

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16th January, 2007 at 6.30 pm
at Saltwells Education Centre, Netherton

PRESENT: -

Councillor Rahman (Chairman)

Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Mrs. Aston, Bradney, Cotterill, Ms Craigie, M. Davis, Finch, Johnston, Male, Sparks and Waltho; Ms V Little

OFFICERS:

Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management), Group Engineer, (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Principal Project Officer, Area Manager, Housing - Dudley, (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Head of Neighbourhood Management (Chief Executive's), Principal Solicitor, Mr R Jewkes and Mrs. J. Rees (Directorate of Law and Property)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Approximately 40 members of the public.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Coulter and J Davies; Miss H Edwards and Mr Sadiq.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Davis declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in respect of any Agenda Item related to Social Services, in view of him being a service user.

Councillors Cotterill and Sparks declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No 10 (Capital Allocations – Application by the Friends of Stevens Park, Quarry Bank) in view of their membership of the Group.

Councillor Johnston declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No 10 (Capital Allocations – Application by the Luncheon Club at St Augustine's) in view of his association with the applicant.

Councillor Rahman declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item No. 10 (Capital Allocations – Application by The Ar Rahman Care Trust - Dudley) in view of his Chairmanship of the Group.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th November, be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following amendments:

1. The deletion of the word “Court” at the end of the first line of Minute No 42 (f) on page CDAC/34 and the insertion of the word “Cole” in its place.
 2. The deletion of the word “Beeches” in line number 15 on page CDAC/36 and the insertion of the word “Beechwood” in its place.
 3. The deletion of the words “Flood Street” in line number 27 on page CDAC/36 and the insertion of the word “Cinderbank” in its place.
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COMMENTS ON THE MINUTES

Councillor M Davies commented that with reference to Minute No. 41, he had said that the new charges were higher than the original ones and therefore resulted in no reduction in real terms. He would also have appreciated the opportunity to discuss the charges with a representative of the Hospital Management.

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YOUTH ISSUES

No youth issues were discussed at this meeting.

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PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman advised that questions would be taken from the floor should there be any time remaining when written questions had been addressed.

Questions and answers were then given as follows: -

- (1) A member of the public commented that he had not yet received a written response to a petition submitted to the Committee on 7th November 2006, regarding vehicles ignoring the barriers and using Belle Vue Road, Quarry Bank as a short cut.

Councillors Cotterill and Sparks supported the member of the public's request for urgent action to be taken and commented that part of the problem arose from vehicles illegally gaining access through individual employees insisting that they had a right to gain access to the Saltwells Valley, when in fact there was no right of access. As there was no right of access at this point there was a need for an alternative access route to the Saltwells Valley to be established a short distance away at Charles Road, Quarry Bank.

The Assistant Director Environmental Management Directorate of the Urban Environment undertook to investigate the situation as a matter of urgency, with a view to resolving the concerns.

- (2) A member of the public commented that to date he had not received a written response to concerns expressed at the meeting of the Committee in November 2006, regarding Coppice Lane and Coppice Close. The Assistant Director Environmental Management Directorate of the Urban Environment responded that he was aware that the area had been included in the Improvement Programme for the next financial year. He apologised for the lack of a written response and undertook to investigate why a written response had not been sent and ensure that a response was sent.

- (3) A member of the public expressed concerns regarding the lack of fencing and the unkempt state of the former Duncan Edwards Public House site, which he alleged attracted fly tipping and acts of anti social behavior. He requested that the Council take appropriate action to ensure that the new owners of the site erect adequate secure fencing around the site to ensure a reduction in nuisance to nearby neighbours.

Councillor Johnston supported the concerns regarding this issue and had raised the issue at a recent meeting of the Council. He stated that there was a mound of soil, which needed to be moved. There was also a need for more security measures to be installed to prevent trespassers gaining access to the site. In response the

Assistant Director Environmental Management Directorate of the Urban Environment advised that in his professional view, and based on a site visit earlier in the day, the site was as secure as it was possible to be at present. He had found no evidence of trespass, fly tipping or other nuisance during his visit. He advised that his Officers would continue to monitor the situation and take appropriate action against the owner, if necessary. He would send a written response to the questioner and the Chairman advising of the current situation.

- (4) A member of the public enquired if the Committee would support his request for an electronic speed camera near the Cinderbank approach to Netherton, as in his view, traffic traveling from the direction of Dudley was travelling at excessive speeds, endangering the lives of local residents. He expressed concern that when initially requesting information regarding this matter from the Council he was directed to Wolverhampton Council who in turn referred him to the Directorate of the Urban Environment at this Council. In response Members of the Committee offered their support for such a request. The Chairman commented on the undertaking given at a public meeting in July for traffic calming measures for Netherton, which had not yet been introduced. The Assistant Director Environmental Management Directorate of the Urban Environment sympathized that erroneous information had been given to the questioner. He undertook to speak with the questioner outside of the meeting to obtain more detailed information on the issue, to enable him to progress the request for an electric speed camera as a matter of urgency.
- (5) A member of the public asked for an update on the current traffic controls on and around the Scotts Green Island. He expressed concern that traffic was traveling well in excess of the speed regulations despite speed bumps. His dog had been run over recently, and he expressed concern that this could easily have been a child. Ward Councillors expressed their concern at the lack of progress on this long-standing issue. Councillors advised that on the day of the meeting near school closure time cars were actually parked on the pavement, blocking residents' driveways. Assurances had previously been given that speed restrictions would be placed on the road, near to the two schools, but these had not materialized. The Assistant Director Environmental Management advised that he was aware of preferred options which had been agreed and published, but which, when publicized, were objected to by local residents. He undertook to investigate the current situation and send a written response to the questioner, with copies to Ward Councillors and the Chairman.

WARD ISSUES

Councillor Ahmed raised:

- (1) Concern at the speed of traffic travelling on Dibdale Road.
- (2) The need for bushes in Pearce Close and Overfield Road to be cut back to enable visibility of road signs in the vicinity.

Councillor M Davis raised:

- (1) A need for a resolution to previously mentioned issues regarding council tenants and the right of succession.

The Director of Adult, Housing and Community Services advised that the Choice Based Lettings Working Group of the Select Committee on Environment was currently carrying out work on a review of the Council's Succession Policy. The recommendations of the Working Group would be referred to the Select Committee for considerations in due course.

- (2) The need for rubbish on the hedgerow entrance to Dudley near the boundary between Dudley and Wolverhampton to be cleared. He also referred to rubbish on land behind a fence, which he understood to be owned by the Wolverhampton University, and which was causing an eyesore to local residents.
- (4) The need for a solution to a previous request to resurface Walters Row. Despite a response advising that the road is unadopted, streetlights on the road are maintained by Council owned vehicles, which contribute to the poor state of the road.
- (5) The need for the youth centre on the Russells Hall Estate to be open more often.
- (6) The need to look at the chicanes at Russells Hall Road.

Councillor Mrs. Aston raised:

The need for trees to be felled in Bluebell Road, Priory Road and in other parts of the Priory Estate, as these were a danger to wheelchair users and people with prams, using the pavements.

Councillor Finch raised:

- (1) The need for traffic calming measures on the Broadway in the interests of safety.

- (2) Concern at the poor condition of void properties when available for re-letting.
- (3) The need for rubbish, left by workers, to be collected following the completion of housing repairs.

Councillor Johnston raised:

- (1) Concerns at the lack of facilities for young people on the Castle and Priory Estate and at the reported cuts in finance for grants to voluntary organisations.
- (2) The need for a report back to a future meeting relating to youth issues in the Castle and Priory Ward and to include information relating to the impact of budget cuts on voluntary organisations and resources.

Councillor Ali raised:

- (1) The need for graffiti on the footbridge in King Street and over the Southern Bypass to be removed.
- (2) The need for improved lighting on the footbridge and the repair to a fibre optic lighting rope, which was hanging down.
- (3) The need for an opening in the road, on the corner of King Street and Flood Street to be blocked off for safety reasons.
- (4) The need for improved drainage to prevent flooding in the Corporation Road and Highfields Road area and also at the junction at Blackacre Road and Bean Road.

Councillor Ms Craigie raised:

- (1) The need for trees to be properly maintained in Ashenhurst Road, Langstone Road, Merryfield Road, Harlech Way Milking Bank, Falcon Way and Merryfield Road.
- (2) Concern that the windows of a property in Merryfield Road were completely covered in climbing ivy.

Councillor Waltho raised:

- (1) Support for a report to a future meeting relating to facilities for young people and the effect of budget cuts on future facilities.
- (2) Concerns regarding anti social behaviour and its effect on residents in Gads Green Crescent and Warrens Hall Road.
- (3) The need for the main access to the flats in Gads Green Crescent to be more robust.

Councillor Bradney raised:

- (1) The need for traffic calming measures on Highfield Road.
- (2) The need for a solution to the ongoing traffic problems near the bus stop in Hurst Lane, Lodge Farm.

Councillor Rahman raised:-

- (1) The need for speed restrictions near Northfield Road Primary School.
- (2) The need for repairs and improvements to the lighting in Buxton Road, Holly Hall.
- (3) The need for litter to be cleared in Avenue Road and Highgate Road.
- (4) The need for urgent repairs to Upton Street
- (5) The need for air pollution in the Highgate area to be monitored and addressed.
- (6) The need for a railing at Halesowen Road, near to the Bank, on account of the big slope and danger to the public from falling.
- (7) The need for a Youth Club and other youth facilities in the Netherton and Woodside area.

Councillor Cotterill raised:

- (1) The need for bushes on both sides of Saltwells Road to be cleared.
- (2) The need for feedback on action taken in respect of dangerous tree roots on New Village, Quarry Bank.
- (3) The need for Bush Road to be widened to allow traffic to travel without churning up the kerbside.
- (4) The need for traffic lights at the Round Oak Public House, Quarry Bank to be investigated, as they do not “bleep” to warn pedestrians it is safe to cross the road.

- (5) The need for the front door entrance at the flats in Lea Bank Road to be made secure and for the intercom system to be repaired to dissuade acts of anti social behaviour in the front entrance, and to prevent unwelcome visitors gaining access to the flats.

A resident from the flats commented that only half of the intercom systems within the flats were in good working order. She expressed concern that unwelcome visitors could gain access to vulnerable residents living in the flats.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services undertook to investigate and send a written response to Ward Councillors and the Chairman

Councillor Male raised:

The need for a safe crossing access, possibly to include a keep clear area, at the junction of Bowling Green Road and Halesowen Road, to enable local residents to cross this junction. The Chairman commented that he would like this issue resolved before the next meeting as Councillor Male was retiring from the Committee.

Councillor Sparks raised:

- (1) The need for a box junction to be introduced at the junction of Coppice Lane and Victoria Road.
- (2) The need for the replacement of a dog fouling bins in close proximity of Stevens Park, Quarry Bank.

APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

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

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised to agree to the request to vary a right of way for access to 23 Hawthorne Road, Dudley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be agreed and negotiated by the Director of Law and Property.
- (b) That the Cabinet Member for Transport be advised to refuse the application to purchase highway land at King Street, Dudley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons set out in the report.

- (c) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised to declare land off Parkes Hall Road, Dudley and Cochrane Road, Dudley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, surplus to requirements for sale, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
 - (d) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to refuse the application to purchase land with adjoining land for car parking purposes, at Russells Hall Road/Langstone Road, Russells Hall, Dudley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons set out in the report.
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NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL AREA

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on current Neighbourhood Management activities within the Central Dudley Area, arising from an undertaking given at the previous meeting of the Committee in November, 2006, to provide an amended appendix to cover the Saltwells area and to submit a report on activities in the Woodside Area.

In presenting the report, the Head of Neighbourhood Management advised that although the Saltwells area was designated as a managed neighbourhood, the operational boundary had been extended temporarily, due to an increased need exhibited by issues raised and the piloting of the Sector C Neighbourhood Management, Policy and Community Partnership. This was likely to be reviewed in the near future, due to current funding issues.

She further advised that the Woodside area had originally come under the remit of Netherton Woodside and the old St Andrew's Ward. The Neighbourhood Manager for the area had been seconded elsewhere due to resourcing shortages.

The Head of Neighbourhood Management responded positively to comments made by Members of the Committee, which included:

- 1) The need to ensure that funding for these projects continue.
- 2) The need for issues relating to boundaries to be addressed.
- 3) The need for St James' Ward to be included in the work undertaken by Neighbourhood Management.
- 4) Concerns at the lack of a neighbourhood team in St Thomas' Ward.
- 5) The need for consultation with local Ward Councillors on work before it is initiated in their local area.
- 6) The point that Ward Councillors do not work in isolation but as part of a team for the good of their area and that no individual Councillor was a partnership.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted on current Neighbourhood Management activities in the Central Dudley Area, be noted.

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CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in respect of one of the applications to be considered, Councillor Rahman left the meeting for the consideration of this agenda item). In view of this, and in the absence of the Vice-Chairman, it was agreed that Councillor Ali be the Chairman for this agenda item).

(Councillor Ali in the Chair)

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the recommendations of the Capital Allocations Working Group regarding applications made for funding from the capital budget of the Committee, including applications deferred from the previous meeting of the working group.

In presenting the report, the Principal Project Officer advised that it was the recommendation of the Working Group that some of the applications be reduced, due to lack of funds being available in the respective Wards.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the application by Impact Training for a grant to install disabled toilets be deferred, to enable further information to be obtained.
- (2) That the application by Impact Training for security shutters be refused as the Ward Members wish to concentrate their limited funds on the stated health and safety issues within this organisation.
- (3) That the following amounts be awarded to the organisations stated:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<u>Castle and Priory Ward</u>		
<u>Dudley Sea Cadets</u>	Re-rendering of the outside of their building	£3978.55*
		* sum reduced from original request of £6,000

**Netherton Woodside
and St Andrews Ward**

Primrose Hill Congregational Church	Purchase of and fitting of new kitchen equipment	£2,642.00 * * Sum reduced from original request of 3,000.00
Luncheon Club at St Augustine's	Purchase of dining chairs and small tables	£1,000
Ar-Rahman Care Trust (Dudley)	Purchase of office furniture and computer equipment	£2,158 * Sum reduced from original sum request of £2450

**Quarry Bank and
Dudley Wood Ward**

Friends of Stevens Park	Purchase and installation of wrought iron handrails for steps to the memorial garden within the park	£1,000
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St James's Ward

Victim Support (Witness Service)	Purchase of new furniture for the Court witness rooms and a laser printer for the office	£1,400
Impact Training	Purchase of new replacement carpeting	£998

St Thomas's Ward

Hellier Street Youth and Community Association	Purchase of office furniture and equipment	£1,887
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At the conclusion of this agenda item Councillor Rahman returned to the meeting and resumed the Chairmanship of the meeting.

(Councillor Rahman in the Chair)

61 URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT CENTRAL DUDLEY
AREA COMMITTEE – 7th NOVEMBER 2006

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on a number of issues relating to that Directorate raised at the meeting of this Committee held on 7th November 2006.

RESOLVED

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

62 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY PLAN WORKING GROUP

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on recommendations made by the Central Dudley Area Committee Community Plan Working Group held on 7th December 2006.

RESOLVED

That the following recommendations made at a meeting of the Central Dudley Area Committee Community Plan Working Group held on 7th December, 2006 be approved:-

- (i) That, in view of the relatively high levels of social deprivation in the five Central Dudley wards, the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration be requested to consider the possibility of increasing capacity within the Council's Regeneration Unit to facilitate the annual submission of an additional five regeneration funding bids relating to those wards.
- (ii) That, failing the identification of additional capacity as referred to in resolution (i) above, the Chief Executive be requested to consider the possibility of restructuring the Neighbourhood Management Team to enable one member of staff to be dedicated solely to working with community groups, specialist officers and other partners in the Central Dudley area to coordinate high quality regeneration funding bids relating to the five Central Dudley wards.

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DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date and venue of the next meeting of this Committee,
be noted as follows:-

13th March, 2007

Priory Primary School, Cedar
Road, Dudley

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SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

Information was given regarding the dates for future meetings of all Select Committees, which were 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.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

CHAIRMAN