

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Wednesday 24th September 2008 at 6.30 pm
At Lower Gornal Youth Academy, Temple Street, Lower Gornal

PRESENT

Councillors Ryder (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Ameson (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Caunt, Evans, Mrs Millward, Mottram, Perry, Mrs Ridley, Simms, Stanley and Wright; Mr J Millward.

Officers

The Director of Children's Services (as Area Liaison Officer), The Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services), The Assistant Director (Culture and Recreation) and the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety (both Directorate of the Urban Environment), The Area Team Manager of Early Years and Youth Development (Directorate of Children's Services) and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Law and Property).

IN ATTENDANCE

Inspector M Sutton and Sergeant R Simpson of West Midlands Police, Mr S Vincent, Operations Commander, Dudley Borough (West Midlands Fire Service) and, Ms B Picken of the Dudley Council for Voluntary Services were in attendance together with approximately 30 members of the public.

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors G Davies and Perry.

25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ryder declared a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No.7 (Fire Service Issues), in view of his membership of the West Midlands Fire Authority.

Councillors Mrs Millward and Wright declared a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No. 11 (Capital Allocations – Application by Baggeridge Social Club) in view of their being Trustees of the Social Club.

26 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25th June 2008, be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the addition of Councillor Stanley's name in the list of attendees.

27 PETITIONS

It was reported that the following petitions had been received since the last meeting of the Committee and referred to the relevant officers for consideration.

- a) A petition on behalf of residents objecting to the erection of gates on either side of Beacon Passage, Sedgley - referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services. A letter from a resident of Beacon Passage, supporting the petition, had also been referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services.
 - b) A petition submitted by Councillor Ryder, on behalf of residents requesting a better park for the Sedgley community at the Teniescar by Ladies Walk, Sedgley - referred to the Director of the Urban Environment.
 - c) A petition on behalf of residents in Council a Council owned property in Sedgley, complaining about anti social behaviour of a neighbour - referred to the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services.
-

28 POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Sutton introduced Sergeant Rob Simpson who had recently taken up responsibility for the Sedgley and Gornal area. Inspector Sutton advised that, as requested, consideration had been given to holding Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings in the evening to enable people who worked during the day to attend the meetings. He then reported on a project for disadvantaged young people aged 16-24 years of age, which would be ongoing in conjunction with the Fire Authority. The Dudley scheme had been considered so successful that it was now intended to extend the model over the next two years to the whole of the country.

Inspector Sutton stated that crime figures for Dudley were improving. He reported on a recent arrest of a key individual responsible for many anti social behaviour and drug related offences across the West Midlands. In response to a request by a Member of the Committee for a speed camera van to be installed in Brook Street, Inspector Sutton undertook to investigate the matter.

RESOLVED

That Inspector Sutton be thanked for his oral report on police issues, the contents of which be noted.

29 FIRE ISSUES

(Having previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, Councillor Ryder withdrew during consideration of the matter).

Councillor Mrs Ameson thereupon took the Chair for this item.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on proposals by the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority for changes to the way that fire services were provided in the Sedgley area of the Borough.

Mr Steve Vincent of the West Midlands Fire Service gave an oral and visual presentation on proposals by the Authority for the withdrawal of the fire engine at Sedgley Fire Station. The proposal included a revision of the Authority's resources. Those present at the meeting were advised that they could comment or object direct to the Fire Authority by e-mail or telephone. It was the Fire Authority's intention to retain the station building for use in the community, including the expansion of the Service's work with young people and changes to how resources were used.

In response to comments regarding the small amount of savings that the withdrawal of the appliance would make to the Fire Authority's overall budget, Mr Vincent advised that the withdrawal was not about savings, but rather on changes to how the Fire Authority proposed to address changing trends in fire risk in the community. The Fire Authority was confident that the proposals would not put anyone at risk and that all areas would be adequately covered by existing services at nearby stations.

In response to a question from a member of the public as to whether the station at Sedgley was to close, Mr Vincent advised that although the appliance would be removed, the Station would remain open for community use.

During the ensuing discussion the following concerns were raised:

- 1) The accuracy of some of the information provided by the West Midlands Fire Authority.
- 2) Concerns about the validity of fire engines travelling at speed down Moden Hill and difficulties gaining access to the Straits, Lower Gornal.
- 3) Concerns over the withdrawal of the Sedgley fire station, which had the second fastest response time in the area.
- 4) That the stated response time of just over 7 minutes from the Dudley Fire Station was too long.
- 5) Concern at the time appliances from other stations would take to get to The Northway, Sedgley.

At the end of the discussion, the Committee

RESOLVED Unaminously

That Area Liaison Officer advise the West Midlands Fire Authority of the view of the Committee as follows:

“That in view of the extremely small value of potential savings in the Fire Authority budget and the level of public concern about the withdrawal of the fire engine at Sedgley Fire Station, the North Dudley Area Committee register their objection to the plans to withdraw the fire engine from the Sedgley Fire Station.”

It was also

RESOLVED

That Mr Vincent be thanked for his presentation, the contents of which be noted.

At the conclusion of this matter, Councillor Ryder reassumed the Chair.

30 YOUTH ISSUES

The Area Team Manger of Early Years and Youth Development reported on the consultation document to be presented at the next meeting on the restructuring of Youth Services. An information document, which included a timetable for the consultation process was circulated.

Four representatives of the Dudley Youth Forum gave a visual and oral presentation, in respect of their recent residential course which had taken place in Hereford in April 2008. The Forum had had its first meeting, at which members had been elected to their respective posts. The following priorities had been identified:

Personal safety in gully's in the area
Graffiti in parks
General park maintenance

Future meetings of the Forum had been arranged and Members of the Committee were invited to attend the first meeting to be held, at Sedgley Youth Club on Wednesday 15th October at 4.00 pm.

Mr J Millward thanked the young people for their presentation, stating that it was refreshing to see such good work being done by young people.

He referred to the Dudley Youth Awards ceremony which was scheduled to take place on 2nd October 2008 and reported on the activities of the Dudley Youth Council Panel, indicating that the main report of the Panel was available on its website.

He also referred to the “Behind the Bus Scheme” initiative which had been introduced in other parts of the country, and which enabled all young people under 18 to travel on local buses free of charge. He requested that the Council contact CENTRO to suggest that this cheap travel initiative be introduced for young people in Dudley.

Councillor Mrs Millward stated she had mixed views on a scheme for free travel in case it resulted in buses becoming unsupervised mobile youth clubs. However, she was supportive of the idea of free travel for students to and from school, which would free up the roads during the peak times of the day. She was aware of similar schemes which worked very successfully in other parts of the country. She suggested that CENTRO be contacted to discuss this idea as a possibility for Dudley.

RESOLVED

That the Youth representatives be thanked for their visual and oral presentations, the contents of which be noted.

31 TRANSPORT ISSUES

In the absence of a representative from CENTRO in attendance at the meeting, no transport issues were discussed.

32 DUDLEY COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICES – PROMOTION OF THE “SMALL GROUPS PROJECT”

Ms Pickin, the Small Groups Development Officer of Dudley Council for Voluntary Services (DCVS) gave a presentation on the services provided by DCVS and her role as Development Officer.

The project was a lottery-funded initiative, which aimed to provide tailored support to small and emerging local and voluntary groups. “Small Groups” were currently defined as organisations having an income of up to £15,000 per annum and were entitled to receive free support from the Small Groups Development Officer in respect of the issues indicated in paragraph 7 of the report submitted. In addition, the project offered small groups room hire and photocopying facilities at a reduced rate.

Ms Pickin invited interested parties to contact her, or her colleagues, should they wish to take up the support offered.

RESOLVED

That the Small Groups Development Officer be thanked for her presentation, the contents of which be noted.

33 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 responses were then given as follows:-

- (1) A member of the public expressed concerns over golf balls travelling at high speeds from the Sedgley Golf Club Range which were causing nuisance to local residents. He also commented that the residents living near the public footpath situated between the houses and the Golf Club were also experiencing nuisance from anti social behaviour.

Councillor Evans indicated that as he was aware of the concerns relating to the Sedgley Golf Club he would speak with the member of the public outside of the meeting to attempt to resolve the situation.

- (2) A member of the public expressed concerns regarding drivers exceeding the 30 m.p.h speed limit on Cotwall End Road, partly due to the road signs advising motorists of the speed limit being hidden by overhanging trees. The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate this matter.

- (3) A member of the public queried whether the Council enforced the "No Ball Games" signs erected on Council owned land. He and other residents in the Ettymore Road area of Dudley were experiencing nuisance and anti social behaviour problems due to ball games being played near their property. He alleged that he had been advised by a Housing Officer that although the signs had been erected enforcement action was not being taken.

Councillor Mrs Millward advised that she was aware of a large plot of grassed land in the middle of the Straits which had been left to the people of the area for leisure purposes which could perhaps be used for ball games instead of the grassed areas within residential establishments. The Legal Adviser to the Committee undertook to investigate and liaise with the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services to resolve the situation.

- (4) Further to the objection by some members of the public to a proposal to erect a gate on either side of Beacon Passage, Sedgley, as referred to in Minute 27 (a) above, it was reported that the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services had investigated this issue and, as residents had not been in favour of gating, these would not now be erected.

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

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on a request to declare land at Westfield Road, Sedgley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted to allow the land to be sold, without a restriction for the site to be used for warden controlled bungalows.

In presenting the report, the Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services) advised that the wrong report had been included in the agenda, but that the correct report had been circulated under separate cover prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Housing be requested to agree to the declaration of the site at Westfield Road, Sedgley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, surplus to requirements without a provision for the site to be used for the purpose of warden controlled bungalows.

35 DELEGATED CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item insofar as it related to an application received from the Baggeridge Social Club, Councillors Mrs Millward and Wright left the meeting for the consideration of the application.)

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted informing the Committee of the applications received for funding from the capital budget allocation of the Committee considered by the Capital Allocations Working Group, at its meeting held on the 22nd July, 2008 and actioned in accordance with the authority granted to the Area Liaison Officer. The report also referred to the recommendations of the Working Group on two late applications considered on 1st September 2008.

Two further late applications for funding were also considered at the meeting.

The applications below had been considered on 22 July 2008:-

- 1) An application from the Bayer Street Allotments Association had been approved in the sum of £2,000, towards a scheme to repair the fencing at the allotments, subject to confirmation to the Area Liaison Officer that the Association had sufficient funds to contribute the remaining £2,805.55 and that any subsequent fencing repair/maintenance would be the responsibility of the Association.
- 2) An application from Coseley Comets Drum and Trumpet Corps for funding for new musical instruments was refused, in view of the Corps having been allocated funding as a result of a previous application.
- 3) An application from Coseley Community Education Network had been approved in the sum of £2,000, towards the installation of security fencing and gates to prevent graffiti and other anti social behaviour.
- 4) An application from the North Dudley Kickz Project towards the cost of a mobile pitch had been further deferred, to enable further advice to be sought from the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

5) An application from All Saints Church, Sedgley had been approved in the sum of £5,000 towards the conversion of existing male toilets to include a disabled toilet.

6) An application from the West Midlands Fire Service, which had been submitted to all area committees for fire fighting equipment for a number of Fire Intervention Reparation Education projects, had been approved in the sum of £1,613. the Area Liaison Officer advised that all other Area Committees had also approved the application.

7) An application from Baggeridge Social Club had been approved in the sum of £1,600, towards the provision of disabled toilet facilities, subject to confirmation to the Area Liaison Officer that the Club could provide the remaining funding required for the project and that the work would be fully Disability Discrimination Act compliant.

8) An application from Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward Councillors had been approved in the sum of £1,700 towards the provision of off-road parking on Dudley Road.

The following applications had been considered at the meeting on 1st September 2008:-

- a) An application from the Sedgley and District Community Association for £9,769.40 towards the cost of connecting a storm water drain and construction of a drain run at the Centre.
- b) An application by the Sedgley Weight Lifting Club in the sum of £5,000, towards the cost of rewiring the premises and installing polycarbonate sheets to cover window apertures. The grant to be made up of £1,000 from Sedgley, Gornal and Coseley East Wards and £2,000 from the Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward.

Two late applications were submitted and considered by the Committee as follows:

- a) On behalf of Sedgley Ward Councillors, Councillor Evans submitted an application for £1520 for the purchase and installation of two Welcome to Sedgley signs and two plant boxes, the flowers for the boxes to be supplied and maintained by children from Queen Victoria School.
- b) On behalf of Sedgley Ward Councillors, Councillor Caunt submitted a request for £5000 towards the purchase and installation of Christmas lights in Sedgley.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and Ward Councillors, be authorised to determine urgent applications for funding.

- (2) That the proposals detailed in paragraphs 1 to 8 above, which had been considered by the Capital Allocations Working Group held on 22nd July 2008 and actioned by the Area Liaison Officer in accordance with the authority granted to him by the Committee, be noted.
- (3) That the application from Sedgley and District Community Association for £9,769.40 towards the cost of connecting a storm water drain and construction of a drain run at the Centre be refused, on the grounds that the Association had received several grants previously.
- (4) 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>
Sedgley Weight Lifting Club Lower Gornal	Rewiring of the Centre in Vale Street, Lower Gornal	£5,000
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (Application made by Sedgley Ward Councillors)	Purchase of and installation of Two Welcome to Sedgley Signs and Flower Planters	£1,520
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (Application made by Sedgley Ward Councillors)	Purchase and installation of Christmas lights for Sedgley Town Centre	£5,000

36 WARD ISSUES

Councillor Mrs Ridley raised:

- 1) Concerns regarding an overgrown path on the side of the Coseley School leading to Canal Road. The Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) undertook to investigate this matter.
- 2) Concerns regarding inconsiderate parking on Henne Drive, by parents dropping children at school. She requested that parking restrictions be introduced to prevent parking on both sides of the road. The Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) undertook to investigate this matter.

Councillor Mottram raised:

- 1) Concerns regarding inconsiderate parking at Coseley Station which had led to complaints from residents who objected to their drives being blocked. The Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) undertook to investigate this matter.

- 2) Concerns regarding heavy traffic in the Ivy House Lane, Coseley area. The Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) undertook to investigate this matter.
- 3) A request for speed cameras in the Bourne Street and Brook Street areas. He also requested that consideration be given to including the area in a Local Safety Scheme. The Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) undertook to investigate this matter.
- 4) A request for an update to be given on the Roseville Business Watch's request for the introduction of a one way system which CENTRO had objected to. The Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) undertook to arrange for the above issues to be investigated.

Councillor Simms raised concerns regarding the fencing at Tipton Road which needed repairing.

Councillor Mrs Millward requested that traffic enforcement officers be requested to address parking problems in Longfellow Road and Roberts Street and/or the introduction of parking restrictions in the area. The Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) undertook to investigate this matter.

Councillor Caunt questioned why a report on Community Renewal had not been submitted to the meeting, as requested previously. He requested that a report on this issue be submitted to all future meetings of the Committee. The Area Liaison Officer agreed to ensure that a report would be available for the next meeting.

37 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates for future meetings of all Select Committees in the 2008/09 municipal year were noted.

Councillor Mrs Ridney encouraged those present to attend the Select Committee on Health and Adult Social Care.

38 DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The dates and venues of future meetings of the Committee for the remainder of the 2008/09 municipal year were noted as follows:-

3rd December 2008 – Ellowes Hall School, Stickley Lane, Lower Gornal.
28th January 2009 – Dormston Sports Hall, Mill Bank, Sedgley.
8th April 2009 – High Arcal School, Arcal Drive, Sedgley.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN

NDAC/21