

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 2nd February, 2011
at the Lower Gornal Youth Academy, Temple Street,
Lower Gornal, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Caunt (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs. Ameson, Mrs. Millward, Mottram, Mrs. Ridley, Ryder, Sims,
Stanley and Mrs. Westwood

OFFICERS

The Director of Corporate Resources (Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure and The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety (both Directorate of the Urban Environment), Area Team Manager and The Area Youth Worker, Early Years and Youth Education (Directorate of Children's Services), Head of Community Renewal Services and The Area Community Renewal Officer - North Dudley (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services) and Mrs. J. Rees (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

In Attendance

Mr. R. Jones (West Midlands Police), Mr. C Newton and Ms. J. Winpenny (West Midlands Fire Service), Mrs. B. Coombes (Travel West Midlands), Mr. B. Warwick (Area Census Manager), together with approximately 10 members of the public.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Councillors G Davies, Evans and Wright; and Miss G Healey.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Simms declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No. 5 (Youth Issues) in view of his daughter being a candidate for the United Kingdom Youth Parliamentary Elections.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1st December, 2010, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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PETITIONS

Councillor Mrs Millward submitted a petition, on behalf of local businesses, especially hair and beauty salons in Lower Gornal, requesting that consideration be given to the lifting of the current one hour parking restrictions in the Village, or to the provision of a car park, to encourage shoppers and visitors, as businesses in the Village had been adversely affected as a direct result of the loss of the village car park, due to the building of the local library

In supporting the Petition, Councillor Mrs Millward requested that the Director of the Urban Environment arrange a meeting between a representative of the Directorate, a representative of the Chief Executive of Centro and a representative of National Express, to consider the possibilities of improving Gornal Bus Station, introducing a public car park in the middle of Lower Gornal Village or consider possible alternative solutions to address local concerns.

RESOLVED

That the Petition be referred to the Petitions Officer.

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YOUTH ISSUES

A paper by the Area Team Leader indicating the projects and activities involving young people in the area was circulated at the meeting.

The Area Team Leader also reported on the United Kingdom Youth Parliamentary elections which were to be held in the near future and that four young people from the North Dudley Area were putting themselves forward for election.

RESOLVED

That the information presented to the meeting be noted.

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TRANSPORT ISSUES

Mrs. B. Coombs reported orally on transport issues, indicating that there had been a comprehensive bus, rail and metro service provided over the festive

period. She undertook to take back any issues raised regarding transport, including the concerns expressed in the petition submitted previously.

Mrs Coombs stated that she would do her best to attend future meetings of the Committee, but she would appreciate being advised in advance of any transport issues for considered at the Transport Forum. The next meeting of the Forum was scheduled for 16th February, 2011 in Committee Room 2, Council House, Dudley.

In response to comments from a Member of the Committee regarding incidents of inconsiderate and illegal parking in the proximity of Coseley railway station, Mrs Coombs advised that illegal parking was the responsibility of the Local Authority not Centro, although she acknowledged that there were not enough free parking spaces currently available.

She hoped the opening of a free car park at Dudley Port in the Spring would alleviate pressure on parking at Coseley Station.

Members of the Committee expressed concerns that the 582 bus, previously the 544 bus route, was reported to be arriving either too early or too late. Mrs Coombs undertook to take back the concerns regarding the reliability of the service for consideration, although she pointed out that the service was provided by a private bus company not Centro. Mrs Coombs was aware that, following complaints regarding the reliability of the service, the service provider was currently reviewing its scheduling of services to improve the timing and reliability.

A Member of the Committee suggested that consideration be given again to the possibility of purchasing a plot of land, which had previously been identified as suitable for 200 car parking spaces. In response, the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety stated that the possibility of introducing parking restrictions could be considered in the future, but that such measures could result in the parking being pushed into other nearby streets.

RESOLV ED

That Mrs Coombs be thanked for her oral report, the content of which be noted.

The Census Area Manager gave an oral presentation on the 2011 Census. During the presentation he explained the need and aims of the Census and emphasised the importance of completing the questionnaire, and urged everyone to complete the form and send it back in the pre-paid envelope which would be provided. A web site was available for further information and advice, if required. A leaflet explaining the Census was circulated at the meeting.

In response to comments and concerns expressed Mr. Warwick advised that

- (a) Consideration would be given to safety issues relating the elderly, those living alone and vulnerable people, especially after dark.
- (b) The Census forms were being circulated in white envelopes to try to distinguish them from other regular circulars, often ignored by residents,
- (e) The forms would be addressed to the householder to ensure confidentiality and any information given within the Census Forms would not be passed to any other organisation.
- (c) Councillors would receive a briefing in the very near future
- (d) Councillors and others could assist residents in completing the forms, but should not volunteer their services to do this.
- (e) Census staff were likely to be local residents who knew the area and would possibly be known to local residents.
- (f) If residents required assistance completing the forms, an appointment could be arranged for a member of the Census Team to visit and assist.
- (g) Census staff would call to collect forms at a reasonable time of the day.

RESOLVED

That Mr. Warwick be thanked for the oral presentation on the 2011 Census the content of which be noted.

POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Jones updated the Committee on police issues, pertinent to the North Dudley area since the previous meeting of the Committee including information gathering which appeared to support the need for the introduction of an Alcohol Ban for Coseley East and Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Wards.

Inspector Jones reported on Operation Intrusive which had indicated that Wards in the area covered by North Dudley Area Committee were not considered “hot spots” for crime and therefore normal policing would continue.

In response to concerns expressed that some people visiting Cotwall End Valley were carrying loaded guns and firearms, Inspector Jones advised that, whilst he acknowledged that the appearance of people carrying loaded firearms could appear to the frightening, it was most likely that the people referred to were only interested in activities such as shooting wild life. Inspector Jones also advised that it was not against the law to use fire arms for shooting on private land if the owner had a permit, but those carrying firearms should not walk about with them loaded.

In response to concerns expressed regarding drink related anti social behaviour in the vicinity of Eve Lane, Inspector Jones stated that the possible Alcohol ban referred to previously would give the Police powers to take action against anyone found drinking in the likely designated area including confiscation of the alcohol and disposing of it.

Inspector Jones undertook to speak with a Member of the Committee regarding a drug related incident.

RESOLVED

That the information presented to the meeting be noted.

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FIRE ISSUES

Mr. Colin Newton reported orally on current issues applicable to the Fire Service indicating that there had been fewer reported incidents of anti social behaviour, road traffic incidents and arson fires during the cold weather, although there had been a slight increase in arson attacks in the Coseley area.

RESOLVED

That the information presented to the meeting be noted.

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PUBLIC FORUM

1. A member of the public requested an update regarding a planning application for Bourne Street, Woodsetton. In response a Member of the Committee advised that no application had yet been received, but that the situation was being monitored closely.
2. A member of the public requested to know why Councillors had not supported residents of Coseley in their protests over the closure of Coseley Baths.

The Chairman advised that the Coseley site had now been demolished and that facilities were available close by.

DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the recommendations of the Capital Allocations Working Group on four applications for funding. The report also stated the level of unspent capital monies by Ward.

RESOLVED

- (1) That approval be given to the grant of £1,900 only to Coseley Youth Centre for equipment to be used by the Centre, and that the amount not include a sum for the computer requested.
- (2) That approval be given to the grant of £600 only to Coseley Athletic Cricket Club at this time for a new portable cricket net, and that the remaining £600 requested be approved, subject to the submission of the club's development plan evidencing work with North Dudley Youths and Adults and the Coseley School.
- (3) That the application made by Community Renewal Services for £1,824.80 to improve access to a recreation field, be deferred to enable further information, together with the a plan and picture of the project to be submitted, and also to allow Ward Members to comment on the application.
- (4) That the application made by the Lower Gornal Youth Academy for £4,762.58 for the purchase and installation of CCTV cameras inside and outside of the Youth Academy be deferred to enable unresolved issues referred to in the report submitted to be discussed further.

COMMUNITY RENEWAL WORKING GROUP

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the progress to date regarding the work of the Community Renewal Working Group and on the monitoring of the Community Renewal Plan for North Dudley.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted be noted.

WARD ISSUES

1. Councillor Mottram raised concerns that a large number of pot holes in the Coseley and Roseville areas required urgent attention. It was reported that as this was considered a major problem for the Borough as a whole, a report on pot holes was due to be submitted to the next meeting of the Cabinet on the matter.
2. Councillor Simms reported that Sedgley Library would be closed from 7th to 14th February for refurbishment and would reopen with a new self service facility.
3. Councillor Mrs Millward reported that Gornal Ward Members' surgery would be held on 11th March 2011 at 4.00 pm in Gornal Library and encouraged residents to attend.

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SELECT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The dates of the remaining Select Committee Meetings in the current municipal year were noted.

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DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That the date and venue of the next meeting of the Committee be noted as Monday, 28th March, 2011 at 6.30 p.m. at The Dance Studio, Ellowes Hall School, Dudley.

The meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN