

**Central Dudley Area Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

**Report Of The Director Of The Urban Environment**

**Urban Environment - Matters Raised At The Central Dudley Area Committee - 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

**Purpose Of Report**

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006 Central Dudley Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

**Background**

2. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities. This diverse range of technical services focus on regenerating the Borough, maintaining our environment to high standards, protecting our communities and promoting leisure and other community services for all.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both members and the general public, relating to matters such as traffic management, leisure and recreation, regeneration and new development. 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, progress reports are included as an appendix and the proposal resulting from the update is set out at the end of each paragraph.

**Finance**

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

**Law**

6. Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers the Council to provide recreational facilities in its area.
7. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do anything that is likely to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough.

8. 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.
9. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its area 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.

### **Equality Impact**

12. The proposals take into account the Council's equal opportunities policies. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a diverse range of services that affect all sections of the community.

### **Recommendation**

13. That the proposals contained in Appendix 1 attached be approved.



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### **Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-**

Action Notes from 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006 Committee.

## Appendix 1

### **DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT THE CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE HELD 7<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2006**

#### **1. PETITION: BARRIER BELLE VUE ROAD, QUARRY BANK**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Cotterill submitted a petition on behalf of residents of Belle Vue Road, Quarry Bank requesting that the barrier at the end of their road be erected again to prevent vehicles using the road as a short cut.

**Comments:** DUE Officers have consulted with the electricity company and it was agreed that access should be maintained for emergency and maintenance of the electrical sub-station, the barrier will therefore not be re-instated.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### **2. PETITION: TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES - LISTER ROAD, DUDLEY**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Ali submitted a petition on behalf of residents of Lister Road, requesting traffic calming measures to prevent speeding vehicles.

**Comments:** Subject to appropriate approvals being granted, a Local Safety Scheme is being considered for Lister Road as a result of research into accident clusters. The purpose of the scheme would be to reduce the speed of traffic turning left into Lister Road from New Road. There is currently no statistical justification for this Local Safety Scheme to be extended along the whole length of Lister Road but this will be reviewed through future monitoring should circumstances change. The request for a speed visor sign in Lister Road has been forwarded to the Principal Road Safety Officer.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### **3. FLY-TIPPING - WATSONS GREEN ROAD/NORTH STREET**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Ali requested that a fence be erected on the land at the corner of Watsons Green Road and the junction of North Street to prevent fly-tipping.

**Comments:** Officers have undertaken a site inspection and could not see any obvious area where fly-tipping has occurred, the area owned by the Council being clear of rubbish. There is a small section of privately owned land in the area that could do with a clean up. Consequently, officers will liaise with Cllr Ali to agree an acceptable way forward.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

4. **DERELICT PROPERTIES NR BEECH GREEN SHOPS, OLD PARK FARM ESTATE**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Finch raised concerns in respect of derelict properties near Beech Green shops on the Old Park Farm estate, which are rat infested.

**Comments:** DUE Officers have inspected the site and found no evidence of vermin.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

5. **DUNCAN EDWARDS PUBLIC HOUSE**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Johnston requested that the Duncan Edwards Public House premises again be secured.

**Comments:** The Duncan Edwards site transferred to new owners in early December. Consequently, officers from DUE raised concerns in relation to security issues associated with the building and perimeter fencing. In order to resolve this matter to everyone's mutual satisfaction, the new owners have now demolished the building.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

6. **LAND AT THE TOP OF QUARRY BANK HIGH STREET**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Sparks asked for action to be taken to ensure that the owners of the land at the top of Quarry Bank High Street properly maintain it.

**Comments:** Central Networks had undertaken works on the land and the original reinstatement was not delivered to an acceptable standard, culminating in a Defect Notice being served on them.

Any longstanding issues with Central Networks have now been resolved and the Council will be undertaking maintenance on the site in the future.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

7. **GULLIES - CASTLE AND PRIORY ESTATES**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Johnston requested that the gullies and drains on the Castle and Priory Estate be cleared. He also requested a list of drains and gullies already cleared.

**Comments:** The following streets have had gullies cleansed: Wrens Hill Road, Linwood Road, Priory Road, Marigold Crescent, Summer Road, Laurel Road, Paganel Drive, Gervase Drive, Woodland Avenue, Chestnut Avenue,

Forest Road, Castle Mill Road, Thornhill Road and Pine Road. Additional work has also been programmed throughout December.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## **8. KERBSIDE COLLECTION - BULKY ITEMS**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Craigie raised the need for the kerbside collection of bulky items to be reintroduced either free of charge or a lowering of the current charge for large items such as fridges.

**Comments:** The regular free bulky waste collection was withdrawn a number of years ago to be replaced with both kerbside and green waste recycling.

Due to the type and mixture of waste collected, all bulky waste collections had to be taken to landfill for disposal which impacted on our Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) allowance as well as our best value performance indicator targets.

A modest charge is made for the collection of bulky items which reflects the cost of providing the service.

A few years ago, a three month fridge and white goods amnesty was introduced where the Council collected specified items free of charge. Although this limited amnesty proved popular, officers received anecdotal evidence that suggested that waste was being brought in from surrounding districts to be disposed of free of charge in Dudley, ie. this Council was effectively disposing of another authority's waste.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## **9. SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL - RUSSELLS HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Craigie raised the need for the introduction of a school crossing patrol person at Russells Hall Primary School.

**Comments:** School Crossing Patrols are not allocated directly to schools. The patrols are put in at crossing points on busy roads which also have a high number of pedestrian users. A recent survey in the vicinity of Russells Hall Primary School indicated that a School Crossing Patrol could not be justified in terms of present national requirements. In addition, there is a 20 mph limit in place and a School Crossing Patrol on the busy Himley Road to assist pupils to and from Russells Hall Primary School.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## **10. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING - NEW ROWLEY ROAD**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Ali raised the need for a crossing at New Rowley Road (near Vauxhall Gardens).

**Comments:** This location will be considering during 2007-8 for possible inclusion in a future year's annual Pedestrian Crossing Programme.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### **11. SPEED LIMIT - NETHERTON PRIMARY/SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Rahman requested that the speed limit near primary and secondary schools in the Netherton area be reduced to 20 mph.

**Comments:** This concept has been raised nationally, however it is only a concept and the practicalities of its implementation are fraught with difficulties. Each school is considered and assessed on its own specifics and consideration is given to many factors which include: response from consultation on safer access to and from schools with school governors and pupils, traffic congestion resulting in "rat runs" hence creation of accidents elsewhere, likelihood of speed limit being observed, existing traffic speed, enforcement and disproportionate policing levels, physical measures i.e. traffic calming etc and implementation and prioritisation of the Safer Routes to School Programme.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### **12. RESURFACING WORKS - BEECHES ROAD**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Ali raised the need for the resurfacing of Beeches Road.

**Comments:** Beeches Road is not included in any future Highways Maintenance Programmes. The earliest it is likely to be considered for inclusion is within the 2008/2009 programme. An Highway Inspector will visit the site to identify any remedial action that needs to be taken in the interim period.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### **13. IMPROVED SIGNAGE - BLACKACRE ROAD**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Ali raised the need for improved signage around Blackacre Road to prevent traffic travelling through.

**Comments:** Site observations indicate that signing is adequate at Blackacre Road's junction with Dixon's Green Road. However, a Local Safety Scheme is planned for introduction around February next year and consideration can be given at that time for amendments to signing.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**14. IMPROVED SPEED SIGNAGE - OLD BUSH PUBLIC HOUSE**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Waltho requested improved speed signage for traffic near the bend of the Old Bush Public House.

**Comments:** Officers will arrange a meeting with Cllr Waltho on site to discuss this problem.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**15. TRAFFIC VOLUME - FLOOD STREET ISLAND**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Ali requested investigation into the high volumes of traffic at the Flood Street Island.

**Comments:** There have been no indications that traffic movements around the A461 Dudley Southern Bypass's junction with Flood Street are excessive. However, Traffic surveys will be considered next year to determine the situation.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**16. SECTION 106 - DEVELOPERS**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Waltho asked to be supplied with information on where Section 106 monies from Developers were spent.

**Comments:** DUE officers met with Cllr Waltho on the 16th November to brief him on Section 106 processes and opportunities in the Central Dudley area.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**17. REMOVAL OF TREE ROOTS - NEW VILLAGE, QUARRY BANK**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Cotterill asked for the roots to be removed from two trees in New Village, Quarry Bank.

**Comments:** A site visit has taken place in relation to the tree problems in New Village and the residents affected by the problem have been instructed on the appropriate course of action in relation to making a claim against the Council.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**18. REMOVAL/THINNING OF TREES - MARLOW CLOSE**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Cotterill requested the removal or thinning of trees in Marlow Close which are currently screening anti-social behaviour at the Saltwells EDC.

**Comments:** There is approximately 1000 square metres of mixed forestry planting within the grounds of Saltwells EDC against the Marlow Close boundary. It is underplanted with woody shrubs such as Eleagnus and Laurel and is at a stage now where it does require thinning. Approval of the quotation is awaited, when this is received, it is anticipated that the work would be completed before the end of February.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**19. GRASS CUTTINGS**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr M Davis asked that grass cuttings be cleared up to prevent pedestrians slipping on them when wet.

**Comments:** It is not council policy to remove grass cuttings from communal open space as exists on the Russells Hall Estate, both the cost and logistics of this operation would be prohibitive. However in the unavoidable event of grass cuttings spilling out onto adjacent tarmac or hard surfaces they will be removed if they are considered to be a risk to public safety.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**20. MERRY HILL SHOPPING CENTRE OVERFLOW PARKING**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr Cotterill passed on an email from Mr Burnstone who is concerned about the knock-on effect of impending Merry Hill vehicle parking charges.

**Comments:** Investigations are currently being conducted into possible future Traffic Regulation Orders in streets associated with Merry Hill overflow parking. During the planning for new proposals, consideration will be given to the timely comments made by Cllr Cotterill and Mr Burnstone.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**21. CHICANES - RUSSELLS HALL ESTATE**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr M Davis raised the issue of chicanes on the Russells Hall Estate.

**Comments:** An investigation is currently taking place to consider traffic calming issues in the Russells Hall residential estate. Officers are concerned that there is a perception



that motorists driving within the speed limit around this estate are at risk because of the present traffic management measures.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**22. BUS STOPS - RUSSELLS HALL ESTATE**

**Background:** At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 7th November 2006, Cllr M Davis raised the need to address the fact that bus stops on the Russells Hall Estate are occupying spaces which could be used for parking by residents.

**Comments:** Dudley's policy is to support public transport and assist people who do not have the benefit of their own vehicle.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**23. REMOVAL OF TREES - BLOWERS GREEN TIMBER YARD SITE**

**Background:** Issues associated with Blowers Green Timber Yard site have been raised on a number of occasions at Central Dudley Area Committee. Officers have consequently made a commitment to update Committee where appropriate.

**Comments:** The embankment containing the trees does require stabilising. However, the developer now proposes to undertake this primarily through a process known as soil nailing. Basically, this involves inserting 'nails' through the bank (which is thought to be entirely tipped material) to the underlying bedrock. It is a process that should result in fewer trees being removed. Although a Stop Notice has been served on the developer, this work to the bank has been excluded from the Notice because of the health and safety implications of the bank failing. The previously preferred stabilisation method of inserting sheet piling, which would have resulted in a number of trees being removed, has been abandoned. It would appear that part of the embankment may have to be secured by constructing a retaining structure but the developer has been advised that the structural design of any such 'wall' will have to be agreed by the Council's technical officers prior to erection, as required by a condition on the planning permission.

A comprehensive replanting scheme has been proposed to compensate for any trees that have to be removed throughout the duration of the works.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.