

**Central Dudley Area Committee – 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2011**

**Report of the Area Liaison Officer**

**Matters raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2011 other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To note progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2011, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

**Background**

2. The issues set out in paragraphs 3 to 6 (inclusive) below were raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2011, progress on which is as follows:

3. **Russells Hall Community Centre**

A Member of the Committee referred to the recent break-in at Russells Hall Community Centre and the damage caused as a result and queried whether the Centre was now back in use, whether the equipment had now been replaced and how many young people were using the Community Centre. In responding, the Area Team Leader, Directorate of Children's Services, has commented as follows:-

"The recent break in at Russells Hall Community Centre did not effect the normal youth club provision on offer. The projects that were affected were those of the groups using the studio, but these have now been postponed until further notice and once the studio is ready to use again, these projects will continue. The insurance claim is being proceeded with currently but the studio will not be refurbished until we get security advice from Adrian Dawes (CCTV/Security Projects Manager), as that will affect what we purchase. We are waiting for Adrian to get back to us so that we can meet with him at the studio and discuss future options for the studio and its new equipment.

At Russells Hall, attendance is low due to the usual seasonal impact of longer evenings and good weather but we have in excess of twenty-five young people attending on a regular basis. The centre is open for young people on four evenings (two evenings – disability groups) with the possibility of a fifth night starting soon.

Over the Summer the Central area has a varied holiday programme which will hopefully attract new young people to the centre".

4. **Crime Figures for Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's Ward and Partnership and Communities Together (PACT) meetings**

A member of the Committee requested crime figures for the Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's Ward.

The same Member of the Committee indicated that he had received complaints from residents of Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's ward in relation to the venues for Partnership and Communities Together (PACT) meetings.

The Member has since been provided with the figures as requested in relation to the crime figures for Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's ward and it has been agreed that the PACT meetings will alternate between Netherton and Woodside.

5. **Frequency of Area Committee Meetings**

A letter from a member of the public expressing concern at the reduction in the number of Area Committee meetings over the 2011/12 municipal year, as approved at the Annual Council meeting, was received. The grounds of concern were that the opportunity for local residents to express opinions, submit petitions and ask questions was now limited. The Democratic Services Manager has responded as follows:-

"On 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2011, the full Council considered its Revenue Budget Strategy and setting of the Council Tax for 2011/12. The proposal to reduce the number of Area Committee meetings from 5 to 3 per year was clearly identified in the report to that meeting and therefore the decision was taken by full Council. The report to the Council on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 also included details of consultation undertaken on the budget process.

At the annual meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2011, the Council endorsed the programme of meetings for the 2011/12 municipal year and implemented the reduction in Area Committee meetings from 5 to 3 per year. This applies not only to Central Dudley but also the other four Area Committees across the Borough. I can confirm that there have been no reductions in the number of programmed meetings of the full Council or the five Select (now called Scrutiny) Committees in 2011/12".

6. **Woodside Estate**

A Member of the Committee requested an update in relation to progress on bringing the houses on the Woodside Estate up to the Decent Homes Standard. The Area Liaison Officer has responded as follows:-

"The Government's Decent Homes Standard is set at a low level and there is no requirement to address the need for major alternations to the layout of homes. As a result, homes on the Woodside Estate do not fail the Decent Homes Standard due to the particular configuration of the kitchen and bathrooms.

In this instance at Woodside, relocating a bathroom, which is currently adjacent to the kitchen, up to the first floor, is not part of a programme to address decency. This is an additional level of improvement, which is significantly above the level of the Decent Homes Standard. This was approved in order to deal with

the particular issues, which were not addressed by the Decent Homes Standard at Woodside.

A programme of works developed for these specific homes will be implemented alongside Dudley's programme to maintain decency. At a cost of around £25,000 per home, the works are extensive and residents will be temporarily moved into one of two properties that have been made available on the estate. The first resident is about to be transferred and works will commence in July. Six more homes are scheduled to be improved this year, with the remaining ten homes due to be refurbished over the following two years".

### **Finance**

7. This report has no direct financial implications.

### **Law**

8. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

### **Equality Impact**

9. This report complies with the policies of the Council on Equality and Diversity.
10. Children and young people have not been consulted on the preparation of this report, as report seeks only to note progress on issues raised at its previous meetings.

### **Recommendation**

11. That the report be noted.



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**ANDREA POPE-SMITH**  
**AREA LIAISON OFFICER**

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**List of Background Papers** Minutes of the meeting of the Central Dudley Area Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2011