

## **NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE**

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

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Caunt (in the Chair)  
Councillor Ryder (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors A. Aston, Evans, Mottram, Mrs. Ridney, Stanley, S. Turner,  
Mrs. Westwood and Wright

### **Officers**

The Director of Corporate Resources (as Area Liaison Officer); Assistant Director, Culture and Leisure and the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety (both Directorate of the Urban Environment); Ms. A. Jones, Marketing and Communications (Chief Executive's Directorate) and Mr. J. Jablonski (Directorate of Corporate Resources)

### **Also in Attendance**

Inspector G. Malpass (West Midlands Police); Operations Commander A. Grosvenor and Miss J. Winpenny (West Midlands Fire Service), together with eleven members of the public.

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### **COMMENTS OF THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman referred to the recent retirement of Mrs. Joan Rees, Democratic Services Officer to the Committee, and informed the Committee that he had thanked her on their behalf for the work she had done in relation to the work of the Committee. He also reported that Inspector Richard Jones, West Midlands Police, had been promoted to the post of temporary Chief Inspector of the Public Protection Unit and indicated that he would be contacting him to thank him, on behalf of the Committee, for the work he had done in relation to the work of the Committee.

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### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs. Ameson and G. Davies.

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## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Stanley declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of the application received from the 2132 Squadron Air Training Corps referred to in Agenda Item 10 - Delegated Capital Budget – as he was a member of the Squadron's Committee and left the meeting when the application was being determined.

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## MINUTES

### RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 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 the residents of Springfield Grove, Springfield Avenue and Elgin Close, Sedgley requesting a grit bin; and
- (b) A petition requesting:-
  - (i) That potholes be repaired in Yew Tree Lane, Coseley between Church Road and Harding Street and
  - (ii) That police enforcement continues regarding the 7.00 p.m. to 7.00 a.m. heavy goods vehicle ban in Summerhill Road and Harding Street, Coseley.

It was reported that these petitions had been referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for consideration and response.

A petition from residents in Gornal requesting the re-opening of the public toilets in Gornal Village was presented at the meeting.

### RESOLVED

That the petition requesting the re-opening of the public toilets in Gornal Village be referred to the Petitions Officer for consideration.

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## YOUTH MATTERS

No matters were reported under this Agenda heading.

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## POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Malpass reported that there had been a reduction of crime in the area of the Committee and in anti-social behaviour of approximately 10% and indicated that he hoped to continue the level of performance achieved by his predecessor, Inspector Jones.

Inspector Malpass also referred to operations that would be running in the next two months, for example, in relation to offender management which would be carried out in conjunction with appropriate agencies and he looked forward to looking after the area, having moved from the Brierley Hill area.

Arising from the comments made, Councillor Mrs. Ridney referred to the metal thefts that had been occurring in the Coseley area and asked for an update of the current position as matters appeared to have quietened down. In response, Inspector Malpass referred to recent proposals for a change in legislation which should help in this matter and indicated that the issue of metal thefts had been an issue for the Borough as a whole and for the Police and commented that a number of arrests had been made.

A member of the public then referred to anti-social behaviour complaints and asked how many complaints there needed to be before any action was taken as he had heard that five complaints needed to be made.

In response, Inspector Malpass indicated that there was not a specific number of complaints that needed to be received and that if a report of anti-social behaviour was received the police would look at the matter and address it if they could. The important thing was however not the number of calls received, but the nature of the anti-social behaviour being referred to, for example if it was in respect of a vulnerable person, as each case was considered on its merits.

## RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted.

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## FIRE ISSUES

Operations Commander, Andy Grosvenor reported on issues in relation to the Fire Service.

Information was given in particular on the reducing number of fire incidents that had occurred and the types of such incidents throughout the four wards comprising the area of the Area Committee. However, overall the number of incidents was very small. In the Upper Gornal and Woodsetton ward area however there had been a small increase in the number of fires reported and, therefore action would be taken in the next 3-4 weeks in this area in response to this.

The Operations Commander also requested that the public report any fly-tipping that they were aware of through Dudley Council Plus and also asked that they make use of the freephone number that was available.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted.

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#### TRANSPORT ISSUES

Councillor Stanley reported that, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2012, a service between the Stickley estate and Merry Hill would be in operation. This was a replacement service to that previously available. The route of the new service was indicated as operating from the Stickley estate via the LCP trading estate, Russells Hall Hospital, Merry Hill and Halesowen.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted.

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#### PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) In response to a question from a member of the public, the questioner was asked to speak to Inspector Malpass after the meeting regarding the smoking of illegal substances in Council property and that if there were any tenancy issues arising from that consideration, Inspector Malpass was asked to contact the relevant Housing Manager.

It was also reported that a similar incident had been dealt with by the Police and Housing Services taking action.

- (b) In response to a question regarding the non-delivery of refuse sacks in the Lower Gornal area, Councillor Stanley commented that refuse sacks had been delivered and should be sufficient for residents up to the end of this month. He also indicated that the delivery of refuse sacks had been facilitated by the favourable weather conditions over recent time and that reports of non-receipt were very small.

- (c) In response to a question regarding Council policy on existing housing without double glazing and a comment made that it was considered that all housing had to have double glazing by 2010, it was reported that the date of 2010 was the date on which the Council needed to comply with the Government's Decent Homes Standard and this did not relate to the glazing of a property.

It was further reported that there were still properties with single glazing and that such properties would have their glazing replaced at the appropriate time.

In response to further comments from the questioner, Councillor Stanley indicated that he had raised this particular issue at a recent meeting of the North Dudley Area Housing Panel and that he was awaiting a response to the representations that he had made.

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### DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted in respect of two applications that had been received for a capital allocation.

During the consideration of the application received from the 2132 Squadron Air Training Corps, following comments made by him, Councillor Stanley left the meeting having previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter.

All the Ward Members for the Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward supported the application submitted.

### RESOLVED

- (1) That the action of the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with appropriate members, in approving an application in the sum of £5,000 from Sedgley Shopkeepers for the purchase of Christmas lights, be noted.
- (2) That the application by the 2132 Squadron Air Training Corps for £9,994 towards the purchase of a minibus be approved in principle and that the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to determine this application following receipt of all the required supporting documentation.

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### RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the current status of responses to questions posed at the previous meeting of the Committee.

### RESOLVED

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

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WARD ISSUES

- (a) Councillor Mrs. Ridney raised the issue of public toilets in the Roseville area and requested that, as such facilities were not readily available and as there were no facilities for disabled persons in the Roseville area, the toilets that had been closed be re-opened.
- (b) Councillors Mrs. Ridney referred to the on-going parking situation around Coseley Railway Station and to the traffic plan for the area, and requested that a commitment be given to deal with the car parking problem as a priority for commencement in April, 2012.

Councillor Stanley commented that he had raised this issue with Centro on a number of occasions as it not only affected the Coseley area but other parts of the north of the Borough and would again raise the matter at a forthcoming meeting of Centro. The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety also commented that the process in respect of Traffic Regulation Orders for the northern part of the Borough would commence in April, 2012.

Inspector Malpass also commented that he would arrange for officers to patrol the area at appropriate times and that if feasible appropriate action would be taken.

- (c) Councillor Mrs. Ridney commented that she had had a number of phone calls regarding non-receipt of refuse sacks and questioned when the provision in respect of plastic/cardboard would be rolled out to the rest of her ward.

Councillor Stanley reported that currently arrangements for procurement of the necessary equipment was in hand so that hopefully by this time next year, the provision would be rolled out to the rest of the Borough.

- (d) Councillor Mottram queried the position regarding parents collecting their children from the Queen Victoria Primary School, and to a lesser extent from the Dormston School, waiting in the Bilston Street car park.

In response to this, it was considered that a dispensation had previously been given for such waiting without having to pay a charge, however, there was no indication as to this on the payment meters in the car park.

The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety was asked to investigate this matter and respond direct to Councillor Mottram.

- (e) In response to comments made by Councillor S. Turner regarding the re-introduction of a direct bus route between the Stickley estate and Merry Hill, comments were made to the effect that the route indicated earlier in the meeting, was the route submitted by the relevant operator based on commercial considerations.
  - (f) Councillor A. Aston wished to record his thanks to Dave Keeley and the Countryside Management Team for responding to issues in respect of vandalism to the Donkey Pool part of the Wrens Nest Nature Reserve. Given that the Nature Reserve had protected status and was of global geological interest such vandalism was a criminal offence.
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#### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

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

#### RESOLVED

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

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#### DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the dates of future meetings of the Committee would be determined at the meeting of Annual Council to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2012.

The meeting ended at 7.05 p.m.

CHAIRMAN