towards some accredited outcomes and the team were engaging with young people in the Hawbush and Wordsley areas building relationships and carrying out consultations in order to ascertain what future provision was required.

It was further reported that the detached team continued to work across the Brierley Hill area, forging links with Wordsley library.

It was stated that there were large groups of young people gathering behind Kingswinford Youth Centre during Friday evenings and that in partnership with the police, the detached youth team continued to offer young people advice on how to stay safe and the dangers of underage drinking and illegal drug use, and also provide advice and help with career opportunities and a survey was being undertaken in relation to young people's drinking habits, with a view to providing a drop in service.

Details of the new Source Youth Centre Manager were noted, together with contact details.

Youth workers had commenced outreach work around the Wordsley area as the weather improved, in order to develop greater links with the centre and public spaces such as parks. The team was also working with young people to set up a youth activity programme over the summer months.

Details of the Wednesday evening 4US Social Inclusion Project were outlined, together with participation rates and the ages of those who attended the Project. A group residential in April, 2012 was referred to, which had been extremely successful and attended by many young people with disabilities.

It was reported that the parents committee had applied for funding in order to obtain equipment and accessories for the Youth Club and details of a programme of events currently being planned which included a jubilee party, a first aid course, the introduction of boxing and a junior Olympic sports day event were also outlined.

It was stated that at the Nine Locks Youth Centre, young people were engaging in a varied programme of activities, including running their own monthly café. A recent weekend residential was reported upon whereby young people had had the opportunity to learn to face their fears by taking part in activities including zip wires, quad biking and water sports in order to develop self confidence.

Holiday activities including activities that had taken place at Easter were also outlined.

Arising from the presentation Members asked questions and the Detached Youth Worker responded stating as follows:-

In relation to the Kingswinford Youth Centre, staff had now been trained in order to facilitate requests of young people to use the gymnasium and indoor climbing wall.

The Pensnett Youth Club had organised a residential project that had taken place in May 2012 with a further residential planned for August, 2012.

The Dell Stadium attracted young people from the Pensnett and Brockmoor areas and that the Look Out Project also undertook projects in the above areas including football and gardening projects.

That linkages with other partners, such as work undertaken with the Fire Service and the Look Out Project continued to be forged.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.
- (2) That the Director of Children's Services be requested to:-
 - (a) Submit a report in relation to the activities carried out by the Look Out Project to a future meeting of the Committee.
 - (b) Provide details to Councillor Foster of the linkages and other partners that the Youth Service were involved with.
 - (c) Submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee detailing further work undertaken with young people.

Station Commander Colin Newton of West Midlands Fire Service reported on fire issues in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area. He indicated that the number of reported arson fires had reduced in comparison with the figures for last year, and believed that the reduction had been contributed to by the wet weather conditions as this had resulted in a reduction in arson rubbish fires. There had also been a reduction in arson dwelling fires with an increase in one accidental dwelling fire since last year.

Station Commander Newton also detailed the youth activities that had been taking place including those fire projects that had taken place in schools and a passing out parade that was to take place at Dudley Fire Station on Friday 29th June, 2012, inviting Members to attend the parade.

In responding to a request from Councillor Foster, Station Commander Newton confirmed that he would provide Members with a breakdown of reported monthly fire incidents together with locations.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information reported on at the meeting be received and noted.
 - (2) That Station Commander Newton be requested to provide Members with a breakdown of reported monthly fire incidents together with their locations.
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10

POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Boyle of West Midlands Police reported on current Police issues in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area. He circulated details of comparative crime figures and a briefing note on other crime including metal theft, vehicle crime and preventative measures that were being taken in relation to crime. He indicated that on the whole the number of offences committed compared to this time last year had reduced, however he confirmed that vehicle crime had increased and work was being conducted with parking Managers at the Merry Hill Centre, Brierley Hill which was a hot spot for vehicle crime.

Inspector Boyle also reported on Anti Social Behaviour and Quality of Life issues that were being targeted together with the involvement with the Joint Activities Group which helped bring the key stakeholders together in order to address crime and community safety.

In responding to Members questions Inspector Boyle indicated as follows:-

In relation to rising car crime figures, locations and known offenders would be targeted based upon whether the offenders posed a high or middle risk. Those posing a high risk were often repeat offenders.

He confirmed that the crime figures referred to were based on comparisons for the same three months in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Regarding preventative work it was confirmed that work to encourage members of the public to receive advice and expertise from the police was conducted.

There had been a reduction in staffing levels due to the loss of Sergeants and Constables, however structures locally were monitored in order to ensure that there was maximum front line policing.

The Chairman asked Inspector Boyle to commend Sergeant Thompson for the work he had conducted in relation to stray horses and Councillor Islam also praised the expertise of Sergeant Thompson when attending the Council's Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee Working Group that addressed issues in relation to stray horses.

Councillor Tyler requested Inspector Boyle to pass on his thanks to Sergeant Andrew Springthorpe advising that he was an outstanding member of the Police Force.

Councillor Islam welcomed the reduction in crime figures commending the work of West Midlands Police.

RESOLVED

That Inspector Boyle be thanked for his presentation and that the information reported be received and noted.

11 CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of persons to serve as co-opted members of the Committee for the 2012/13 municipal year.

RESOLVED

That, at this time, no co-opted members be appointed to serve on the Committee.

12 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of representatives to serve on various outside bodies for the 2012/13 municipal year.

RESOLVED

That the following Members be appointed to serve on the following bodies for the 2012/13 municipal year:-

Social Inclusion

- (a) Brierley Hill Committee for the Welfare of the Physically Handicapped – Councillors M Wilson and Islam with Councillor Harris as a Deputy.
- (b) Peter Harris Almshouses –
Councillor Islam – four year term from 30.06.2012
Councillor Harris – four year term from 18.11.2012

Community Associations

- (a) Brockmoor – Councillors J Martin and Jordan.
- (b) Dingle – Councillors J Jones and Hemingsley.

- (c) Fens Pool – Councillor Foster.
 - (d) Hawbush – Councillors Harris and Islam.
 - (e) Kingswinford – Councillors Harley and Miller.
 - (f) Nine Locks – Councillors Harris and M Wilson.
 - (g) Pensnett – Councillors Foster and J Martin.
 - (h) Wall Heath – Councillors Boleyn and Tyler.
 - (i) Wordsley – Councillors Mrs Simms and Hemingsley.
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12 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the reappointment of Working Groups for the 2012/13 municipal year.

In presenting the report submitted, the Area Liaison Officer referred to the procedure for dealing with urgent applications for capital allocation in between meetings, as set out in paragraph 2 of the report submitted.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Area Committee Grants Working Group, (formerly the Capital Allocations Working Group) be reappointed comprising Councillor Jordan, (Chair), Hemingsley, (Vice Chair), J Martin, Miller, Mrs Simms and M Wilson.
 - (2) That the Young People's Working Group be not appointed.
 - (3) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to administer the urgent applications for Area Committee Grants in between meetings during the next municipal year in accordance with the provisions contained within paragraph 2 of the report submitted.
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14 PUBLIC FORUM

Consideration was given to the following written/oral questions raised:-

- (a) A written question from a member of the public in relation to the level of noise emanating from the Dell Stadium, Brierley Hill from the tannoy and firing pistol devices. Councillors Foster and J Martin made representations on behalf of the questioner, advising that they had made a site visit to the Dell Stadium and made recommendations as to limiters on the tannoy system and advice to the groups utilising the equipment in order to limit the level of noise. The Head of Sport and Physical Activity undertook to investigate the matters raised and respond to the questioner direct.
- (b) A written question from a member of the public in relation to Excel Parking Company who were private car park operators issuing parking fines at the Moor Street Shopping Centre, Brierley Hill and thus deterring visitors from the area. Councillor Tyler responded indicating that, although parking fines should not be ignored, private car park operators were unable to issue fines and the only penalty they could impose was the cost for overstaying the period of payment. The Area Liaison Officer also reported that the Government would be legislating in relation to private car parking operators.
- (c) Written questions from members of the public in relation to the provision of parking bays in Brierley Hill High Street were deferred until the presentation of the report entitled Brierley Hill High Street Working Group – High Street Enhancements which would be presented later on in the evening.
- (d) A written question from a member of the public in relation to whether there was a new Town Centre Manager for the Brierley Hill area together with details of their role. The Head of Economic Development responded stating that the service had ceased last year and there were no plans to re-commence the service.
- (e) A written question from a member of the public regarding the parking bay after Bell Street, Brierley Hill and a request that this be monitored as members of the public were parking in the bay all day, thus deterring customers from visiting retailers and suppliers failing to deliver goods due to the lack of parking and unloading facilities. The Group Engineer, Traffic and Transportation undertook to investigate the issues raised and respond direct to the questioner.
- (f) A written question from a member of the public expressing concerns that new contracts may be issued to four further pharmacies in the Brierley Hill Area of the Area Committee and the affect that this would have on the current pharmacies situated in the area. Members responded direct to the questioner expressing their support for no further pharmaceutical licences to be issued to new pharmacies in the above area.

RESOLVED

That a letter be written by Members of the Committee to the Black Country Pharmaceutical Society expressing their support for no further pharmaceutical licences to be issued to new Pharmacies within the Brierley Hill area of the Area Committee.

15 AREA COMMITTEE GRANTS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on proposals for the allocation of expenditure from the delegated Area Committee Grants budget for the 2012/13 municipal year. Appended to the report submitted was the criteria for the awarding of funding allocations.

The Area Liaison Officer referred to four new applications for Area Committee Grants and suggested that a meeting of the Working Group take place prior to the next meeting of the Area Committee in order that those applications could be considered.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the process for dealing with Area Committee Grants for 2013, as set out in the report submitted together with the criteria for the awarding of funding allocation be noted.
 - (2) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to administer the Area Committee grants process in accordance with any decisions made by the Committee.
 - (3) That a meeting of the Area Committee Grants Working Group be convened as soon as practicably possible.
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16 BRIERLEY HILL HIGH STREET WORKING GROUP – HIGH STREET ENHANCEMENTS

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the proposed enhancements to High Street, Brierley Hill as part of the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network major scheme (BHSA). Details of the original and new scheme proposals were Appended to the report submitted.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted, members of the public raised concerns in relation to the restriction on parking and the affect that this would have on deliveries and trade.

Following further discussions Members agreed that all traders within the Brierley Hill High Street should be consulted further in relation to the proposals outlined in the

report submitted. Following a suggestion by the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Community Safety it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the proposed enhancements to High Street, Brierley Hill as part of the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network major Scheme (BHSAN) as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to convene a meeting with all Traders within the Brierley Hill High Street, the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Community Safety and appropriate Officers to further consult on proposals in relation to the Brierley Hill High Street enhancements as part of the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network major Scheme.

17 HIGHWAYS MINOR WORKS CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2011/12

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the proposed programmes of work for Local Safety Schemes and Safer Routes to School within the Brierley Hill Area for the 2012/13 financial year. Details of proposed schemes were set out in Appendix A to the report submitted.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted Councillors Harley and Miller congratulated Officers and welcomed the proposals in relation to the refuge splitter island on Market Street/Moss Grove, Kingswinford and the school 20 miles per hour zones at Cot Lane between Lodge Lane and Broad Street respectively.

RESOLVED

That, the proposed Local Safety Schemes and Safer Routes to School Schemes, as outlined in Appendix A to the report submitted, be noted.

18 OBJECTIONS TO WORDSLEY AND KINGSWINFORD TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS.

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted regarding the objections that had been received to the proposals for Traffic Regulation Orders in Wordsley and Kingswinford. Plans of the proposals that had been objected to were Appended to the report submitted.

The Licensee of the Public House referred to in the report submitted was in attendance and made representations objecting to the proposals for double yellow lines and no waiting at any time to prevent visitors to a public house causing nuisance to local residents by parking in the street.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Community Safety be recommended to approve the introduction of the Traffic Regulation Orders referred to in the report submitted for Cot Lane and Broad Street Kingswinford and Highcroft Avenue, Kingswinford only.

19 SANDRINGHAM PLACE, WORDSLEY.

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on issues associated with vacant retail units at Sandringham Place, Wordsley

In presenting the report submitted the Head of Economic Development reported that all property owners had now been identified and he would write to them in relation to redevelopment opportunities.

In responding to a question from the Vice-Chair, the Head of Economic Development reported that in relation to the owner of three of the properties who may wish to sell the properties he could provide support and guidance to the property owner.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, submitted be noted.
 - (2) That the Head of Economic Development be requested to provide feedback to the Vice-Chair following discussions with the owner of the three properties referred to above.
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20 BEECH ROAD, KINGSWINFORD

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the condition of the flats at Beech Road, Kingswinford.

In responding to a question from a Member, Inspector E Boyle advised that should it be established that the overgrown part of the site was a cause of anti social behaviour an approach could be made to the Joint Activities Group to utilise the services of the Payback Group in order to clear the overgrown vegetation.

Councillor Harris suggested that the shops be rented on short term Peppercorn Leases to those businesses wishing to expand, as increased activity would increase security for those residing above the shops.

Councillor Harley referred to the difficulties with renting the shops within the Beech Road area.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, submitted be noted.

- (2) That the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services submit a report to the next meeting of the Area Committee updating Members on the outcome of the options appraisal and associated costs in relation to the flats at Beech Road, Kingswinford.
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21 BADGERS AT THE HAVEN, WORDSLEY

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the issue of Badgers at the Haven, Wordsley.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, submitted be noted.

22 MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH MARCH, 2012

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on a number of issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 8th March, 2012. Details of the matters raised at that meeting were set out in the Appendix to the report submitted.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, be noted.

23 WARD ISSUES

Councillor Blood raised written questions as follows:-

- (a) In relation to New Bradley Hall is it the intention of the Area Committee to hold a Special Area Committee and submit the findings to the relevant Scrutiny Committee who will be looking at the wider review to Adult Care?
- (b) Am I correct in interpreting the amended recommendations submitted on the evening of Cabinet, that New Bradley Hall will remain open as a residential care home for the duration to all current residents irrespective of their age, or only for the foreseeable future, which?

The Area Liaison Officer confirmed that New Bradley Hall will remain open as a residential care home for long term residents: for the duration of their stay for current residents and for the foreseeable future.

That a Stakeholder Working Group comprising Members of both political groups and other stakeholders be set up to consider the full range of the wider implications for all older people in the Borough.

That deliberations around New Bradley Hall would be fed into a much wider review in the light of the impending White Paper and Social Care Bill for a complete review of adult social care strategy, this to be carried out at the highest level by a relevant Scrutiny Committee and that the Stakeholder Working Group above feed into the wider review.

Following further discussion it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services be requested to provide Councillor Blood with a written response in relation to the questions raised above regarding New Bradley Hall.

24 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 22.1 Standing Orders be suspended to enable the remaining Agenda Items to be considered.

25 WARD ISSUES

In responding to a further Ward issue raised, the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Community Safety advised that appropriate action would be taken in relation to problems with clearing drains following heavy rain downpours.

Councillor J. Martin requested that a report regarding the work carried out by the Joint Activities Group be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee regarding the work carried out by the Joint Activities Group.

26 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of future meetings of the Council's Scrutiny Committees in the current municipal year were received and noted.

27 DATES OF VENUES OF FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following dates and venues for future meetings of this Area Committee were noted:-

Thursday 8th November, 2012 at the Brier School, Bromley Lane,
Kingswinford.

Thursday 7th March, 2013 at the Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford;

Meetings to commence at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm.

CHAIRMAN