

North Dudley Area Committee – 30th January 2008

Responses to Questions Raised at Previous Meetings

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Committee on the current status of responses to questions posed at previous meetings of the Committee.

Background

2. At the meeting of this Committee on 5th December 2007, it was indicated that written responses would be sent to the questioners concerned. The responses are attached as appendix 1.

Finance

3. There are no direct financial implications at this stage.

Law

4. Section 111 Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its statutory functions.

Equality Impact

5. The proposals take into account the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

Recommendation

6. That the Committee note the report and the appendix to the report.



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John Freeman
Area Liaison Officer

Contact Officer: Joan Rees – Democratic Services Officer 01384 815242

E Mail: joan.rees@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers:

Question slips submitted at the meeting
Correspondence sent in response by Council Officers

APPENDIX 1

Responses To Questions Raised at Previous Meeting held on 5th December, 2007

Youth Issues

a) Change of Name of Youth Award

The Co-opted Member representing Youths on the Committee, requested that in memory of Rajpal Singh, the Youth Worker from the Lower Youth Academy, the Youth Council be asked if they would consider changing the name of a Youth Award to that of the Rajpal Parting Award. In response, the Area Liaison Officer has written to the Chairman of the Dudley Youth council, requesting that the Youth Council give consideration to the request.

b) Youth Conference

Councillor Mrs Millward requested that the Director of Children's Services give consideration to altering the date of the Youth Conference in December 2007, in view of it clashing with Year 11 exams throughout the Borough.

The Director has sent a written response to Councillor Mrs Millward.

Public Forum -

A member of the public raised concern regarding brambles which needed pruning on both sides of the Old Railway Bridge in Bradleys Lane, Coseley to avoid possible danger to children walking to Wallbrook Primary School. The Area Liaison Officer has written to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council to request that, as the land referred to belongs to Sandwell Council, they prune the brambles as a matter of urgency.

A query as to why electronic training for council staff on disabilities had not been implemented was referred to the Chief Executive who has responded to the questioner advising that there had been a delay in introducing the e-training on diversity due to some technical issues which still needed to be resolved. He was optimistic that these would be sorted out in the New Year. He also advised that the more traditional training courses on disability and equality issues continued to be provided for employees.

Information regarding applications for capital allocation has been sent out to the person who requested the information.

The Area Liaison Officer has requested that the Headteacher of Ellowes Hall School speak with pupils with a view to depositing litter in the bins provided, particularly chip papers and wrappers. The Headteacher has responded and advised that anti litter education will continue to form part of the school's Personal, Social and Health Education programme.

Ward Issues –

Councillor Rydney's request for shredders to be made available within public libraries was referred to the Director of Adult Community and Housing Services.

The Assistant Director for Libraries, Archives and Adult Education has written to Councillor Ridney advising that in principle libraries would be prepared to host shredders. However, as they would need to be of industrial strength to manage the potential usage they would not be able to provide them from library budgets. If a funding source was identified for the shredders and removal of paper waste a trial scheme could be established to see if the volume of shredded documents produced was manageable.

QUESTIONS RAISED CONCERNING THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Public Forum

A member of the public expressed concerns relating to how The Friends Clayton Playing Fields Group had been constituted, and on an apparent lack of public consultation regarding the Group's proposals to re-designate the playing fields near Fountain Lane, into a park. The Assistant Director, Culture and Community Services (Directorate of the Urban Environment) undertook to arrange a meeting with residents and local Councillors to discuss the issue further.

The friends of Clayton Park Playing Field were established in 2006 from a small number of local people who wanted to improve facilities on the playing field and were seeking the Council's support through the liveability project. They developed a master plan in line with all other friends groups and required by the Liveability process and in June 2007 opened up that master plan to public scrutiny through a consultation process. This included a post card drop to households within a 400 metre distance from the boundary of the playing field inviting residents to a public meeting and fun day to discuss the master plan. 1083 households were covered by this exercise. In addition leaflets, posters and adverts were placed in the local library, youth centre, Coseley Swimming Pool and local shops for the same purpose. In addition the master plan and associated questionnaire was available on line. In total 78 completed questionnaires have been received which are to be used in the development of the master plan and the priorities for the utilisation of funds that the playing field can access. Further meetings will be held with local elected Members and other interested parties prior to any implementation of the master plan.

A member of the public queried when work on Cotwall End Valley would take place, as six months had lapsed since the granting of funding to carry out the work. The Assistant Director Culture and Community Services, advised that, as a direct result of the unprecedented heavy flooding throughout the country which had necessitated urgent remedial work elsewhere, work on the Cotwall End Valley project had been unavoidably delayed. It was anticipated that the work would now commence in January 2008

A member of the public requested an update on proposals for Hopyard Lane to be made a one way street. In response, the Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety, advised that he would speak with the questioner outside of the meeting to arrange a site visit to discuss proposals for the siting of the poles required to advertise the one way system.

A meeting will be arranged in due course with all Ward Members and the resident of Hopyard Lane who supports the one-way scheme.

The same member of the public questioned why Himley Hall was used as a venue for meetings and events as it was difficult to reach except by car, and was not on a designated bus route. Events starting at 9.30 am were proving difficulty for the elderly as bus passes were not valid until after 9.30 am. The query was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for a written response.

The Assistant Director Culture and Community Services and the Himley Estate Manager have written to the questioner.

A member of the public queried why the pot holes in Gornal still had not been repaired. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to discuss the issue outside of the meeting, with a view to addressing the problem.

Consideration will be given to investigating the location of potholes in Gornal, and rectifying the problems.

Ward Issues

Cllr Mrs Millward expressed

- a) Concerns regarding traffic flow at Brook Street, Lower Gornal. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate.

An investigation will commence during the next financial year, following which consideration will be given to the inclusion of Brook Street in a future annual programme of works

- b) Concern at an apparent lack of consultation with residents and young people, regarding proposals for a skatepark in the Gornal Ward.

An extensive consultation exercise was undertaken in February 2005 and involved postal consultation with residents residing in a catchment of 400 metres of the proposed site boundary and 2407 households were invited to respond. In addition consultation meetings were held with the Oval Residents Forum, The Turls Hill and Swanbrook Valley residents Association, The West Midlands Crime Prevention Unit and local youth groups. The results of the exercise were reported to the Area Committee on 23 March 2005 at which the Committee approved the provision of a skatepark at the Tenacre Site.

Subsequently with the awarding of monies from the Big Lottery Play Programme a scheme has been designed following meetings held in October 2007 at the Oval and Tudor Neighbourhood Centre involving young people. No further consultation is planned for the project at this stage and implementation is due in early 2008.

Cllr Mrs Ridley requested that the roads in and around Roseville Methodist Church, including School Street and Bayer Street, be repaired.

The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate. He advised that the streets will be assessed and added to a list for future highway repair works.