

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Monday, 20th March, 2006 at 7.00 pm
at Hob Green Primary School, Stourbridge

PRESENT:-

Councillor Adams (Chairman)
Councillors Banks, Mrs Collins, Mrs Cowell, Donegan, Jones, Knowles, Mrs Martin, Musk, Rogers, A Turner, Vickers and C Wilson and Mr G Downing

Officers:-

Director of Law and Property (as Area Liaison Officer); Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection, Head of Design and Projects, Planning and Policy Manager, Senior Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety (Directorate of the Urban Environment) Acting Assistant Director (Directorate of Children's Services), Housing Manager (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Group Accountant (Directorate of Finance and ICT), and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Law and Property).

IN ATTENDANCE:

Approximately 35 members of the public were in attendance at the meeting.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Adams and Rogers declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No 8 (Capital Allocations - Application by the Friends of Mary Stevens Park) in view of their being President and Vice Chairman, respectively, of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park.

Councillor Mrs. Cowell declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No. 8 (Capital Allocations - Application by Withymoore Colts), in view of her granddaughter being a member of the football team.

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 13th February, 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following amendment:-

That in respect of paragraph (8) of Minute No. 59, the word "tipping" be replaced with the word "posting" in lines 2 and 3.

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 had requested by telephone a written response to his previous request, for dropped kerbs in the Stourbridge Town Centre and at sites in the surrounding area. The Assistant Director, Development and Environmental Protection, advised that she was aware of an extensive site meeting between an Officer and the questioner, the previous week, and that a written response had been sent to the questioner.
- (2) Two members of the public complained about the unlawful parking of large vans on the pavement near their homes, which was blocking their view. The Area Liaison Officer advised that this was a police matter. The Chairman undertook to send a letter to the police regarding this issue.

Councillor Knowles advised that, when these issues had been brought to his attention, he had reported the matter to the police, who had since advised him that the traffic wardens in the area were monitoring the problem.

Councillor Mrs. Martin advised that unlawful parking on pavements was a Borough wide problem, which caused particular problems to wheelchair users and people with pushchairs, who could not negotiate the pavements when vehicles were parked unlawfully.

- (3) A member of the public asked if Post Office Workers could be requested not to drop elastic bands, when delivering the post. The Chairman undertook to write to the Post Office, requesting that postal workers retain the elastic bands and take them back to the Post Office.

- (4) A member of the public requested an update on the current position regarding the proposed alterations to the Hungary Hill, Birmingham Street/ Stourbridge Road Junction of which they had been advised of some time ago. The Senior Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety, undertook to investigate and send a written response to the questioner.
 - (5) Comments by a member of the public referring to the Stourbridge Town Centre Master Plan were deferred for consideration under that agenda item.
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STOURBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN AREA ACTION PLAN

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the preparation and progress of the Stourbridge Town Centre Masterplan, including the Town Centre and the adjacent land to the north.

In presenting the report, the Assistant Director, Development and Environmental Protection, advised that the timetable contained within the report could be subject to change, under the annual monitoring process, as set out in the Local Development Scheme. Regular update reports would be submitted to future meetings of the Committee, as and when appropriate.

During the discussion of this matter, a member of the public queried why information and maps relating to the Stourbridge Town Centre Masterplan had not been published in the local press. Councillor Jones, as Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, advised that it was not practical to publish the material in the press, due to limited space, the volume and size of maps referred to, and the high cost of inserting publicity material in the press.

In response to a comment by a member of the public regarding the impact of any future planning application, by an individual developer, would have on the Stourbridge Town Masterplan, Councillor Jones advised that the Council were well aware of the reasons why certain developers deliberately submitted incomplete planning applications, and on the impact on local areas. However nothing could be done to prevent anyone from putting in any planning application, which had to be considered by the Council. Developments for Stourbridge could not be put on hold waiting for possible applications to be submitted.

Councillor Knowles spoke in support of the Plan, but expressed disappointment at the poor quality of the map contained within the report submitted.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the content of the report be noted and that the work of officers and of the Cabinet Members for Economic Regeneration and Transportation in the continuing development of the Stourbridge Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plan, be supported.
- (2) That further reports on the Stourbridge Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plan be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

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CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(Councillors Adams, Mrs Cowell and Rogers withdrew from the meeting whilst applications for a capital allocation in which they had declared a prejudicial interest were considered).

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on two applications for funding from the Committee's Capital Allocations Budget.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that he had received a late application from the Stourbridge Quakers, for funding towards the cost of the provision of a security fence at the side of their Meeting House. The security fence was required as a matter of urgency, to protect the building from acts of vandalism and anti social behaviour.

He advised that the erection of the fencing would be subject to planning permission, which a member of the Quaker Society confirmed had been applied for, the outcome of which was expected to be known by the beginning of April.

The member of the Quaker Society advised that the building suffered more from anti social behaviour and vandalism in the lighter evenings, hence the urgency of the application.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the following amounts be awarded to the organisations stated.

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Friends of Mary Stevens Park	Erection of iron railing along the Norton Road perimeter of the park	£5000
Withymoor Colts Football Club	Training equipment, nets and goals and barbecue and marquee	£2450.30

- (2) That the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to determine the application from the Stourbridge Quakers, and any other late applications of an urgent nature where a decision could not wait for the next meeting of the Committee.

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PROPOSED SKATEPARK - JUNCTION ROAD PLAYING FIELDS

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the proposed skatepark facility at Junction Road Playing Fields, Stourbridge, following consultation with local residents, and seeking views of the preferred site option, as set out in plan attached to the report, for the provision of a skatepark.

The Head of Design and Projects advised that, following discussions with Redhill School, it had been suggested that a perimeter fence be erected to surround whichever site was used. He acknowledged that a number of objections had been received, the main objections being related to anti social behaviour, crime and drugs. He confirmed that where other facilities had been introduced in other areas, there was no evidence of any increase in anti social behaviour problems. The Skatepark Working Group had worked extensively over the last year to identify a suitable site for this provision.

A member of the public questioned the accuracy of some of the figures and the public comments contained within the report submitted. The Design and Projects Manager advised that the comments contained within the report were printed exactly as received from members of the public, and that the information contained within the report was correct.

A second member of the public questioned the accuracy of the plan attached to the report, in response to which the Head of Design and Projects advised that the details contained within the plan attached to the report were correct.

He also confirmed that, should endangered and protected species of wildlife be found on the site, an amphibian survey, would be carried out together with appropriate action necessary as a result of the survey.

It was understood that there would not be an increase in traffic in the area, as people using skatepark facilities would not usually travel by car. The sites identified were easily accessible by rail and bus.

The Head of Design and Projects undertook to send information regarding responses from residents of Junction Road to the questioner.

In response to questions from the Area Liaison Officer, the Head of Design and Projects confirmed that the alleged differences in the figures relating to various sections of the consultation, contained within the report, could be as a direct result of people not completing the whole of the consultation form. He also confirmed that the final cost of the facility, which would be dependent on the specific site agreed upon, would be contained within the report to the Cabinet Member for Leisure.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report and appendices to the report, submitted on the results of the public consultation carried out in respect of the proposed skatepark at Junction Road Playing Fields, be noted.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure be requested to approve the provision of a skatepark at Junction Road Playing Fields, on the proposed Site 1, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted.

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HIGHWAY MINOR WORKS CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2006/2007

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on proposed programme of works on Local Safety Schemes, Pedestrian Crossings and Safer Routes to School within the area of Stourbridge for 2006/2007 financial year. The Senior Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety advised that there were no identified Safer Routes for Schools within the area covered by the Committee for the financial year 2006/2007.

With regard to the proposed puffin crossing at Red Hill, Stourbridge it was requested that the exact position of the crossing be reinvestigated.

With regard to the proposed zebra crossing for Wollescote Road, Stourbridge, a representative of the Friends of Wollescote Park said their preferred site would be the Cradley side of Wollescote Road, as traffic turning right encountered a blind spot at present.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be advised of the Committee's support for:

- (1) the anti skid surfacing of the deceleration lane/Speed Management for New Road/Worcester Street Stourbridge.
- (2) the improved signs/markings/anti-skid markings on the A458 Birmingham Street/Ring Road, Stourbridge being placed on the reserve list of schemes.
- (3) the exact site of the Puffin Crossing for Redhill Stourbridge to be reinvestigated.

- (4) the zebra crossing at Wollescote Road, Stourbridge, near Walker Avenue, be situated on the Cradley side of Wollescote Road.
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78 OBJECTION TO DISABLED PARKING PLACES PROGRAMME J

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on an objection received to an application for a disabled parking place in programme J of the on-street Disabled Parking Places Scheme.

Members did not consider it appropriate to consider the application in public, as some of the information which would be referred to was of a personal nature.

RESOLVED

That, in view of the comments made by Members, the Cabinet Member for Transportation be requested to determine the application for a disabled parking space at 97 Hagley Road.

79 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Vickers raised:-

- (1) Concerns by Lye residents for personal safety and the need for CCTV cameras in Lye Town to combat anti-social behaviour problems and double parking in the High Street in the evening.
- (2) The need for public lighting on the main car park and between the car park and the church yard.

Councillor Jones agreed to investigate the possibility of installing temporary mobile CCTV cameras to assess the problems. Also, although reluctant to install lighting on the car park, in view of possible future proposals for the car park, he would investigate the possibility of installing some lighting between the Churchyard and the car park, to ensure a safe walkway between the two.

Councillor Adams raised the issue of the late night No 9 bus service from Birmingham to Stourbridge returning to Birmingham empty, which he had investigated following the previous meeting. He advised that he had been informed that responsibility for late night services was due to change in the near future. When the new company took over, the request would be made again, and Councillor Adams would continue to monitor situation.

Councillor Knowles raised the issue of the need for a mechanism to enable the Stourbridge Town Hall Working Group to report back to the Area Committee on the work carried out by the Working Group. He also requested that Councillor Mrs Martin meet with the Working Group to discuss issues regarding the Crown Centre. Councillor Mrs Martin agreed to meet with the Working Group to discuss the matter.

RESOLVED

That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to submit a written report to the next meeting of the Committee on the work of the Stourbridge Town Hall Working Group.

Councillor Donegan expressed gratitude to the Senior Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety, for the traffic calming measures recently introduced for Stambermill Road, Stourbridge.

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DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That the dates and venues of future meetings of the Committee be advised when determined at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN