

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Thursday, 31st January 2008 at 7.00 p.m.
at The Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Wilson (Chairman);
Councillor Tyler (Vice Chairman);
Councillors D Blood, Ms Boleyn, Ms Foster, Harley, Ms Harris, Ms Jordan, Islam, Lavender, Miller, Nottingham, Southall and Tomkinson.

Officers

The Director of the Urban Environment (as Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration), Principal Engineer (Traffic and Transportation), Manager of the Executive Support Team – (all Directorate of the Urban Environment), Assistant Director of Children's Services (Specialist Services), Senior Solicitor and Ms K Smith (both Directorate of Law and Property).

In Attendance

Mr S Riley – (DTZ, in relation to agenda item 7 – Pensnett Local Regeneration Plan), Mr M Mason (Brierley Hill Community Forum), together with 25 members of the public

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillor Mrs E Blood and Inspector R Jones (West Midlands Police).

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Southall and Mrs Wilson declared a Personal Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in relation to agenda item number 12 (Capital Allocations – Lions Boxing Club), in view of their membership of the Development Control Committee.

Councillor Southall declared a Personal Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in relation to agenda item number 12 (Capital Allocations – Phoenix Youth Football Club), in view of his membership of the Birmingham County Football Association.

Councillors Miller and Tyler declared a Personal Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in relation to agenda item 12 (Capital Allocations – Kingswinford Village Association), in view of attending meetings and being known to the traders in Kingswinford.

54

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6th December, 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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YOUTH ISSUES

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.

56

PUBLIC FORUM

Several members of the public raised a number of concerns and objections to a proposal to reduce the funding for the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Service (EMAS). It was acknowledged that the reductions referred to were currently only a recommendation and that no decision on the matter had been taken. No other actions had been carried out in relation to any cuts in service or staffing at this time nor an impact assessment undertaken. If and when a decision was made for a reduction in funding, the Director of Children's Services would consult with all parties concerned prior to making any changes in service. Consideration would be given to developing and meeting the needs of all children within the Borough, whilst working within the budget allocated to Children's Services.

Following a detailed and lengthy discussion and following a majority vote it was

RESOLVED

That the Committee requests a special meeting of the Select Committee on Children Services to be held to re-consider the EMAS proposals to include a full impact assessment.

57

PENSNETT LOCAL REGENERATION PLAN

A presentation was made on behalf of DTZ, the consultants appointed to coordinate the production of the Pensnett Local Centre Regeneration Plan. Pensnett had been identified as one of the priority areas for regeneration and accordingly a detailed implementation plan had been drawn up to deliver action in accordance with the current Planning Policy, Council Plan, Economic Strategy and Community Strategy Policies.

The presentation offered ideas for discussion in the form of four draft options based on an analysis of key issues and responses from the public consultation, on urban design options for improvements to the local centre. Responses would be used to refine the proposal into a preferred option to be included into the Local Centre Regeneration Plan.

RESOLVED

That the information reported at the meeting be noted.

58

LAND ISSUES

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on applications received in respect of land and property owned by the Council.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the application from the owner of 14 Highfield Road, Wordsley, to purchase an area of land to the rear of the property, as indicated on the plan attached to the report submitted, be approved, and the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised to declare the land surplus to requirements to be offered to adjoining owners for garden purposes only, but subject to a condition specifying that vehicular access to the rear of the property would not be granted, upon terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
 - (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised that the land sited at the corner of Commonsides and Berbeck Place, adjacent to Mullet Park, site of the Pensnett Estate Offices, as indicated on the plan attached to the report submitted, be declared surplus to requirements but retained for further consideration of alternative uses by and for the benefit of the local community.
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59

PUTTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FIRST - CHARITY

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted proposing rationalisation of eighteen small inactive education charities into one charitable body; with the beneficiaries of the new charity being children and young people of Dudley by way of awards for educational achievements.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the eighteen education charities be rationalised into one new charity, "Putting Children and Young People First".
- (2) That a public consultation document be issued to include the proposals outlined in paragraph 13 of the report submitted.

60

LOCAL SAFETY SCHEME 2007/2008 – THE BOULEVARD, MERRY HILL

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on proposals to introduce traffic calming measures and a twenty mile per hour speed limit along The Boulevard, Merry Hill, as indicated on drawing number HD2548D attached to the report. Consultation had been undertaken on the proposals outlined in the report submitted, through the Express and Star and on street. Full consultation details were listed in Appendix A attached to the report.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Committee notes the contents of the report and supports the implementation of traffic calming measures and a twenty mile an hour speed limit for the full length of The Boulevard, Merry Hill, as indicated on drawing number: HD2548D attached to the report submitted.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended to introduce the scheme supported by the Area Committee subject to the necessary resources being available.

61

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING – MILL STREET, BRIERLEY HILL

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.

RESOLVED

That the information reported at the meeting be noted

62. CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the recommendations of the Capital Allocations Working Group on applications for funding from the Capital Allocations budget of the Committee.

In relation to the application referred to in minute (1) below, the Committee noted that the working group had acknowledged that the amount was in excess of the £5,000 maximum limit, previously agreed as part of the criteria for funding applications, but considered this to be an exceptional circumstance.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the application submitted on behalf of Lions Boxing Club for funding towards the supply and erection of; 133m of 2m high triple pointed galvanised steel palisade perimeter gates and fencing, be approved to a total value of £7,500 (ex Vat), subject to planning permission being granted if required, and two further competitive quotes being obtained by the local authority.
 - (2) That the application submitted on behalf of the Phoenix Youth Football Club for funding towards the purchase of items of football equipment, be deferred pending submission of additional information by the club.
 - (3) That the application submitted on behalf of the Kingswinford Village Association for funding of £4,000 towards Christmas lights, be deferred pending submission of additional information by Kingswinford Village Association.
 - (4) That the application on behalf of Dudley Sports Bowls Club for funding towards one off legal disbursements of £424, incurred as a result of obtaining new headquarters, be approved
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63 MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON 6th DECEMBER 2007

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 6th December 2007, in relation to services provided by the Council.

In relation to Community Centres Councillor Miller reported that that were under his jurisdiction from February 2008. In response to a question by Councillor Ms Harris on possible proposals to sell off the community centres, Councillor Miller stated that he was unaware of such a proposal but would investigate and report back

In response to a comment in relation to the cost and timescale for the removal of the Youth shelter at Hawbush Road Councillor Ms Harris stated that the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services were looking into its demolition and how the timbers could be re-used on another community project

In response to a question raised by Councillor Ms Foster on the Building Schools for the Future Programme, it was agreed that a more detailed response with timescales would be sent to the original questioner.

Councillor Tyler reported that in relation to CENTRO and consultation undertaken in relation to changes to bus routes, three Members had made representations to CENTRO.

RESOLVED

That the information reported and contents of the report submitted be noted.

WARD ISSUES

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 5) In response to a query by Councillor Tomkinson on the issue of boy racers along Fens Pool, the representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment responded 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.

65 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of the remaining meetings of the Council's Select Committees in the current municipal year were received and noted.

66 CHAIRMANS THANKS

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked Mr J Woodall, Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration), for his services to the Committee and wished him well on his impending retirement from the local authority.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked Ms K Smith, Clerk to the Committee, for her services to the Committee and wished her well on her future endeavours upon her impending departure from the Council.

67 NEXT MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

It was noted that future dates of meetings of the Brierley Hill Area Committee would be determined at the Annual Council Meeting

The meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

CHAIRMAN