

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday 28th November, 2006, at 6.30pm
at the Dormston Sports Centre, Mill Bank, Sedgley

PRESENT

Councillor Ryder - Chairman
Councillors: Caunt, G H Davies, Evans, Fraser-Macnamara, Mrs Millward, Mottram, Mrs Ridley, Simms and Wright; Mr J Millward

Officers

The Director of Children's Services (as Area Liaison Officer), the Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services), the Senior Engineer (Directorate of the Urban Environment), the Assistant Director (Culture and Community), the Area Team Leader (Youth and Community), the Priority Neighbourhood Manager (Chief Executives Directorate), and Mrs Holland (Directorate of Law and Property)

Also in attendance

Inspector L Bailey of West Midlands Police.
Mr A Perry of Travel West Midlands
Mr S Vincent of West Midlands Fire Service

Approximately 40 members of the public.

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Ameson and Stanley.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Members' Policy Code of Good Practice, Councillors G H Davies, Mottram and Wright confirmed that they would not take part in any debate in that part of Agenda Item No. 9.3 (Application in Respect of Land and Property) which related to Moden Close/Vale Street, Upper Gornal and would absent themselves from the meeting while the item was being discussed as they are Members of the Development Control Committee.

Councillor Fraser-Macnamara declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct in relation to Agenda Item No.10 (Delegated Capital Allocations) in so far as it related to the application by the Sedgley and District Community Association set out in paragraph 4 of the report in view of his membership of the Committee of the Association.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th September 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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PETITIONS

A petition submitted by Mr T Donnelly was presented by Councillor Mrs Millward, regarding the operation of the 541 bus route through the North Dudley Area.

It was noted that the petition would be referred to Mr Alex Perry of Travel West Midlands.

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YOUTH ISSUES

Ms Lisa Atkinson introduced herself as the newly appointed Area Team Leader (Youth and Community). She informed the Committee that currently there was a lot of positive youth work taking place in the North Dudley area, namely:

In conjunction with Judith Ashford of the Oval and Tudor Managed Neighbourhood, Ms Atkinson reported that external funding had been secured to continue the detached youth worker provision in Upper Gornal until April 2007. This would allow young people who had previously not accessed Youth Service provision the opportunity to participate in a range of activities, including ice skating, art workshops, sports coaching, sexual health and drug/alcohol awareness workshops, cyber bus provision, theme park trips, and to undertake work leading to their gaining the Youth Achievement Award,

Coseley Youth Centre was in the process of developing youth provision and was beginning to deliver short term projects from which young people could attain recorded and accredited outcomes. Some issues in regard to anti social behaviour still remained at the Centre, but partnership working was taking place and the issues were being addressed holistically. Attendance numbers at the Centre had improved and the Centre was now open on four nights of the week. A Friday night event was being arranged at the Centre on the 8th December 2006 and a young person would comper the event. If the event proved to be successful, it was planned that more would be held in the future.

Dudley North Youth Conference had taken place on Saturday 18th November 2006 and had been a great success with over forty young people attending from across the North Dudley area. The aim of the Conference had been to advise young people on how to get their voices and opinions heard and discussions had been held on issues that affected young people. Discussions had also taken place as to what sort of changes young people would like effected in their local area. Local Youth Forums were being developed and representatives from those bodies would participate in creating the Dudley North Youth Forum.

Mr Joe Millward updated the meeting on the activities of the Youth Forum and on activities that currently affected the youth of the Borough. He reported that he had attended a strategy meeting with regard to the provision of a skatepark in the North Dudley area and the initiative had received the full support of those present at the meeting.

Mr Millward thanked those Ward Councillors who had attended the Youth Conference held on 18th November 2006 and members commented positively on the success of the event.

RESOLVED

That the oral reports now given by Ms Atkinson and Mr Millward, as summarised above, be noted.

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ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13c it was

RESOLVED

That the remaining items of business be considered in the following order:

Agenda item numbers 7,6,8,9,10,11 and 12

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TRANSPORT ISSUES

The Area Liaison Officer introduced Mr Alex Perry, Interim Director - Black Country, Travel West Midlands who had been invited to attend the meeting

Mr Perry reported on the re-routing of the 223 bus in response to a petition received from North Dudley residents. He stated that although the Vista would not be included, the service had been re-routed to run through most of the areas it had covered previously. A leaflet drop to local residents had been made which informed residents of the route the 223 would be taking, and enclosing a timetable.

Councillor Millward referred to the petition submitted to the meeting earlier under agenda item no. 4 with regard to the 541 bus service and requested that Travel West Midlands investigate the issues raised.

Councillor Evans pointed out that when buses failed to run to time or did not turn up passengers were affected and that a lot of the passengers whom used the 541 service were pensioners.

Councillor Simms expressed concern regarding buses that run past Bishop Milner School but did not stop to pick up children or stopped further along the road to prevent children from boarding.

Mr Perry agreed to investigate the issues raised and pointed out that buses were fitted with CCTV cameras that could be viewed to ascertain exactly what problems were occurring en route.

Councillor Ryder pointed out that Committee Members had spent a lot of time and effort trying to resolve the public transport issues in the area, but that in a recent press article, only the local Member of Parliament had been mentioned.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Committee's thanks be extended to Mr Perry for attending the meeting and explaining the actions taken by Travel West Midlands with regard to the 223 bus route.
- (ii) That the petition submitted in respect of the 541 bus service, be forwarded to Mr Perry at Travel West Midlands.
- (iii) That, following his investigations regarding the bus route that passes close by Bishop Milner School, Mr Perry be asked to report further to a future meeting of the Committee.

Inspector Bailey of Sedgley Police attended the meeting and updated the meeting on the current issues regarding neighbourhood policing teams and their composition. She reported that the current allocation of four Community Support Officers would be increased to eight and that there had been a move towards neighbourhood policing. Police surgeries were currently being held and a camper van had been deployed that allowed Officers to hold mobile surgeries in different areas.

Inspector Bailey also reported on the following:

Issues in the Sedgley area regarding anti social behaviour and under-age drinking; issues in the Gornal area regarding anti social behaviour and under-age drinking, particularly in Valley Road; an anti social behaviour issue in Woodsetton, particularly around High Arcal area; issues that had been highlighted in the Tudor and Oval neighbourhood; and anti social behaviour issues in the Coseley area, particularly in Broad Street.

In relation to Coseley, the Youth Representative commented that a lot of work had been carried out at the Youth Club in Coseley and reported that some success had been achieved in that some young people had been encouraged to take an alternative path rather than to become involved in anti social behaviour.

Inspector Bailey also reported that Officers had been operating in Catholic Lane in respect of incidents involving graffiti. Dudley Health and the Probation Service had painted over the areas affected. Incidents of tyre slashing on the Beacon Estate had been reported. The perpetrators had been apprehended and were found to be juveniles. She considered that appropriate action had been taken and the parents of the juveniles in question had been consulted. No re-offending had occurred.

Inspector Bailey reported further that alcohol and a small quantity of cannabis had been seized by patrols in the Springvale Close area and off-road motorcyclists had been apprehended; twenty-four young people had been stopped and questioned in the Fir Tree Drive area the previous week. There had also been an incident of drunk and disorderly conduct on the Tudor Estate and issues had arisen in respect of two off-licences in which Trading Standards had become involved.

Inspector Bailey stated that one off-road motorcyclist had been warned under the Police Reform Act. The vehicle could now be seized if the owner re-offended within the next three months.

Inspector Bailey reported that additional police patrols had taken place in areas where it had been reported that young people had been knocking on doors and there had been two arrests in respect of criminal damage at High Arcal School. The Police had also investigated reports with regard to bins being set on fire.

Inspector Bailey expressed satisfaction that Coseley Youth Club was now opening on more nights during the week. She reported that parking in Coseley remained an issue and that an operation had been conducted in Salcombe Grove. She advised that the police had access to Sherpa cameras that could be deployed at very short notice on lampposts to combat anti social behaviour and that it was planned to deploy them in Sedgley during the forthcoming week.

Inspector Bailey further reported on an initiative involving the Princes' Trust, Wolverhampton College and Sedgley Police. She asked the public to contact Sedgley Police Station if they had ideas for projects.

Inspector Bailey informed the meeting that the Pub Watch scheme had been successful in Sedgley and that it was planned to extend the scheme to Coseley. She urged the public to talk to the Police if they were experiencing any problems in their area; she also warned about leaving valuables around the house and urged the public to leave a light on in their houses when they were empty.

Councillor Evans asked Inspector Bailey whether there was any way in which residents on the Beacon estate whom had had their tyres slashed could claim compensation, as most were pensioners. He called for strong action against anti social behaviour. In response Inspector Bailey stated that compensation could only be considered if the perpetrators were prosecuted in Court.

In response to a question from Councillor Millward, Inspector Bailey stated that Neighbourhood Panel meetings had already been held and that the next meeting was to be held on 30th November.

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PUBLIC FORUM

1. A written question was submitted querying why notices prohibiting the use of heavy goods vehicles had not yet been installed in Bradley's Lane, Coseley.

The Senior Engineer responded, stating that the notices were on order and that they would be fitted as soon as they had been delivered.

2. A written question was submitted pointing out the poor condition of footpaths, pavements and road surfaces on Milton Road, Sedgley.

It was agreed that an update be submitted to the Committee at its meeting to be held on 7th February 2007 and that the Senior Engineer would organise the response.

3. A written question was submitted asking for an update on the current position in respect of Coseley Archives.

Councillor Evans responded, stating that it was important to provide a quality building in which to house the Dudley Archives and that the issue was still being explored. He agreed to report to the Committee when further information was available.

4. A question was asked regarding the footpath leading from Hopyard Lane to Stickley Lane, Gornal. Councillor Mrs Millward called for a further meeting to be held between the relevant Councillors and Council Officers from the Directorate of the Urban Environment to resolve the matter.
5. A question was asked seeking information on when the road surfaces around the Bull Ring, Sedgley, would be repaired.

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APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

Having declared an interest under Paragraph 2 of the Member's Policy Code of Good Practice in agenda item number 9.3 (Application to purchase land at Moden Close/Vale Street, Upper Gornal), Councillors G H Davies, Mottram and Wright withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the item.

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted regarding land and property within the Committee's area.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to approve the application now submitted for the sale of eleven square metres of Council owned land fronting 2a and 2b Sandstone Close and that grant of access rights for those properties for access marked on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (ii) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to approve the application now submitted for the sale of an area of land in Central Drive Lower Gornal, to the owner of 23 Grosvenor Road, the address of which is adjacent to the area of land in question, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (iii) 1. That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to approve the application now submitted for the sale of the area marked 1 on the plan attached to the report submitted, at Moden Close/Vale Street Upper Gornal, on terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Director of Law and Property.

2. That the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture be recommended to approve the application now submitted for the sale of the area marked 2 on the plan attached to the report at Moden Close/Vale Street, Upper Gornal, and the variation of access rights to the Windmill, on terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Director of Law and Property.
3. That the Development Control Committee be recommended that the proposed development should not block the views from Ruiton Windmill ; that properties of no more than two storeys with low-pitched roofs, be allowed to be built on the proposed site; and that the safety of local residents in respect of nuisance emanating from people using local footpaths on the site and footballs being kicked into the back gardens of residents from the public open space amenity, be borne in mind by the Development Control Committee.

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DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on applications received for funding from the capital budget allocation of the Committee. The recommendations of the North Dudley Area Committee (Capital Allocation) Working Group regarding each respective applicant were included in the report.

(Having declared an pecuniary interest in accordance with the Member's Policy Code of Good Practice in this item, in so far as it related to the application by Sedgley and District Community Association referred to in paragraph 4 of the report submitted. Cllr Fraser-Macnamara withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the application).

RESOLVED

- (a) That, the application from the Upper Gornal Kidz Club for the provision of an air hockey table game, a football table game and a set of snooker balls, in the total sum of £440, be approved.
- (b) That, the application received from the Sedgley and District Community Association in the sum of £5,000 to fund the shortfall of funding required for the building of an extension to the Centre to increase the facilities for the Community, be approved.
- (c) That, as the additional information requested by the Working Group has been received and is in order, the application received from 2132 (Sedgley Squadron) Air Training, for funding towards the purchase of a mini bus, in the sum of

£6,000 be approved.

- (d) That, the application from The Oval and Tudor Managed Neighbourhood Community Safety Project refused by the Working Group and referred to in paragraph 7 of the report now submitted be resubmitted to the next meeting of the Working Group for further consideration.
 - (e) That, following a request from Age Concern Sedgley, the application refused at the Committee meeting held on 20th September, 2006, in the sum of £1,472.50 for the upgrading and safety and security at the Day Centre in Ettymore Road, be resubmitted to the next Working Group, in the light of additional information submitted by Age Concern in support of their application.
 - (f) That, the recommendation of the Working Group that the application by the Darby and Joan Club referred to at paragraph 6 of the report be refused, for the reasons indicated in the report, be approved.
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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.

Councillor Davies raised the issue of the delay in the erection of the Heavy Goods Vehicle signs in Bradleys Lane, Coseley, referred to in minute 45 above to be expedited.

In response, the Senior Engineer again apologised for the delay and advised that the signs were on order and would be delivered in the near future; and confirmed that as soon as they had been received the signs would be erected.

Councillor Mottram expressed his disappointment that a skatepark for North Dudley had not yet been finalised. He asked the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Culture and Community) what had happened to the funding that was originally available for the construction of a skatepark.

In response the Assistant Director stated that he would provide a comprehensive report, to include issues on funding, to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report and the appendix to the report, submitted, be noted, together with the comments received from Councillor Davies, Mrs Millward and Mottram.

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WARD ISSUES

- (1) Councillor Mrs Millward raised the issue of traffic issues affecting Hopyard Lane/Stickley Lane and called for a further meeting to be held between the relevant Councillors and Council Officers from the Directorate of the Urban Environment to resolve the matter.
- (2) Councillor Simms asked for the Committee's support in calling for the graffiti in Tudor Road and on the Vale Street Recreation Ground to be cleaned up.
- (3) Councillor Davies expressed his concern at a leaflet being delivered to residents in the Coseley area, which had given the impression that Coseley Baths were being closed down.

In response, Councillor Fraser Macnamara stated that he knew nothing of any plans to close Coseley Baths.

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SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The information given in respect of publicity for future meetings of Select Committees as set out in item no 13 on the agenda, was 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 on the dates shown and at the venues indicated, as follows:

7th February 2007 – Wallbrook Primary School
28th March 2007 – Roberts Primary School

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN

NDAC/31