

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE – 3rd APRIL, 2008

REPORT OF THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA LIAISON OFFICER

MATTERS RAISED AT THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 31st January 2008 Brierley Hill Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Council.

BACKGROUND

2. The Council provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both members and the general public, relating to a range of services. Few enquiries can be answered immediately, with many prompting further investigation, feasibility studies and public consultation, prior to being reported back to Committee.
4. To keep Committee updated, a progress report is attached.

FINANCE

5. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

LAW

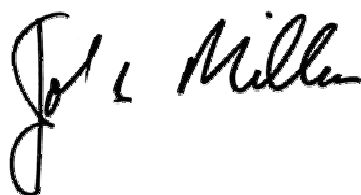
6. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders are largely governed by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
7. Provisions relating to Highways including trees thereon are contained in the Highways Act 1980.
8. Provisions relating to the Council's Housing stock are contained in the Housing Act 1985.
9. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its areas to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.
10. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
11. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.
12. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.
13. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area.

EQUALITY IMPACT

13. This report is consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity policy. There is no direct effect on children or young people.

RECOMMENDATION

14. The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.



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Brierley Hill Area Committee Liaison Officer

Contact Officer: John Millar
Telephone: 01384 814150
Email: john.millar@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers - See progress report attached

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REPORT OF THE AREA LIAISON OFFICER

YOUTH ISSUES

ISSUE: Skate Park Provision

A question was raised by local skateboarders as to the current situation with regard to the ongoing investigation into the proposals of siting a Skatepark at an indoor facility. The Area Liaison Officer confirmed that he would obtain details with regard to the current situation and respond to the questioner.

RESPONSE:

The responsible officer has written to the questioner to advise him of the present situation that no outdoor site can be identified and therefore Members have asked for an investigation into indoor provision.

The Black Country Sports Facilities Strategy, which is recognised as a technical appendix to the Joint Core Strategy, includes reference to 'Development in Brierley Hill'. It is suggested that this should be a significant opportunity in keeping with the strategic centre status, which encompasses a range of 'lifestyle' sports including skateboarding. Black Country Consortium Ltd has had recent discussions with BHRP about what this may ultimately entail and how it may be delivered with further feasibility work likely to take place.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING – MILL STREET, BRIERLEY HILL

ISSUE:

The representative of the Urban Environment gave a verbal update on the current position in relation to the provision of a pedestrian crossing facility in the vicinity of St. Mary's RC Primary School. The Committee was advised that an assessment had been carried out and that following a meeting with the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet Members for Transport, it had been agreed that the site would now go forward to the Cabinet meeting on the 13th February 2008, as part of the proposed programme of works for 2008/09. Formal clarification on the approved programme of works would be reported to the next meeting of the Area Committee.

RESPONSE:

The provision of a pedestrian crossing facility in Mill Street has been approved by Council for inclusion in the Highways Safety Schemes Capital Programme for 2008/2009.

WARD ISSUES

ISSUE:

1. At the request of Councillor Mrs Jordan, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration), agreed to investigate the delay, until March 2008, of civil works and statutory mains diversions at the Bryce Road junction with Pensnett, and respond.

RESPONSE:

The diversion of statutory undertakers apparatus at the junction relates to the works that need to be carried out by BT but in order for them to complete their works, it will also be necessary for e-on (the electricity suppliers) to carry out some works as well.

It was originally intended that e-on would do their works on the 4th January, until it was revealed that Brockmoor Foundry were served directly from this particular main and that with their requirements being in the order of 7.5 Mega Watts, any severance of the supply would clearly shut down the foundry. Unfortunately, even in their quieter periods, when they only run a 'Holding Furnace', the position does not change sufficiently to accommodate their minimum requirements from another feed of sufficient capacity.

Under normal circumstances, Brockmoor Foundry is an all year round operation and only shuts down for a two week period in August, so the 4th January proposal was not feasible. However, with works planned by the Foundry as part of their own service needs, there is now an opportunity to carry out the e-on diversion works at the same time, which is currently scheduled for the 15th March. Completion of the diversion works will then enable BT to do their works and, thereafter, the highway works will also continue at the junction.

2. Councillor Islam drew attention to the litter on land in Addison Road, in the vicinity of the fish and chip shop, and requested that it be cleaned up. The matter was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for investigation.

RESPONSE:

Senior officers from DUE's Street Cleansing team visited the area on the 26th February, after which arrangements were made to clear the litter in Addison Road.

The fish shop is opposite Addison Rd on Moor Street. Whilst the land adjacent to the premises is heavily littered, it is however, private land and currently closed off with 8ft high steel fence giving the indication that it is being made ready for development.

3. Councillor Mrs Harris expressed concern that the planning consent for land adjacent to the Albion works, granted two years previously, for flats and an art gallery was due to lapse. She asked what action the Council could take to ensure that the land did not become an "eyesore". The matter was referred to the representative of the Directorate of Law and Property for clarification of the situation and for a report back.

RESPONSE:

The Directorate of Law and Property believes the land in question to be Farmer's Bridge, which is next to the Albion works. On 24 May 2004 planning consent for change of use to flats and an art gallery was granted and this consent remains extant for 5 years.

Therefore the planning consent does not expire until May 2009.

The Council does not own the land and therefore has no control over whether the change of use is implemented.

4. Councillor Ms Foster requested that a report be brought back to the Committee on the current policy in relation to stray horses and action taken. The matter was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for a report back to a future meeting of the Committee

RESPONSE:

The Area Liaison Officer has arranged for a briefing note to be produced for consideration by members which will be circulated at the meeting.

6. Councillor Mrs Wilson requested that the railings along The Promenade, Brierley Hill, which had recently been replaced except for a small section, be looked at. The matter was referred to the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing for investigation.

RESPONSE:

Due to the quantity of railings on the Chapel Street estate, their replacement will be programmed over a two to three year period. The Promenade railings were the first to be replaced in 2007/8 and the intention is to continue with the programme in 2008/9. The Directorate is currently considering the budget allocated for the programme in 2008/9 and both tenants' representatives and councillors will be involved in the discussion through the Area Housing Panel, the local Tenants and Residents' Association and DFTRA. It is the Directorate's intention to carry on along the route identified and replace the railings next to those that have already been replaced as soon as possible.