

## **BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE**

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 at 7.00 pm  
at The Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Southall (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs D Harley (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Blood, Foster, P Harley, Ms Harris, Islam, Mrs Jordan, Miller, Mrs Simms and Mrs Wilson.

### **Officers:-**

The Director of the Urban Environment (As Area Liaison Officer), Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Manager, Executive Support Team, Group Engineer, (Traffic and Road Safety), (all Directorate of the Urban Environment); Targeted and Service Improvement Manager – Youth Service, (Directorate of Children's Services); Senior Account Manager, Marketing and Communications (Chief Executive's Directorate); Mr T Holder, Solicitor and Miss K Fellows (Directorate of Corporate Resources),

together with Inspector E Boyle and Sergeant R Evans, West Midlands Police and approximately 19 members of the public.

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### **OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman introduced Captain Jamie Haden-Walker and the members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Pensnett Boys Brigade advising of their performance at the meeting. By way of introduction the Chairman also referred to the background of the Boys Brigade together with their involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme with some of the members attaining the prestigious gold award. He also referred to the successful application for capital allocation funding from the Committee in order to purchase new musical equipment, to the band membership and their lead at the Remembrance Day Parade in Netherton, providing details of their fundraising.

Captain Jamie Haden-Walker referred to the new instruments that had been purchased and thanked the Committee for their support in relation to the application for capital allocation funding.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Pensnett Boys Brigade then performed to the Committee.

Following the performance the Chairman wished the 1<sup>st</sup> Pensnett Boys Brigade every success for the future and thanked Councillor Foster for her suggestion that the band perform at the Area Committee.

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Billingham, Mrs Greenaway and J T Jones.

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35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Member made a Declaration of Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

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36 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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37 PETITIONS

The following petitions had been received since the last meeting of the Committee:-

- (a) From residents in Ash Crescent, Kingswinford objecting to proposals to introduce waiting restrictions in Ash Crescent, Kingswinford. It was reported that the Petitioner had been responded to advising that it was unlikely that waiting restrictions would be introduced as there did not appear to be general community support for the scheme.
- (b) Objecting to proposals for double yellow lines surrounding the Park Tavern Public House in Kingswinford. It was reported that the first named Petitioner had been advised that the concerns had been noted and Officer recommendations regarding the public highway would be decided upon in due course.

No further Petitions were presented to the meeting.

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38 YOUTH ISSUES

The Targeted and Service Improvement Manager – Youth Service gave a verbal presentation updating the Committee on the youth activities taking place within the Brierley Hill Area Committee Area.

She advised of her new role within the Youth Service stating that this would be her last attendance at the Committee and that Mr J Grant would attend future Committees to update Members on youth service activities.

The Targeted and Service Improvement Manager – Youth Service made particular reference to activities taking place in the Kingswinford Youth Centre, the Pensnett Youth Club and the Dell Friday evening football sessions.

She also reported on the Brierley Hill Detached Project advising that the Brierley Hill Youth Forum were currently meeting on Wednesday evenings and had formed partnerships with Wordsley Library.

She stated that in partnership with the police, Mr Grant and Juniper Training together with other substance misuse workers a pre-Christmas disco had been arranged at Kingswinford Youth Centre which had been well attended. She reported on the continuing work with young people including how to stay safe, the dangers of underage drinking and illegal drug use and that the team were also involved in advising on career opportunities.

It was also reported that at the Source Youth Centre, the Integra Housing Association had commenced Friday evening sessions catering for young people and adults with mental health issues and that the first two sessions had been well attended and that they would continue to meet fortnightly.

Following the presentation Members thanked the Targeted and Service Improvement Manager for her hard work and wished her every success in her new post.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.

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## PUBLIC FORUM

Consideration was given to the following written/oral questions raised:-

- (a) In response to a written question regarding concerns in relation to the flats in Beech Road, Kingswinford being in a state of disrepair which had resulted in anti social behaviour at the site, the Area Liaison Officer advised that he would refer the matter to the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services who would submit a response to the questioner.

Councillor P Harley further reported on the position advising of the possible recommendations in relation to the Beech Road shops and requesting that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to the up to date position.

Councillor P Harley also raised an issue in relation to the derelict shops in Sandringham Road, Wordsley suggesting that a report in relation to the Council's proposals regarding these shops should also be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

- (b) The same questioner also raised concerns in relation to anti social behaviour on Albermarle Road, Kingswinford. In responding to the question, Councillor P Harley advised that issues in relation to anti social behaviour could be discussed at the Police and Communities Together meetings which were held at the Kingswinford Community Centre.

Inspector Boyle also stated that incidents of anti social behaviour should be reported to the police in order to provide an audit trail, to enable the police to target resources accordingly.

- (c) Councillor Ms Harris requested that alternative venues be considered when arranging future meetings of the Area Committee in order to further engage the public within the Brierley Hill Area.
- (d) Councillor Foster suggested that the frequency and advertising of future meetings be investigated and that the public should be consulted upon Area Committee meetings in order to ascertain what they required from such meetings.
- (e) Councillor P Harley suggested that Area Committees could consider merging with Police and Communities Together meetings with other Community Groups engaging with the Area Committees.
- (f) In response to a written question regarding the enforcement of the Traffic Regulation Orders in Elgar Crescent, Russells Hall, the Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety reported that the signage would be erected within the near future and that the Police would enforce the orders, as far as their resources would permit. However local residents should liaise with the police in relation to any concerns regarding parking.

Inspector Boyle requested local residents to highlight the times of day and/or particular days that obstructive parking occurred in order that police resources could be targeted appropriately.

- (g) In responding to a written question from the same questioner in relation to the erection of the Round Oak Steel Workers Memorial, the Area Liaison Officer advised that the Borough Artist was continuing to investigate funding options as sponsorship was required for the cost of the provision of the Memorial and agreed to provide details of the up to date position in relation to funding to a future meeting of the Committee.

- (h) A member of the public referred to problems with badgers at the Haven, Wordsley.
- (i) A further resident of the Haven suggested that the council remove the grass banks surrounding the area.

In responding the Area Liaison Officer advised that as badgers were a protected species the Council had to work within the relevant legislation. Guidance had been obtained from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and that Council Officers were investigating what action could be positively undertaken to try and alleviate the problem. He also referred to the commissioning of a report by the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services in relation to the effect that the badgers were having upon the sandstone banks within the area and any potential remedies in relation to the application for Licences to deal with the badger setts under prescribed circumstances and would ensure that a response outlining the findings of the above work was submitted to the questioner.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That reports be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to the up to date position regarding:-
  - (a) The shops at Beech Road, Kingswinford; and
  - (b) The shops in Sandringham Road, Wordsley.

#### CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on recommendations made in respect of applications received for funding from this year's Capital Allocation budget and to update Members on progress to date.

In presenting the report submitted, particular reference was made to the interim arrangements for dealing with Capital Allocation applications for the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chairman at the first meeting of the Area Committee in the new municipal year, and the arrangements for dealing with urgent applications in between meetings during the next municipal year.

The Area Liaison Officer also referred to the letters of thanks that had been received from those recipients of funding from this Committee's Capital Allocations budget.

The Chairman thanked the Manager of the Executive Support Team and the Group Accountant for the professional manner in which they dealt with applications for Capital Allocations funding.

#### RESOLVED

1. (a) That approval be given to the application received from the Chapel Street Estate Tenants and Residents Association for the sum of £730 to purchase a lap top computer and printer to support the administrative functions of the group.
- (b) That approval be given to the application received from Kingswinford Air Training Cadets for the sum of £5,000 towards IT equipment that will allow cadets to access BTEC training and sit on-line exams.
- (c) That approval be given to the application received from The Calvary Church, Kingswinford for the sum of £5,000 towards the purchase of 250 chairs for use at the facility with Council Officers working with the Church in order to provide best value.
- (d) That approval be given to the application received from The Rainbow Club based at the Richardson Hall Cottage, Wordsley for the sum of £1,732 for various items of sports, musical and IT equipment to provide activities to stimulate and educate adults with autism or other learning disabilities.
- (e) That approval be given to the application received from St James' Methodist Church – Children and Young Peoples Group, Pensnett for the sum of £5,000 to purchase and install Astroturf to provide an environmentally and child friendly surface to a safe play area for the benefit of the various children and young peoples' groups who use the facility provided, with Officers from the Council's Landscape Procurement Team providing appropriate advice to the Church in order to provide best value.
- (f) That approval be given to the application received from The Waterfront Christian Fellowship for the sum of £5,000 towards the cost of a £7,300 project to upgrade the heating and hot water system at the centre.
- (g) That approval be given to the application received from Richmond Park Allotment Society, Wall Heath for the sum of £3,464 for the installation of security fencing and works to improve access to the site.

- 2 That in the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chairman at the first meeting of the Area Committee in the new municipal year, the Lead Officer, in consultation with a representative from each political group on the Committee, be authorised to consider and determine any application received for capital funding and that the decisions made, be reported to the first meeting of the Committee in the new municipal year.
- 3 That in between meetings during the next municipal year, in respect of urgent applications for a capital allocation funding, any such applications be considered and determined by the Area Liaison Officer in consultation with Members of the Capital Allocations Working Group and reported for information to the following meeting of the Committee.

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#### MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 10<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2011.

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A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on a number of issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2011. Details of the matters raised at that meeting were set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted.

In presenting the report submitted the Area Liaison Officer made particular reference to the response relating to the request for the provision and price of residential parking permits within the Birmingham area as such a scheme would be popular within the Kingswinford area, advising that the Cabinet Member for Transportation was considering the information obtained from Birmingham City Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Jordan in relation to the establishment of a Scrutiny Committee Working Group to consider various issues in relation to Council owned grazing land, Councillor Islam reported that a draft policy in relation to stray and illegally grazing horses had been submitted to the Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee and had been endorsed and would now proceed to the Cabinet Member for approval.

He referred to the four parts of the Policy that had been established in conjunction with the police and other agencies, making particular reference to the Council's retention of a bailiff in order to deal with illegal grazing on council owned land and the council looking at the feasibility of improving their land stock in order to make it fit for grazing purposes.

The Area Liaison Officer also reported that £52,000 for each of three consecutive years had been allocated by the Council in order to retain the bailiff and conduct work with the Police in relation to stray horses on the public highway.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted be noted.

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42                    WARD ISSUES

In responding to two Ward Issues, the Area Liaison Officer advised as follows:-

In relation to the shops situated at Sandringham Road, Wordsley, this site was not council owned, however Officers were working to promote the site and the council's Corporate Property Department were investigating potential use of the site and a report on this would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

In relation to the shops situated at Beech Road, Kingswinford, this site was council owned and the Housing Services of the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services were currently investigating options in relation to the site and a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to the site.

Councillor Islam congratulated the Chairman and Councillor Foster in relation to the suggestion and the facilitation of the attendance of the 1<sup>st</sup> Pensnett Boys Brigade at the Committee.

Councillor Islam also requested that a future meeting of the Committee take place within the Brierley Hill Area and that more publicity be provided in relation to the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.

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43                    SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of future meetings of the Council's Scrutiny Committees in the current municipal year were received and noted.

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44                    DATES OF FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

It was noted that the dates of meetings of the Committee in 2012/13 would be determined at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May, 2012.

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45                    CLOSING REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN



The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their participation in the Area Committee meetings during the current municipal year.

The meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.

CHAIRMAN