

## **NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2007 at 6.30pm  
at Ellowes Hall School, Stickley Lane, Lower Gornal

### **PRESENT**

Councillors: Mrs Ameson, Evans, Fraser Macnamara. Mrs Millward, Mottram, Mrs Ridley, Ryder, Simms, and Wright, and following his co-option, Mr J Millward (Youth Member).

### **Officers**

The Director of Children's Services (as Area Liaison Officer), The Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services), The Assistant Director, Culture and Community Services, the Group Engineer, Traffic and Safety (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Quality and Complaints Manager (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Area Team Leader, Youth and Community Worker Lower Gornal Youth Centre (Directorate of Children's Services) and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Law and Property).

Inspector Lyn Bailey of the West Midlands Police together with approximately 40 members of the public was in attendance.

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### **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

#### **RESOLVED**

That Councillor Simms be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Councillor Simms thereupon took the Chair).

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### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Caunt, G Davies and Stanley and Mr Vincent of the West Midlands Fire Service.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member declared a personal or prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of any items on the Agenda.

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### **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th March 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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5                    APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Ryder be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal year.

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6                    TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted setting out the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted, on the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees, be noted.

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7                    APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the co-option of persons to serve on the Committee for the 2007-2008 municipal year.

RESOLVED

- 1                    That Mr Millward be appointed as the co-opted youth member for North Dudley Area Committee for the 2007-2008 Municipal Year, representing young people in the Borough.
  - 2                    That, with the exception of a co-opted Youth Member, no other co-opted members be appointed to the Committee.
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8                    APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of working groups in the 2007-2008 Municipal Year.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that as lottery funding had been approved, there was an urgent need for the Skatepark Working Group to meet as soon as convenient, to review its previous decision and determine clear proposals to ensure the securing of the lottery funding in order for the Skatepark to be erected on an agreed site.

In view of the shortness of time left for claiming the grant, and the fact that the Lottery would expect the grant to be signed off promptly, and the next meeting of the Area Committee being 19<sup>th</sup> September, the Area Liaison Officer recommended that the Working Group, at its meeting, delegate authority to him, in consultation with the Chairman, to approve and authorise the acceptance of the lottery grant and the commencement of the erection of the skatepark, which was likely to be started before the next meeting of the Committee.

In response to a query from a Member as to whether local residents could be invited to the meeting of the Skatepark Working Group, the Area Liaison Officer advised that there was no provision within the terms of reference for anyone outside of the Committee to be part of the Working Group, but that the Working Group could invite external representatives to attend their meeting, if it so wished.

#### RESOLVED

- 1 That the North Dudley Area Committee Capital Allocations Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the working group comprise Councillors Mrs Ameson, G Davies, Mrs Millward, Mrs Ridney, Simms, and other Members of the Committee with an interest.
- 2 That the North Dudley Area Committee Skatepark Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the working group comprise all members of the Committee.
- 3 That the North Dudley Area Committee Skatepark Working Group meet as a matter of urgency to determine an agreeable site for the provision of a skatepark within the North Dudley Area, and that the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to accept the lottery grant and approve and authorise the commencement of the erection of the skatepark facility on an agreed site.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the nomination of

members of the Committee to serve on outside organisations, for the 2007-2008 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the organisations indicated for the 2007/08 municipal year or for the term period indicated.

<u>Social Inclusion</u>	Term of Office
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**Baggeridge Miners' Welfare Club**

Councillors Mrs Millward and Wright	Annual
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**Community Associations**

**Sedgley and District**

Councillor Fraser-Macnamara	Annual
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**Upper Gornal Voluntary Recreational Association**

Councillor Ryder	Annual
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**Hurst Hill**

Councillor G Davies	Annual
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**Rainbow (Coseley)**

Councillor Mrs Ridney	Annual
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10                      **PETITIONS**

A petition was submitted by Mr M Davis on behalf of over 3,000 members of the public objecting to the proposed closure of Arcal Lodge. The petition was referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services for consideration and attention.

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11                      **YOUTH ISSUES**

The Area Team Manager of Early Years and Youth Development reported on youth issues as follows:

Coseley Youth Centre were working in partnership with young people from The Coseley School on a Citizenship Project. The Youth Centre would deliver a four week summer programme to include a residential, workshops activities plus day trip, leading to Accreditations.

Sedgley Youth Centre had installed a new DJ booth and was to hold DJ workshops for young people who attend the club. Art workshops and football coaching have taken place. A new development worker was to be based at Sedgley Youth Centre for 22 hours per week. The development worker was hoping to deliver a two week summer programme including a first aid course, activity day, cooking, art projects, sport and day trips, subject to obtaining external funding.

Lower Gornal Youth Centre was scheduled to re-open on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July, following refurbishment. The Centre was to deliver a two-week summer programme in partnership with The Orchard. In partnership with Ellowes Hall School. The Centre would to hold a Friday night disco for students from the school on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July.

Ten young people from North Dudley area were to be given an opportunity to participate in a five day residential over the summer, leading to an Intensive Junior Sports Leaders Award.

The results of a consultation carried out on 121 young people relating to the introduction of a skatepark facility at Ten Acre Field were that 91 young people would use the skatepark facility on that site and 30 young people would not.

The Co-opted Member, Mr Joe Millward, informed of an event organised by young people together with Community Police Support Officers in Sedgley on 15<sup>th</sup> July, and including a BBQ for those attending. He invited Committee Members and members of the public to attend the opening of the Lower Gornal Youth Club on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. Mr Millward also expressed concerns, on behalf of young people, at the lack of recycling facilities at Youth Centres and at Ellowes Hall School, particularly in the light of the publicity encouraging recycling throughout the Borough.

Mr Millward advised that Lower Gornal Youth Club was to hold discos every second week on a Friday evening. He expressed concern that when youth workers were on maternity leave or off sick, no replacement workers were provided and therefore the Club had to close, leaving the young people with nowhere to go.

Members of the Committee supported the request for recycling facilities at youth centres and schools.

A member of the public requested that recycling facilities be provided at Churches also. The Assistant Director, Leisure and Community Services undertook to investigate the feasibility of this.

The Area Liaison Officer advised of the availability of funding, for projects of a capital and revenue nature for young people, through the Youth Opportunities and Youth Capital Fund for projects. He advised that the closing dates for applications were 6<sup>th</sup> July and 21<sup>st</sup> September. He encouraged any eligible young people to apply for the funding.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the verbal reports made regarding youth issues in the North Dudley Area be noted.
- 2 That the Area Liaison Officer be asked to arrange for at item to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Select Committee on the Environment requesting that the Select Committee give consideration to recycling provision at youth centres and schools.

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12

CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure 13 (c) it was

RESOLVED

That agenda item no. 15 - Progress of Elected Member Visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments 2006/07 - be considered as the next item of business.

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13

PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE ESTABLISHMENTS 2006/07

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the progress of visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments during the 2006/2007 municipal year and requesting further nominations for Members to make visits in the 2007/2008 municipal year.

In introducing the report, The Quality and Complaints Manager, Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services advised that Members wishing to take part in the visits would need to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check and attend a training programme which was scheduled to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2007. The Chairman

suggested that any Members wishing to take part in visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments during 2007/2008, contact the Quality and Complaints Manager outside of the meeting.

## RESOLVED

1. That the information contained in the report now submitted, on progress of elected Member visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments in 2006/2007 and on nominations for visits in 2007/2008 be noted.
2. That the Directors of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Children's Services be advised that Councillors Ameson, Ryder, Simms and Wright had indicated their willingness to undertake the visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments during 2007/2008 and that any other Members wishing to undertake visits contact the Quality and Complaints Manager following the meeting.

## POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Bailey, Sedgley Police, was in attendance at the meeting and updated the meeting on the current issues regarding neighbourhood policing as follows:

Neighbourhood 1's last meeting was held on 7<sup>th</sup> June - priorities identified included: a) Clean up plans for Sedgley town centre and surrounding area on 15<sup>th</sup> July, b) Attention to Anti Social Behaviour on Sedgley Beacon. The next meeting would take place on 5<sup>th</sup> July at All Saints Church Hall, Sedgley.

Neighbourhood 2's last meeting was held 24<sup>th</sup> May - priorities identified included: a) anti social behaviour issues in Gornal Village around shops, bus station and the Darby and Joan Club and park area. b) request by Fire Service to identify insecure void premises and refer to the Fire Service. The next meeting would take place on 12<sup>th</sup> July at Housing Office, Kent Street Lower Gornal.

Neighbourhood 3's last meeting was held on 6<sup>th</sup> June - priorities identified a) anti social behaviour at Stockton Court, b) under age drinking by pupils of High Arcal School, c) anti social behaviour at Park Road Woodsetton, d) off road motobikes at Dawlish Road e) anti social behaviour at Springvale Close, f) anti social behaviour at Patricia Crescent. The next meeting would take place on 4<sup>th</sup> July at Bramford Primary School, Chad Road, Woodsetton alongside the Neighbourhood 4 meeting.

Neighbourhood 4's last meeting was held 6<sup>th</sup> June - priorities identified:  
a) increase in theft of lead and scrap metal. B) off road bikes at Skidmore Road c) an arrest for cultivating cannabis d) pub watch meeting held. The next meeting would take place on 4<sup>th</sup> July at Bramford Primary School, Chad Road, Woodsetton alongside the Neighbourhood 3 meeting.

She also commented that a new Princes Trust course was scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> August.

#### RESOLVED

That the verbal report made regarding police issues in the North Dudley Area be noted.

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#### TRANSPORT ISSUES

It was noted that there were no transport issues to be discussed at this meeting.

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#### PUBLIC FORUM

1. A member of the public expressed concerns regarding the adverse effect to local residents caused as a result of the unkempt state of Stockton Court off Mason Street, Coseley, which the Freeholder had let fall into disrepair and which had been empty for the last six years. As a result of the theft of the water tank at one of the void flats recently, flooding had necessitated the attendance of the Fire and Rescue Authority and had left some of the flats without water supplies to their bathrooms. The Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services advised that he was aware that a corporate group were looking into the general issue of empty/derelict properties in the Borough. With regard to the specific problem raised, he undertook to investigate what powers the Council had and advise Ward Members accordingly. He also undertook to arrange for someone to speak to the questioner after the meeting.
2. A member of the public raised a number of issues in respect of the Turls Hill and Swanbrook Valley Residents Association's views on a proposed site for a skatepark facility in the North Dudley area, including suggestions for an alternative site to the original site proposed. It was agreed that the comments be referred to the Skatepark Working Group for consideration.



3. A member of the public queried whether staff would be trained in the Disability Equality Scheme, to ensure their duties complied with the new legislation on Disability Equality. The query was referred to the Chief Executive for a written response to the questioner with a copy to the Chairman. Councillor Fraser Macnamara also undertook to discuss the query with the Chief Executive.
4. The same member of the public expressed concerns regarding the need to reduce traffic on the main Dudley Road. He also requested that deep potholes marked up in yellow several weeks ago be filled in before an accident happened. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate and send a written response to the questioner.
5. A resident raised concerns relating to the state of land at the corner of Stickley Lane. The Assistant Director Culture and Community Services undertook to send a response to the questioner.
6. A member of the public raised concerns regarding the effect on elderly residents of a proposed road closure for a civic parade on Sunday. The Ring and Ride Service which takes elderly residents to attend Church Services would not be able to gain access to the residents' homes on the return journey. It would also prevent residents of Roberts Street using their cars to attend church at that time. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that road closures were controlled by the Police. He did not envisage that the closure would be effective for a long period. He was confident, that when presented with the situation the Police would respond favourably to the Ring and Ride service collecting and returning elderly residents to their homes.
7. A member of the public asked when a footpath would be constructed in Hopyard Lane and when a one way system would be introduced in Brick kiln Lane. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that the footpath was likely to be constructed in the Summer of 2008 and the one way system to be introduced later this year.
8. A member of the public raised concerns regarding the weight restriction on Straits Road, Eaton Crescent, The Alley and Straits Road and asked if there were plans to extend this limit to Straits Road, Louise Street and Zoar Street. Concerns were expressed that large numbers of extra large container lorries were carrying extremely heavy loads in and out of the area.

The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that there were no plans at present to extend the weight restrictions in that area. He undertook to investigate the matter further.

9. A member of the public asked when speed cameras were to be installed at Bradleys Lane, Coseley. The same member of the public also advised that the two speed cameras in Milking Bank were too close together and a camera in Bradleys Lane would be more beneficial. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that a request for a speed camera in Bradleys Lane had been refused by the West Midlands Casualty Reduction Partnership. He undertook to request that the West Midlands Safety Reduction Partnership give consideration to the request again. The Area Liaison Officer also undertook to send a written request to the Partnership expressing the concerns raised at the meeting.
10. A member of the public commented on the unsatisfactory siting of a speed camera in the middle of the pavement on Stourbridge Road, which is in Central Dudley Area, making passage by visual and mobility impaired pedestrians difficult. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to have the matter investigated by his colleagues.
11. A member of the public expressed concerns relating to recent tree felling at Cotwall End Valley, as parts of the trees were left lying across the lake. She also queried whether any inspections were carried out when contract work was completed. She also commented on funding which The Friends of Cotwall End Valley were awaiting from the Wrens Nest Grant and the Group's concerns that this could be lost if work was not carried out satisfactorily. The Assistant Director Culture and Community Services advised that overall the work had been carried out satisfactorily, although some minor damage had been caused by machinery. The contractor had been requested to rectify this. In respect of the Wrens Nest Grant, he advised that he understood that the Wrens Nest Grant had been sanctioned and that work would be carried out in the very near future.
12. Concerns expressed by a member of the public, regarding the proposal to dispose of land at Kent Street and Jews Lane Upper Gornal, which would result in a lack of toilet facilities in that area were deferred for consideration under Agenda Item 16 (Applications in Respect of Land and Property Owned by the Council).

13. In support of the petition referred to earlier, a number of objections to the closure of Arcal Lodge were expressed. These were referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, together with the petition for her consideration and attention. Comments addressed to the Chief Executive on this matter were referred to him for his consideration.

#### APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on reports relating to land and property controlled by the Council.

In respect of the application regarding land at the corner of Jews Lane and Kent Street and the adjoining land, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, a member of the public expressed concern that nearest alternative toilet facilities to Jews Lane and Kent Street was 20 minutes away which he considered unacceptable.

Some Members of the Committee disagreed with the proposal contained within the report and suggested that consideration be given to the provision of a "superloo", facility, similar to the one in Sedgley, to be installed near the site in question.

In respect of the application for commercial access rights at Furlong Road, Sedgley, the applicant advised that it was his intention to continue to use the land as a garage and that local residents would not be adversely affected by his proposals. If access to the garage site was not granted, he would not wish to develop the land in question.

Members of the Committee suggested that the matter be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee in September, to allow local residents to attend the meeting and to enable their views to be sought. The applicant expressed a view that he would be in agreement to a deferment of this matter.

#### RESOLVED

- 1 That consideration of the application to declare the land at the corner of Jews Lane and Kent Street and the adjoining land, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, surplus to requirements and added to the Land Disposal Programme, to be sold on the open market, on terms and conditions negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property be deferred to allow consideration to be given to the feasibility of providing a "Superloo" for the area.

- 2 That consideration of the application by the garage site owner for Commercial Access Rights at Furlongs Road, Sedgley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, be deferred until the next meeting to enable local residents to express their view on the application.
  - 3 That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be advised to approve the request to declare the land adjacent to 21 Hospital Lane, Coseley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, surplus to requirements for addition to the Land Disposals Programme for sale on the open market on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
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### DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted informing on applications received for funding from the capital budget allocation of the Committee as referred to in the report submitted.

In presenting the report, The Area Liaison Officer advised that a letter had been received from the Mature Movers, expressing gratitude to the Committee for the grant given.

The Area Liaison also advised that since the report was prepared, under his delegated powers, he had approved an application, which had been received some time ago by the Directorate of the Urban Environment, which had been delayed to allow certain issues to be resolved, for £5,150.23 for fencing at Central Drive.

### RESOLVED

- 1 That the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and Ward Councillors, be authorised to determine urgent applications for capital funding.
- 2 That the Committee note the decisions of the Area Liaison Officer in respect of the following applications, dealt with under delegated powers:
  - a) the application by Gornal Community Fun Day Planning Committee for £420 towards the cost of purchasing BBQ's and Gazebos for a fun day and for use of the equipment by voluntary organisations who are members of the planning committee.
  - b) the application by Lower Gornal Youth Centre for £7,050 towards the refurbishment of the coffee bar and

upgrading of the seating area at the Lower Gornal Youth Centre.

- c) the application by North Dudley Housing Services for £5,150.23, towards the cost of providing fencing at Central Drive.

- 3 That it be noted that the Area Liaison Officer had asked the Upper Gornal Pensioners' Club to resubmit their application for funding, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report submitted, as a number of the items listed were of a revenue nature.

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### HIGHWAY MINOR WORKS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on proposed programmes of work for Local Safety Schemes, Pedestrian Crossings and Safer Routes to Schools within the North Dudley Area for the 2007-2008 Financial Year.

In response to a query as to the introduction of a pedestrian crossing at Skidmore Road, Coseley, the Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate the design.

In response to a query as to why a pedestrian crossing at Bramford Road had not been introduced, the Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that the proposed design at Bramford Road had failed the safety audit and an alternative local safety scheme had been introduced instead.

### RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be advised of the Committee's support for the introduction of:

- a) junction highlighting and anti skid pelican approaches and signals at Brook Street/Tipton Road Woodsetton and, if funding should become available, for the introduction of cycle priority lanes, splitters and larger central island at Castle Street/Tunnel Street Roundabout, Coseley.
- b) upgrading of existing signals to include pedestrian crossing stage at Harding Street, Coseley at Skidmore Road, Coseley.
- c) improved pedestrian safety through segregation of traffic movements at Cotwall End Primary School, Sedgley.

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## RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the current status of responses to questions posed at previous meetings of the Committee.

### RESOLVED

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

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## WARD ISSUES

- 1 Councillor Mrs Ridney raised concerns regarding the poor state of cleanliness of the toilets in Roseville shopping centre and the lack of toilet paper available at the facility. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to refer the matter to his colleagues within the Directorate of Urban Environment.
- 2 Councillor Mrs Millward expressed gratitude to all staff in the Directorate of the Urban Environment and the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services for their dedicated work over recent weeks in addressing major problems arising from the recent inclement weather. The Area Liaison Officer undertook to relay the gratitude of the Committee to both Directors for their staff.

Councillor Mrs Millward advised of the work of the War Veterans Society who to assist Pensioners and their families. She encouraged anyone knowing someone who could benefit from the services of the Society to contact her direct for details.

- 3 Councillor Evans expressed concern, which he had raised previously, regarding a pedestrian crossing for Gospel End Street, which had no footpath and which was in close proximity to a number of schools. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that requests for a crossing had failed the safety audit and could not therefore be installed. An alternative crossing near the Seven Stars Public House was being investigated. Councillor Evans requested that the crossing, if installed, should not be too close to the entrance of a garage in that area. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to visit the site in question, with Councillor Evans and to re-investigate the design of the crossing.
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## SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

Information was given regarding the dates for future meetings of all Select Committees, which are held at the Council House, Dudley. Members of the public were welcome to attend such meetings.

RESOLVED

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

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FUTURE DATES AND VENUES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

It was noted that future meetings of the Committee would be held at 6.30 pm on the dates and at the venues indicated, as follows:

19<sup>th</sup> September 2007 – Dormston Sports Hall, Mill Bank, Sedgley DY3 1SN

5<sup>th</sup> December 2007 – Wallbrook Primary School, off Bradleys Lane, Coseley, Bilston, WV14 8YP

30<sup>th</sup> January 2008 – Roberts Primary School, Roberts Street, Lower Gornal DY3 2AZ

28<sup>th</sup> March 2008 – Cotwall End Primary School, Cotwall End Road, Sedgley DY3 3YG

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.

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CHAIRMAN