

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Monday 17th October 2011 at 7.00 p.m.

At Hob Green Primary School, Hob Green Road, Pedmore Fields,
Stourbridge

PRESENT-

Councillors Kettle (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Cowell (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Attwood, Banks, Barlow, Hanif, L Jones, Knowles, Lowe, Mrs Rogers, A Turner, Mrs Walker and C Wilson; Mr G Downing and Miss N Hathway.

OFFICERS:-

Acting Director of Children's Services (Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health, Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety, (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Area Detached Youth Worker (Directorate of Children's Services), Group Accountant, Mr T Holder - Solicitor and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Inspector E Boyle (West Midlands Police) Mr C Wood and Ms J Winpenny (West Midlands Fire Service) Ms M Ingram (Director of People and Corporate Development - Dudley and Walsall NHS Mental Health Trust), together with 15 members of the public.

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Adams and Mrs P Martin.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Hanif and Lowe declared personal interests in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item 8 (Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust), in view of their Lay Membership of the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust and as an employee of UNISON, representing the health workers of the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust, respectively.

Councillor Mrs Rogers declared a personal interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item 10a (Capital Allocations – application from the 15th Stourbridge (Norton St Michael's) Scout Group), in view of her husband having been the original Project Manager.

25 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27th June 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed.

26 YOUTH MATTERS

Miss Hathway gave an oral report on youth matters including that;

- The questionnaire referred to previously would be circulated after October half term.
- Feed back from the questionnaire would be reported on when available; and
- Activities to be offered to young people during October half term included football, raft racing and a residential.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the oral report be noted.

27 CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure 13(c) it was

RESOLVED

That agenda item 8 (Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust) be considered as the next item of business.

28 DUDLEY AND WALSALL MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP NHS TRUST

Ms M Ingram, Director of People and Corporate Development, Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust gave an oral presentation on the Trust's application for Foundation Trust status.

At the commencement of her presentation, Ms Ingram gave a brief outline of the history of the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust, how it was founded and some of the services provided including those provided at Busheyfields Hospital.

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 that was interested in becoming a member.

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 of the new Foundation Trust.
- It was acceptable that the Foundation Trust would be allowed to hold on to old funds and roll them over to future years.
- If a decision was made for two Elected Member representatives to be on the new Foundation Trust, there would be a need to change the composition of the Council of Governors.

In response to questions from Committee and members of the public, Ms Ingram's responses included that:

- The suggestion of one Elected Member representative from the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust was only an initial suggestion by members of the Partnership Trust for consideration and discussion and it could be amended.
- The reason Dudley Council came to be linked with Walsall Council when the joint Partnership Trust was initially founded, was as a result of the decision by Sandwell and Wolverhampton Councils not to join the Partnership when the Black Country Partnership was established, outside of the Primary Care Trust.

- The need for paperwork could not be overlooked, however there would in future be a strong focus on the quality of care of patients.
- The role of the Lay Members would not change under the proposed new system.
- The Foundation Trust, when established, would have the freedom to borrow money in the same way as other organisations for new builds.
- It was anticipated that the Foundation Trust status would be completed by July 2012.
- The ethnicity categories set out in the consultation documents, which did not include “English”, were those stipulated by the Department of Health.
- The Foundation Trust would ensure more accountability to the community in that it would be more representative of local communities.
- She could not comment on the difference it would make to individuals at this stage, other than to highlight mental health issues.
- It was possible that people who came forward as Members of the Trust may not be known locally.
- Some of the people who had come forward to join the Foundation Trust did not have a vested interest in mental health issues, just a wish to see the services developed.
- There would be no PFI's in the foundation Trust.

RESOLVED

That Ms Ingram 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 in the presentation be noted.

A written report by Inspector Boyle was circulated to Members on police matters. In speaking on his report, Inspector Boyle advised that the Dudley Local Policing Unit continued to achieve excellent performance within the

West Midlands Police Force area and were being put forward as Best Practice to other Local Policing Units.

He reported on the crime figures as at 14th October 2011, advising that metal thefts continued to be an issue across the Borough. Also, there had been an increase in the theft of catalytic converters, although measures were in place to address this.

A Member of the Committee reported that it was intended in future to replace stolen metal manhole covers with suitable plastic covers.

Inspector Boyle reported on other Police initiatives, including Operation Darker Nights, Burglary Dwellings, Operation Night safe, Custody Issues and the Neighbourhood Watch.

In response to a comment from a member of the public about the length of time it had taken the Police to respond to a 999 call, recently, Inspector Boyle advised that response times were graded according to the seriousness of the incidents, when reported. He undertook to investigate the questioner's comments outside of the meeting.

In response to a question from a Member of the Committee, as to why the holding cells in Halesowen and Stourbridge had been closed, Inspector Boyle advised that they were closed for reasons of efficiency and savings. The Police service was also looking at alternative ways of bringing offenders to justice.

He also reported that key messages for keeping homes safe included

- time switches on lights when away from the home,
- having secure door and window locks,
- Not putting keys under plant pots outside the home, and encouraged anyone requiring advice on home security to contact the Police.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted.

Mr C Wood gave an oral report on fire matters advising that:

- The number of arson fires in the area was up on last year's figures.

- Joint partnership working was ongoing with the Police on safety issues in the home.
- Work was being undertaken to address arson attacks in rented accommodation.
- residents were being encouraged to replace faulty electrical equipment, including electric blankets, despite the poor economic climate.
- There had been an increase in the number of arson attacks on white vans.
- Members of the public were being encouraged to advise fire and police services of vulnerable residents in need of advice.
- People should be encouraged not to drink whilst cooking over the festive period.
- Home bonfires should be discouraged and people should be encouraged to attend organised events, such as at Himley.

Mr Wood encouraged those present to be more vigilant during the lead up to bonfire night and circulated safety leaflets.

RESOLVED

That the oral report on fire service matters be noted.

31

PUBLIC FORUM

Before reading the questions from the public, the Area Liaison Officer reported that any questions which could not be answered would receive a written response.

Questions and answers were then given as follows:

1. A member of the public referred to his previous comments regarding the repair of the gates at Mary Stevens Park, and his suggestion that students at Dudley College be involved. He had been in communication with the Principal of Dudley College over the matter.

The Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Protection undertook to send a written response to the questioner.

2. A member of the public commented on a long standing issue of the danger to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, due to the unkempt state of the land in front of the electricity sub station on Walker Avenue. A Member of the Committee commented that there was a similar problem with the frontage to the electricity sub station at Drew Road, Pedmore.

The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety advised that he had written to the Power Company concerned about the complaints received. The Council could take no action, as the land

referred to was privately owned by the Power Company. The Group Engineer undertook to write again to the Power Company requesting that they address the concerns expressed regarding both sub stations.

3. A member of the public commented on the validity of funding previously allocated to the Humarra Project by the Committee.

The Area Liaison Officer and Members of the Committee advised that the matter referred to, had been investigated by the Council's Auditor and everything relating to the capital funding made by the Committee to the Humarra Project had been found to be satisfactory.

32

CAPITAL ALLOCATION AND STEVENS PARK AND RECREATION GROUND FOUNDATION TRUST

A joint report of the Area Liaison Officer and the Treasurer was circulated to Members on very late requests for funding from the Committee's capital allocation budget and the Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust, and on a request for an extension to the time allowed to claim grants previously awarded from both budgets.

In presenting the report, the Area Liaison Officer also advised that a letter had been received from the Stourbridge Glass Boys Under 7's Club thanking the committee for the £800 which has been awarded to them in March 2011 and which would be used wisely.

Following consideration of the joint report it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the request by 15th Stourbridge (Norton St Michael's) Scout Group for an indefinite extension to the time allowed, to enable them to claim the grant of £5,000 from both the Committee's Capital Allocations Budget and the Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust, be approved, subject to the Group keeping the Committee updated with the progress of the project.
- (2) That the request by 15th Stourbridge (Norton St Michael's) Scout Group for £500 from the Committee's Capital Allocation budget to purchase a gas griddle and 2 gas boiling rings, be approved, subject to the group being requested to furnish the Area Liaison Officer with a completed application form, the Group's accounts together with quotes and invoices for the equipment.

- (3) That Lye Cricket Club be awarded the sum of £1,150 from The Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust, towards the purchase of a replacement tarpaulin sheeting for the club's wicket cover.
 - (4) That Lye Cricket Club be awarded the sum of £4,000 from the Committee's Capital Allocation budget, towards the cost of redeveloping the Club entrance ramp and part of the driveway, to enable easier disabled access.
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33

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration of the appointment of representatives to serve on the Margaret Westwood Memorial Charity and the Bishop Hall's Charity for the Advancement of the Christian Religion, following the deaths of the Council's previous representatives on both Bodies.

RESOLVED

- (1) That Councillor Attwood be appointed for the remainder of the four year term ending on the 22nd March, 2014.
 - (2) That Mr Michael Davies of Wollaston be appointed for a four year period, commencing 18th October, 2011 to the Bishop Hall's Charity for the Advancement of the Christian Religion.
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34

ERNEST STEVENS TRUSTS – ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

A report of the Treasurer was submitted seeking approval of the Annual Accounts, for the four Trusts, comprising the Ernest Stevens Bequests, as at 31 March 2011. The annual returns of the individual trusts comprising the Ernest Steven bequests were attached as appendices to the reports submitted.

In response to a query from a Member of the Committee, regarding the income figures on the Trust accounts, the Group Accountant undertook to send a written response to Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the audited final accounts of the Ernest Stevens Trusts for the year ended 31st March, 2011, as attached to the report submitted, be approved.
- (2) That the Chairman be authorised to sign the accounts and annual returns for the year ended 31st March, 2011 on behalf of this committee.

35 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on written responses sent in respect of questions asked at the last meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted

36 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

No issues were raised by Members.

37 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

RESOLVED

That the dates and venues of future meetings of all Scrutiny Committees held at the Council House, to which the public were invited, be noted.

38 DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date and venue of the next meeting of the Committee be noted as follows:

Monday 20th February, 2012 at 7.00pm at Redhill School, Junction Road, Stourbridge, DY8 1JX.

The meeting ended at 8.30p.m.

CHAIRMAN