

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Monday, 20th June, 2005 at 7.00 pm
at Hob Green Primary School, Hob Green Road, Stourbridge

PRESENT:-

Councillors Adams, Banks, Mrs Collins, Mrs Cowell, Donegan, Jones, Kettle, Mrs Martin, Musk, Rogers, A Turner, Vickers and C Wilson.

Officers:-

Director of Law and Property (as Area Liaison Officer); Assistant Director, Development and Environmental Protection, Regeneration Manager, Senior Engineer Traffic and Transportation, (Directorate of the Urban Environment); Assistant Director of Education, Access and Inclusion Division, Area Youth and Community Worker (Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning); Group Accountant, Corporate Finance (Directorate of Finance), Quality Manager, Improvements and Complaints Team and Team Leader PULSE (Directorate of Social Services), Strategic Policy Information Manager (Chief Executive's), Area Manager, Stourbridge District Housing Office (Directorate of Housing) and Mrs. J. Rees (Directorate of Law and Property).

IN ATTENDANCE:

Approximately 40 members of the public were in attendance at the meeting.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Adams be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Councillor Adams thereupon took the Chair)

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st March, 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Adams declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item number 17 (Grant Applications: Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust) in view of his being President of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park.

Councillor Mrs Collins declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in agenda item number 16 (Grant Applications) in view of her son being Chairman of the Stourbridge Radio Group.

Councillor Rogers declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item numbers 16 (Capital Allocations) and 17 (Grant Applications: Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust) in view of his being a member of the Scout Association and Vice Chairman of the friends of Mary Stevens Park respectively.

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Attwood and Knowles.

5 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Mrs Cowell be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

6 CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13 (c) it was

RESOLVED

That Agenda Item No. 12 (Co-opted Members) be considered as the next item on the Agenda.

7 CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the co-option of members to serve on the Committee for the 2005/2006 municipal year.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that he had received a request, as had other Area Committees, from the Dudley Association of Governing Bodies (DAGB) for consideration of a representative of the DAGB to be a co-opted member of the Committee.

It was the view of the Committee that, as all the Members were governors of Dudley schools, there was no need for further representation from the DAGB.

RESOLVED

That Mr G Downing, Mr D Coggan, Miss R Hill, Ms P Shepherd and, Mr K Rodney (and in his absence Mr P Singh) be reappointed as co-opted members for the 2005/2006 municipal year.

8

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEE

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted setting out the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees, as approved at the annual meeting of the Council held on 19th May, 2005

RESOLVED

That the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees as set out in the Appendices to the report submitted be approved.

9

PUBLIC FORUM

Before reading questions from the public the Area Liaison Officer stated that any questions which were not addressed at the meeting would receive a written response from the appropriate officer.

Questions and answers were then given as follows: -

1. A member of the public requested that the notice board showing opening times of Stourbridge Crematorium be reinstated, following the introduction of a reversal of traffic flow. The Assistant Director, Development and Environmental Protection undertook to investigate the request and consider the reinstatement of the notice board.
2. A member of the public requested comments from Councillor Jones regarding the closure and sale of the Crown Centre car park. Councillor Jones commented that there were no intentions to reduce the number of car parking spaces available at the Crown Centre. He was aware of the possible potential to redevelop the site by the replacement of the existing supermarket when it closed, with a new building, which would incorporate improved car parking facilities.

3. A member of the public queried whether the grant of £5,000 to the Stourbridge Theatre Company would be withdrawn following the Company's failure to raise the required funding, and the current involvement of a Council Directorate in the project. The Area Liaison Officer advised that the grant would not be withdrawn, as the grant had been granted specifically for the provision of tiered seating for the Town Hall. The Directorate of the Urban Environment's involvement was in respect of improving the standard of the Hall's floor and other improvements. He added that the terms of reference of the committee for awarding grants did not prohibit Council Directorates from applying for funding for projects which would benefit the community.
4. A member of the public, who was unable to attend the meeting, had raised concerns relating to maintenance of footpaths, cycleways and open green spaces in the Withymoor area. The Assistant Director, Development and Environmental Protection advised that she was aware that a great deal of work had been undertaken by the Grounds Maintenance Section and Public Works Division in the Withymoor area. She explained the different types of maintenance work undertaken in this area and the reasons for those differences.
5. A member of the public queried proposals for improvements and provision of security at Wollescote Park, in response to which the Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection advised on the admirable work already undertaken by the Friends of the Park and the Directorate of the Urban Environment. She undertook to investigate the queries and send a written response to the questioner.
6. A member of the public requested action be taken regarding four empty houses in Foster Street East, two of which had been damaged by fire and were having a detrimental effect on the surrounding area. The Senior Engineer, Traffic and Transportation undertook to investigate and send a written response to the questioner.
7. A member of the public expressed a number of concerns regarding the unkempt state of the passageway between Sandhurst Avenue and Buckbury Close, including poor lighting due to overgrown trees, danger from motorcyclists using it as a racetrack and concerns for the general safety of local residents. The Senior Engineer Traffic and Transportation undertook to meet with the member of the public to clarify the issues and send a written response to her.
8. A member of the public expressed concerns over a large dangerous hole in the private road behind the police station in Victoria Street in the HSBC Bank car park. As there appeared to be some confusion over the ownership of the land where the hole was situated, the Senior Engineer, Traffic and Transportation

undertook to investigate and send a written response to the questioner.

10 YOUTH ISSUES

There were no youth issues to be discussed at this meeting.

11 DUDLEY BOROUGH CHALLENGE – CONSULTATION PHASE III

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted updating and advising on the Council's proposed Dudley Borough Challenge, as a consequence of the Council's responsibility to produce a strategy framework for the next 15 years. Consultation on the draft strategy was due to end in July 2005, when a final strategy would be drawn up and further consultation would take place. Members of the Committee and members of the public were encouraged to let the Chief Executive have their views on the draft strategy and take part in the Challenge for their neighbourhood.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report submitted be noted.

12 APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

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

On consideration of the report submitted it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That a licence to occupy the kitchen and other rooms in Wollescote Hall, Wollescote Road, Stourbridge be granted to the Black Country Bowls Club, the Crystal Bowls Club and the Lye and Wollescote Sons of Rest, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (2) That, subject to the Area Liaison Officer providing the Chairman and Ward Members with an amended map and to their subsequent comments thereon, the Cabinet Member for Leisure be advised to approve the application to purchase land at 37 Farndale Close, Amblecote, Stourbridge,
- (3) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised to approve the transfer of land at the rear of 134 Grange Lane, Stourbridge as shown hatched on the plan attached

to the report submitted on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.

13

APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration of the reappointment of Working Groups for the 2005/06 municipal year.

Upon consideration of the report and clarification of the composition of each group it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Stourbridge Area Consultative Group be reappointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the consultative group comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Co-opted Members of the Committee.
 - (2) That the Stourbridge Town Centre Traffic Management Working Group be reappointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the working group comprise the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Councillors Jones and Knowles.
 - (3) That the Skate Park Working Group be reappointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the working group comprise the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Councillor Mrs Collins and Ms Hill.
 - (4) That the Stourbridge Town Hall Working Group be reappointed for the ensuing municipal year with its existing terms of reference and that the working group comprise the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Councillors Mrs Collins, Vickers and Knowles.
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14

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted seeking consideration of appointments of representatives of the Council to various outside organisations for the 2005/2006 municipal year.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that the Lye Youth Centre had been disbanded; with a new association being formed named "Lye Body Building Gym", and using the same premises, with the assets of the disbanded group being transferred to the new organisation.

Currently two nominations were sought for the new management, but a third may be requested in the future, in which case the third Ward Member for Lye and Wollescote would be nominated.

Some Members of the Committee commented that they were not notified when meetings of the Outside Bodies took place. The Area Liaison Officer undertook to request that Members be advised of times and venues of future meetings when advising of the nominations to the outside bodies. Upon consideration of the report and comments made it was

RESOLVED

That appointments to the organisations indicated below be made as follows:

<u>Name of the organisation</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Period of Office</u>
<u>Social Inclusion</u>		
Mary Stevens Hospice	Councillors Jones, Kettle and C Wilson	Annual
The Margaret Westwood Memorial Charity	Mr A Fisher	4 years from 23/03/06
Robin Woods Centre Board of Directors	Councillor Mrs Cowell	Annual
Stourbridge Relief in Sickness Charity	Mr P Pinfold, Stourbridge, Directorate of Social Services	4 years from 26/02/06
Lye Body Building Gym	Councillors Donegan and Vickers (with Councillor A Turner in the event of a third nominee being requested)	Annual
<u>Community Associations</u>		
(a) Lye	Councillors Donegan, Turner and Vickers	Annual

(b)	Norton	Councillor Adams	Annual
(c)	Valley Road Youth & Community Centre	Councillors Donegan, Turner, Vickers and Attwood	Annual
(d)	Withymoor	Councillor Banks	Annual

15

PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO SOCIAL SERVICES ESTABLISHMENTS NOVEMBER 2004 – APRIL 2005

A report of the Director of Social Services was submitted on member visits to the Social Services residential establishments in the 2004/05 municipal year and seeking further nominations for visits for the 2005/06 municipal year. In their absence, the Chairman undertook to seek agreement from Councillors Attwood and Knowles to undertake the visits and advise the Director of Social Services accordingly.

A member of the public advised that Wollescote Hall had been vandalised on the previous evening. A representative from Social Services undertook to investigate and send a written response to the member of the public raising the issue.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information in the report now submitted be noted.
- (2) That, subject to the consideration to be given to this matter by the Chairman, Councillors Turner and Wilson be nominated to participate in the Social Services residential visits for the 2005/06 municipal year:

16

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in parts of this item, Councillors Mrs Collins and Rogers withdrew from the meeting during consideration of their respective applications).

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration of five applications for funding from the Capital Allocations budget for 2005/06.

In support of the application for St Thomas's Parochial Church Council, their representative commented that a plan had been submitted with their application. The Area Liaison Officer undertook to circulate the plan to Members of the Committee for their information.

In response to a query regarding a previously allocated grant for skatepark provision, which had not come to fruition, the Chairman advised that the Skatepark Working Group was scheduled to meet very shortly to identify a suitable site. If a suitable site was not forthcoming, then the previously allocated grant would be returned to the Capital Allocations budget.

Upon consideration of the report and comments made it was

RESOLVED

That the sums referred to below be allocated to the following organisations for the purposes indicated.

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Friends of Wollescote Park	For computer and printing equipment	£1,797.75
Norton St Michael's Scout Group	Purchase of replacement camping equipment	£550.00
St Thomas's Parochial Church Council	Preparing scheme to upgrade church grounds and create a community garden subject to the balance of the funding being secured.	£5,000.00
Stourbridge in Bloom	The purchase of automatic watering systems and planters.	£5,000.00
Stourbridge Radio Group	Audio and transmission equipment subject to the balance of the funding required being secured and the Stourbridge Radio Group being granted a community licence.	£5,000.00

GRANT APPLICATIONS: STEVENS PARK AND RECREATION GROUND FOUNDATION TRUST

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in parts of this item, Councillors Mrs Collins and Rogers withdrew from the meeting during its consideration).

A report of the Director of Finance was submitted seeking consideration of applications for funding from the Ernest Stevens Memorial Trust.

Members of the Committee indicated their reluctance to use part of the capital funds to award grants.

Upon consideration of the applications and the comments made it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That, in order to ensure the amount of capital on deposit would be maintained, applications be awarded on a match funding basis, i.e. the approval of 50% of the application, with the applicant providing the remainder.
- (2) That the sums below be allocated to the organisations indicated for the purposes shown, subject to the organisations confirming to the Director of Finance that the remaining funding required has been secured:-

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Stourbridge Theatre Group	Tiered seating system to be installed in Stourbridge Town Hall.	£2,500.00
Friends of Mary Stevens Park	Improved facilities at Mary Stevens Park.	£2,500.00
Stambermill St Mark's Scout Group	Fencing for the rear of HQ	£350.00
Oldswinford Cricket Club	Provision of disabled facilities.	£2,500.00
St Thomas's Parochial Church Council	Provision of a community garden.	£2,500.00

STOURBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN FURTHER UPDATE

The Regeneration Manager gave a verbal update on the current situation regarding the proposed draft master plan for Stourbridge Town Centre, which it was anticipated would be completed in November 2005 when it would be the subject of public consultation.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation given be noted.

ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

- (a) Councillor Donegan advised that the previously named Jim's Gym at Lye had now reopened as Lye Body Building Gym. On behalf of the group he extended thanks to the officers for their assistance in establishing the new club and congratulations to Sally Walton for scoring a goal for the Great Britain Women's Hockey Team.
 - (b) Councillor A Turner raised concerns at the increased traffic problems in Stourbridge High Street, particularly on weekend nights. He requested consideration for a trial period of a parking ban in the High Street, the installation of a yellow box junction at High Street and Foster Street junction and also the creation of a hackney carriage stand in the High Street. The Chairman advised that consideration would be given to these issues at the next meeting of the Stourbridge Area Committee Traffic Management Working Group.
 - (c) Councillor Mrs Cowell raised concerns at the distress caused to relatives resulting from the new one way system now in operation at Stourbridge Crematorium and requested that the system should be reviewed. The Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection undertook to investigate and reply to Councillor Mrs Cowell and report back to the next meeting of the Committee.
 - (d) Councillor Kettle raised concerns that the covenant on the cricket pitch at Wollescote Park was being contravened by youths using the cricket pitch for football and other activities and causing nuisance to the local residents.
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DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS.

The dates and venues of future meetings were reported as follows.

12th September, 2005 at 7.00pm at Stourbridge Town Hall
14th November, 2005 at 7.00pm at Redhill School, Stourbridge
13th January, 2006 at 7.00pm at Redhill School, Stourbridge
20th March 2006, at 7.00pm at Redhill School Stourbridge

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm

CHAIRMAN

SAC/11