

## **NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 6.30pm  
at High Arcal School, High Arcal Drive, Sedgley

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Caunt (Chairman)  
Councillor Ryder (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Mrs Ameson, A Aston, Evans, Mottram, Mrs Ridley, Stanley, S  
Turner, Mrs Westwood and Wright; Miss D Lewis.

### **Officers**

The Director of Corporate Resources (as Area Liaison Officer); Assistant  
Director, Culture and Leisure and the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road  
Safety (Directorate of the Urban Environment); Mr D Millard, Youth Worker  
(Directorate of Children's Services) and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Corporate  
Resources)

### **Also in Attendance**

Inspector R Jones (West Midlands Police) Mr C Newton and Miss J  
Winpenny, (West Midlands Fire Service), Ms B Coombes (CENTRO), Mr L  
Wilson, (National Express West Midlands), Ms M Bytheway (Foundation Trust  
Project Manager Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust) and 19 members of  
the public.

24

### **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of  
Councillor G Davies.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Members declared a personal or prejudicial interest in accordance with the  
Members' Code of Conduct in respect of any matters to be discussed.

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26

### **MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2011, be  
approved as a correct record and signed.

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## PETITIONS

It was reported that the following petitions had been received since the last meeting of the Committee:

- (a) A petition from local residents, supporting the inclusion of the Woodsetton and Upper Gornal area in the designation of an area where the consumption of alcohol in public places is prohibited, apart from within the curtilage of the licensed premises, was referred to the Licensing Officer. The alcohol ban was subsequently considered and approved by the Licensing Committee in September, with the ban on the consumption of alcohol in the designated public places taking effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011.
- (b) A petition from Councillor Stanley on behalf of local residents requesting the reinstatement of the 297/297A bus service around the Stickley Estate, was referred to the representatives of Centro for consideration.
- (c) A petition from local residents, requesting a vehicle weight limit restriction in Redhall Road, Lower Gornal, was received by the Director of the Urban Environment. The Director had written to the petitioners to advise that Redhall Road would be considered in the future list of annual Traffic Regulation Order Programmes.

## YOUTH ISSUES

A report prepared by the Area Youth Worker was circulated to Members of the Committee and presented by Mr D Millard of the Youth Service present at the meeting. A copy of the report would be included in the Council's Committee Management Information System.

Miss D Lewis, co-opted Member then reported orally on the activities of the North Dudley Youth Forum, including Area trips and new objectives for the Youth Forum to target. Miss Lewis also advised that the Youth Forum was planning to participate in more training, in particular volunteering opportunities for young people in the Dudley North area. She also reported on activities which would be offered to young people during October half term.

A Member of the Committee thanked Officers for the work undertaken to make the Silver Jubilee Coseley Youth Centre a success.

### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the reports submitted on Youth matters be noted.

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## CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure 13(c) it was

### RESOLVED

That agenda item 8 (Transport Issues) be considered as the next item of business.

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## TRANSPORT ISSUES

Ms Coombes advised of recent structure changes which had taken place at CENTRO, as a result of which she could no longer guarantee attendance at all future meetings of the Committee.

Members of the committee expressed their concerns that attendance at future meetings could not be guaranteed.

In response to the concerns expressed by the Committee, on the possible lack of attendance at future meetings, Ms Coombes advised that the Dudley Transport Users' Forum was a more appropriate arena to air transport related issues. She circulated a list of dates of future meetings for the Users' Forum.

In response to concerns expressed regarding the withdrawal and amendment to bus services, Miss Coombes advised that the companies operating bus services in the area were privately owned companies who needed to make a profit. CENTRO could only pass on information to these Companies, which she believed would be better addressed directly to the Transport Users' Forum, as the Forum had the machinery in place to follow up issues raised.

Mr L Wilson (National Express, West Midlands) reported on the recent structural changes at National Express, including the establishment of a new Management Team and commented that, as part of his new role, he would be looking into ways to improve services. He also undertook to investigate possible inaccuracies in the recently published timetable.

Some Members of the Committee expressed their concerns that the 297/297A bus service around the Stickley Estate had not been re-instated, in view of the fact that the connecting service was unreliable. They also requested that, if the full service could not be reinstated, consideration be given to a 'looped service' from Gornal Village to the Stickley Estate and back.

Mr Wilson undertook to investigate the possibility of improving the 257 bus service and options to improve the service provided to the Stickley Estate.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, Mr Wilson advised that a response to the concerns expressed was likely to be available in approximately six weeks time.

He also advised that any issues raised at the Transport Users' Forum would be followed up and responded to.

Members of the Committee reiterated their concerns regarding the lack of parking facilities in close proximity to Coseley Train station and the inconvenience to local residents caused by inconsiderate parking by train commuters.

In response Ms Coombes advised that additional parking could only be provided if additional funding became available. In the meantime inconsiderate parking on the Highway was a matter for the Highways Authority. She confirmed that additional parking facilities had been provided at Tipton and Dudley Port, with Members of the Committee pointing out that the facilities referred to were in the Sandwell area.

In response to comments as to why additional parking facilities could not be provided at Coseley station, when they had been recently increased at the train station at Stourbridge Junction as a result of the service being oversubscribed, Ms Coombes advised that there was insufficient funding available to increase parking facilities at all train stations.

#### RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted.

#### POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Richard Jones of West Midlands Police reported on current police issues in the area of the Committee, with particular reference to crime figures. which he advised had increased in some Wards within the North Dudley Area, whilst they had decreased in others since April 2011.

The Inspector indicated that metal theft offences were still being committed, particularly the theft of metal manhole covers and catalytic converters. Work was ongoing into the possibility of replacing the stolen metal covers with alternative materials. He reported that the Police were working hard to combat the issue.

In response to a question from a Member of the Committee, Inspector Jones advised that the 77 manhole covers recently stolen were recorded as one crime incident, as there was only one injured party, namely Dudley Council. He also confirmed that replacement covers were extremely expensive, and would have to be paid for by the Council Tax payers. He urged anyone who had any information, to contact the Police.

#### RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted.

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#### FIRE ISSUES

Mr Newton reported on current Fire Service activities, advising that there had been an increase in reported vehicle and rubbish fires in the area covered by the Committee, in particular in Upper Gornal and Sedgley. Some reported fires had been in rented accommodation owned by the Council. He urged vigilance, particularly by residents in their own property and in the lead up to Halloween and bonfire night. Partnership working with the Police and other agencies was ongoing to address the illegal sale of fireworks.

One Member of the Committee commented that in the Gornal area some of the reported rubbish fires had been as a direct result of the tipping of felled trees on open land.

The Chairman requested that an account of the response times for reported house fires be advised to the Committee.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the information reported on at the meeting on fire issues be noted.
  - (2) That Mr Newton be requested to provide the Committee with the actual response times for reported house fires.
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31

#### PUBLIC FORUM

No questions were raised under this agenda item.

It was reported that High Arcal School would be hosting the BBC Radio 4 programme Any Questions, chaired by Jonathon Dimbelby, on the evening of 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 7.00 pm. Anyone requiring tickets was advised to contact Mr Dhami at the school on 01384 814302.

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32

#### DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on three applications received for Capital allocation.

In presenting his report, the Area Liaison Officer reported on checks that had been made on an application by the Friends of Sedgley Beacon when they had submitted invoices for a lower amount than that agreed for payment.

Following the checks made and consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Ward Councillors, the Area Liaison Officer, had used his delegated powers to approve the items on the invoices.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the action of the Area Liaison Officer in consultation with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Ward Members to approve the sum of £2,088 in respect of the application made by the Friends of Sedgley Beacon, be noted.
- (2) That the application by Roseville Methodist Church for £2,500 as part of the 10% grant application to Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust for the provision of disabled toilets for the church hall, be approved.
- (3) That the application by Gornal Business Watch for £5,000 towards the cost of Christmas Lights for Gornal be approved, subject to the Group being able to provide the necessary funding to cover the revenue aspects of the project.
- (4) That St Peter's Church, Upper Gornal, be awarded the sum of £2,600 towards the cost of a replacement boiler at the church.
- (5) That Tipton Road Children's Home be granted an extension of six months to enable them to claim the grant of £7,000 previously awarded for the purchase of a mini bus.

#### DUDLEY AND WALSALL MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP NHS TRUST

Ms Mary Bytheway, Foundation Trust Project Manager, Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, gave an oral presentation on the Trust's application for Foundation Trust status.

She indicated that becoming a Foundation Trust would increase accountability to the local communities, through its membership and encourage local people to influence and help improve the way NHS services were delivered. She explained what a Foundation Trust was, the benefits of becoming a Foundation Trust, membership proposals, the proposed structure of Council of Governors, future proposals and indicated that forms were available for anyone who was interested in becoming a member.

In response to comments from the Chairman, Ms Bytheway confirmed that all questions would be noted, collated and referred back to the Trust.

Following consideration of the presentation comments from the Chairman and the Committee included that:

- It was not acceptable for there to be only one Elected Member representative on the new Foundation Trust. It was considered that there should be two representatives from each of the Local Authorities to enable a political balance on the new Trust and for the voice of both Dudley residents and Walsall residents to be heard.
- No mention had been made on the restructuring of the mental health facilities
- It was felt that the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust was ignoring the two Local Authorities that had helped found the Trust.
- It was confusing that reference was made to Oxford and Nottingham when referring to services based in Dudley.
- Assurances should be given to staff regarding their job situations when the teams moved to Foundation Trust status.
- Work was ongoing with the Commissioners to improve services for those with eating disorders.
- The proposed name “Better together Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust” was disliked by some Members of the Committee.
- Dudley and Walsall Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust was considered a more suitable name, in that it stated exactly what it was.
- There were concerns that the emphasis might be on funding rather than quality.

At the Committee’s request, Ms Bytheway undertook to furnish the Committee with a copy of the notes taken by her prior to them being included in the consultation document.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That Ms Bytheway be thanked for the presentation on the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust’s application for Foundation Trust status, and that the information contained within the presentation be noted.
- (2) That Ms Bytheway be requested to furnish the Committee with a copy of the notes taken by her on this matter.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted and the responses sent to questions asked at the previous meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted on responses to questions raised at the previous meeting, be noted.

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35

WARD ISSUES

Councillor Mrs Ridney thanked Officers for their prompt responses to issues raised at previous meetings.

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36

SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

Information was given regarding the dates of Scrutiny Committees held at the Council House, Dudley for which members of the public were invited and welcome to attend.

RESOLVED

That the information given in respect of the dates of the meetings of Scrutiny Committees be noted.

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37

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The date and venue of the next meeting was noted as follows:

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2012 at 6.30 p.m. at Roberts Primary School, Roberts Street, Lower Gornal.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm.

CHAIRMAN