

## **BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2007 at 7.00 p.m.  
at Brockmoor Primary School, Belle Isle, Brockmoor, Brierley Hill

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Mrs Wilson (Chairman)  
Councillor Tyler (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Blood, Ms Boleyn, Burt, Harley, Ms Harris, Mrs Jordan, Miller,  
Nottingham, Southall and Tomkinson.

### **Officers**

Mr J Millar, (Director of the Urban Environment, as Area Liaison Officer), Mr J Woodall, Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration), Mr P Boland (Principal Conservation Officer/Borough Archaeologist), Mr N Ford (Manager of Executive Support Team), Ms J Pilkington (Senior Conservation Officer), Mr A Webb (Principal Recreation Officer) and Mr I Withey (Principal Engineer -Traffic and Transportation) – all Directorate of the Urban Environment, Ms Kidd and Mr Sanders (both Directorate of Law and Property)

### **In attendance**

Mr S Riley (Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership), Mr M Mason (Brierley Hill Community Forum) and two community Police Officers, together with thirteen members of the public.

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### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Islam and Mrs Pearce.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A declaration of personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, was received from Councillor Ms Harris in respect of Agenda Item number 8 (Land Issues – Disposal of Land at Cottage Street, Brierley Hill) in view of the possible implications for the property 'The Poplars', in Cottage Street, which was owned by the Dudley Primary Care Trust, in view of Councillor Ms Harris' status as a shareholder in the Trust.

A declaration of personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, was made by Councillor Miller in respect of Agenda Item number 8 in view of his designation as the Cabinet Member for Social Services, within whose area of responsibility authority to determine the issue vested.

On behalf of himself and other members of the Development Control Committee in attendance, Councillor Southall declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct, in respect of Item numbers 10 and 11 on the Agenda (Public Consultation on Four Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals) and (Wordsley Hospital Conservation Area), respectively, in view of their membership of the Development Control Committee.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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RECEIPT OF PETITION

A petition from residents of the Chapel Street Flats, mainly from Chapel Court, but also from Dean Court and Brickiln Court, was presented by Councillor Mrs Wilson requesting the provision of CCTV cameras in the lifts and the employment of a security guard to protect frail and elderly residents from undesirable persons gaining entry to the flats. As an alternative course of action to alleviate the problem, the petition also requested action to be taken to evict tenants who allowed the undesirable persons the access to the flats.

RESOLVED

That the petition be referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services.

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YOUTH ISSUES

No issues were reported under this item.

In response to a question asked at the previous meeting of the Committee, on the reasons for which the Brierley Hill Area Committee (Young People's) Working Group had not met in the current municipal year, the Area Liaison Officer explained that following its appointment at the first meeting of the Area Committee in the new municipal year, few members had indicated a wish to serve and thus the Group had not been proceeded with. In view of this, however, and to enable youth matters to be considered by the Area Committee, an instruction had been given to include Youth Issues as a standing item on the Agenda for all meetings of the Committee.

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BRIERLEY HILL COMMUNITY FORUM

A presentation on the Brierley Hill Community Forum was given by the Director of the Forum, Mike Mason.

In indicating the background to the Forum, Mr Mason referred to its creation initially as a company limited by guarantee and its subsequent registration as a charity. Membership comprised community, voluntary and faith groups in the Brierley Hill, Brockmoor and Pensnett electoral wards, and the Forum worked closely alongside Council Officers and strategic partners, operating closely with the community.

The Forum had been instrumental in the formation of the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership and was one of its three stakeholders.

In indicating the manner in which the Forum worked with its partners, Mr Mason described and gave examples of the nature and type of projects and programmes with which it was engaged, and how these were designed to meet the objectives of the Government's and the Council's relevant strategies.

**RESOLVED**

That the presentation be received and noted and that Mr Mason be thanked for his attendance.

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ORDER OF PROCEDURE**RESOLVED**

That, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13 (c), the remaining items on the Agenda be considered in the following order;

8, 7, 9, 11, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

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LAND ISSUES

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on an application received from Stourbridge College to purchase Council owned land in the Cottage Street area of Brierley Hill.

A question from a member of the public asking whether the Council had considered the sale of land in relation to the development of Brierley Hill to Merry Hill as a strategic Town Centre was considered at this juncture. In supplementing the question orally the questioner asked if the Council was envisaging providing any land for heritage purposes, including a site for the Archives and the Glass Collection.

In response, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration) amplified the reasons given in the report for support for disposal to Stourbridge College for their proposed scheme and indicated that the Council had not so far deliberated on the possible use of land at Brierley Hill for accommodating the Council's Archives or Glass Collection.

On further consideration of this item, a Member of the Committee suggested that part of the site might be utilised to provide for a replacement public toilet.

Following discussion on the issue of disposal an initial view was taken by the Committee that further information was required before a recommendation could be reached, but after being advised by the Director of the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership that deferral could prejudice substantial funding for the College from Advantage West Midlands, the Committee resolved as set out below.

Concerns were expressed by some members of the Committee at the untidy condition of the site and the fencing thereat.

#### RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Personnel Law and Property and the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services be recommended:

- (1) That negotiations with Stourbridge College be permitted to continue and that the Cabinet Members for Personnel Law and Property and Adult and Community Services determine the application.
- (2) That the final decision be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.
- (3) That Stourbridge College be requested to make a presentation on their detailed proposals to the members of this Committee in advance of the next meeting of the Committee.
- (4) That, in determining the issue, the two Cabinet Members above be asked to address the concerns expressed at the condition of the site and the fencing thereat.

A question by a member of the public seeking information on the implications of the proposed Brierley Hill parallel route on Mount Pleasant and Mill Street was submitted and referred for reply to Agenda Item number 9 (Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network).

(b) Metro Route

In response to a question on the current position with Midland Metro insofar as it affected Brierley Hill/Merry Hill, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration) indicated that, as a result of a parliamentary question, it had emerged that funding for the project would be dependent on the Council's engaging in a 'sustainable transport scheme' to reduce road usage and encourage the use of public transport. There were also complications in respect of the part of the scheme involving Birmingham City Council, where funding had yet to be allocated for the work necessary to the section of the line from Snow Hill to Five Ways. The Assistant Director confirmed that, otherwise, the scheme was ready to start and to be completed by the target date of 2012 and both Councils were currently lobbying Government through their local Members of Parliament.

BRIERLEY HILL SUSTAINABLE ACCESS NETWORK

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted advising the Committee of current progress on the delivery of this scheme.

The report confirmed that, in a letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> December 2006, the Department for Transport had confirmed ministerial approval for funding of £20.32m. With public and private sector local contributions, the total expenditure approved for the scheme was £27.4m and the scheme was now ready to proceed.

The tender process had been completed and the works were to be executed by Carillion J M Limited under a partnership arrangement. It was anticipated that a start on site would be made in April 2007, with completion anticipated for August 2008. The tendering process had followed best practice in contract delivery, as promoted by the Highways Agency, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the West Midlands Centre of Excellence and the Office of Government Commerce, and thus recognition of the involvement of the local community had been factored in.

In response to the question asked under Agenda Item number 7, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration) indicated that, as well as benefiting in terms of quality of life and safety, through traffic congestion being alleviated, the proposals would have no direct impact on Mount Pleasant. The new parallel route, however, would dissect Mill Street, as there would be a major intersection at that location. The Assistant Director circulated a card giving contact points for the public to obtain further details on the scheme. He also indicated that a display would be provided should a vacant property, safe enough to provide the facility, become available.

Reference was also made to the concerns of local residents of John Street, the impact on which street would be significant in the early stages of the scheme, in view of the work to its junctions scheduled.

In the discussion on the report, reference was made to the fact that Brierley Hill High Street would be changed substantially and, in response to a question by one member, in which the retention of the current shop frontage policy was advocated, the Assistant Director indicated that an Area Action Plan for the High Street would be prepared. The Action Plan would endeavour to maintain the character of the High Street but considerations would be necessary in respect of air quality and congestion. In many ways, however, it was envisaged that the character of the High Street would not be changed. On this point, the Assistant Director indicated concerns of local traders at the number of hot take away food outlets that were now in place.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be received and noted.
- (2) That the issue of the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network be included on the Agenda of all future meetings of the Committee until further notice.
- (3) That particular consideration be given to the concerns of residents of John Street and that a report specifically relating to the situation in John Street, and the implications for residents of that street, be submitted.
- (4) That it be noted that a report on air quality will be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

At this juncture, in view of the declarations of interest made by Councillor Southall on behalf of the members of the Development Control Committee in attendance at the meeting, Councillor Mrs Wilson vacated the Chair and the Chair was assumed by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Tyler.

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WORDSLEY HOSPITAL CONSERVATION AREA – PUBLIC  
CONSULTATION ON A DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER  
APPRAISAL WITH MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

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A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking views of the Committee and members of the public on draft documentation comprising a Conservation Area character appraisal incorporating proposals for the future management of the Wordsley Hospital Conservation Area.

A presentation on the issue was given by the Principal Conservation Officer/Borough Archaeologist in which the features that justified designation of the site with Conservation Area status were summarised. The Appraisal had also identified certain weaknesses that detracted from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and reference to this was also given in the presentation. The consultation documentation was circulated.

RESOLVED

That the draft Wordsley Hospital Conservation Area character appraisal, including the management proposals contained therein, be received, together with the consultation material.

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PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON FOUR DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA  
CHARACTER APPRAISALS

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A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking the views of the Committee and the Public in attendance on draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals prepared for the following four canal-based Conservation Areas: The Delph Locks, Brierley Hill; Stourbridge Sixteen Locks, Wordsley; Stourbridge Branch Canal, Amblecote; and Stourbridge Branch Canal, Canal Street, Stourbridge.

A presentation on the proposals was given by the Principal Conservation Officer/Borough Archaeologist, in which the proposals for the management of the Conservation Areas were summarised and boundary changes proposed to each respective Area, which had emerged from the Character Appraisals as being appropriate, were indicated. The documentation on the public consultation, which was proposed to run from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007, was circulated.

RESOLVED

That the four draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals, including the proposed boundary amendments and management proposals, for the four canal-based Conservation Areas at the Delph Locks, Brierley Hill, Stourbridge Sixteen Locks, Wordsley, Stourbridge Branch Canal, Amblecote and Stourbridge Branch Canal, Canal Street, be received, together with the consultation material.

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CHAIRMANSHIP

The Chair was reassumed by Councillor Mrs Wilson at this juncture.

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CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

No applications for funding from the Capital Allocations budget in the current year had been received since the previous meeting and no action was therefore taken in respect of this item.

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MATTERS RAISED AT BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2006, insofar as they related to services provided by the Council.

In this regard, a note by the Director of the Urban Environment in response to concerns expressed by Councillor Islam on the lack of a footpath at the bridge in Brierley Hill Road, was circulated.

In the discussion on matters raised previously, the Solicitor, Ms Kidd, agreed to report to Councillor Southall on the current position regarding litigation being taken in respect of the site of the former Wordsley Institute. In addition, the Principal Conservation Officer/Borough Archaeologist was asked to provide Councillor Southall with information regarding artefacts removed from the former Institute premises.

RESOLVED

That the report, and the additional issues referred to, be noted.

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WARD ISSUES

- (a) Councillor Ms Harris drew attention to concerns expressed by residents of Parkes Street in relation to vehicular parking problems caused by non-residents of that street who parked there in consequence of the introduction of charging at the car parks at the Moor Centre. The matter was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration.
- (b) Councillor Tomkinson drew attention to problems arising from the grazing of horses at Bryce Road. She was particularly concerned at the danger to local residents and to road users. The matter was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for attention.



- (c) Councillor Harley requested to be advised of the reasons for which an application for the tenancy of a shop in Beech Road, Kingswinford for a bakery had been refused. The matter was referred to the Director of Law and Property for a response.
- (d) Parking problems in Mill Street, Woodley Close, and Corbett Road anticipated by a member of the public, in consequence of the forthcoming introduction of parking charges at Merry Hill, were discussed. The matter was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment.

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NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 at the Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford.

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SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of forthcoming meetings of the Council's Select Committees were noted.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm

CHAIRMAN