

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Thursday 29th January 2009, at 7.00 p.m.
at the Civic Hall, Bank Street, Brierley Hill

PRESENT:-

Councillor D Blood (in the Chair)
Councillor P Harley (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Mrs E Blood, Ms Boleyn, Foster, Mrs Greenaway, Mrs D Harley, Ms Harris, Islam, Mrs Jordan, Miller, Nottingham, Southall and Tyler; Mr D Horrocks, co-opted Member.

Officers

The Director of the Urban Environment (as Area Liaison Officer), Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety), Manager of Executive Support Team – (all Directorate of the Urban Environment), Ms P Sharratt, Assistant Director of Children's Specialist Services, Ms J Garwood, Area Team Leader, (Early Years, Youth and Education Services/Youth and Community Team), (Both Directorate of Children's Services); Ms S Evans, Head of Housing Options, (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Senior Account Manager, Marketing and Communications (Chief Executive's Directorate), Senior Solicitor, and Miss K Fellows (Directorate of Law and Property).

Also in attendance

Mr D Baker – West Midlands Fire Service
Police Constable Sinar – West Midlands Police

together with 38 members of the public.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Wilson.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee requested that their best wishes to Councillor Mrs Wilson for a speedy recovery, following a recent operation be recorded.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Committee held on 4th December, 2008 and of the Special Meeting held on 6th January, 2009, be approved as correct records and signed.

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PETITIONS

- (a) A petition from residents of Tansey Green Road, Pensnett was submitted by Councillor Foster, requesting the Council to install traffic calming measures given the number of speed related incidents and the increasing volume of heavy goods vehicles using the road. The petition was received and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.
 - (b) A petition from residents of Wall Heath, Kingswinford was submitted by Councillor P Harley, requesting the Council to install traffic calming measures and a pedestrian crossing on the A449 Kidderminster Road, (access point to Wall Heath village), to counteract the problem of speeding vehicles. The petition was received and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.
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YOUTH ISSUES

- (a) Daniel Horrocks, reported on the formation of the Brierley Hill Area Youth Forum, advising that eighteen young people were interested in joining and that Dudley Youth Services had been working in conjunction with the Youth Forum.
- (b) Ms J Garwood, the Area Team Leader, (Early Years, Youth and Education Services/Youth and Community Team), (Directorate of Children's Services), circulated a note and reported orally on the work completed since the last Area Committee on establishing an Area Youth Forum for the Brierley Hill Area Committee, making particular reference to the team consisting of four qualified full time area youth workers, who had met and to the appointment of a Participation Officer, Siobhan Lloyd. A joint Area Youth Forum residential, with Halesowen Area Youth Forum was being planned and would take place on 20th and 22nd March, 2009, the purpose of the residential would be to build the confidence and skills of the young people on the Forum to enable them to become competent spokespeople on behalf of the needs, issues and interests of Brierley Hill Youth.

It was further reported that the Team had delivered workshops at Thorns Community College on anti-racism and had been invited to deliver a further workshop on sex, relationships and education on the day of the Area Committee, when two hundred and fifty year ten students had taken part.

The Youth Service four key performance indicators were referred to, and it was indicated that the targets had either been reached or exceeded during the current municipal year.

It was further indicated that the post for a full time detached youth worker and seven part time detached youth workers in the Hawbush area of Brierley Hill had been released, and that the posts had been advertised for detached workers. It was noted that such workers would be requested to work in any area where a need for their services was identified.

In respect of further discussions on skatepark provision, there was agreement to the suggestion made by Councillor Tyler that the provision of an indoor skatepark, which was accessible by young people in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area, should be investigated by the Brierley Hill Area Committee – Young People’s Working Group.

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ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN PUBLIC PLACES – BRIERLEY HILL TOWN CENTRE

A report of the Interim Director of Law and Property was submitted on the proposal for an Order making Brierley Hill Town Centre a designated public place where the consumption of alcohol would be prohibited other than within the curtilage of licensed premises.

Ms Kidd, Senior Solicitor, outlined the report, referring in particular to the formal consultation process which would include the views of the Area Committee, prior to a final decision being taken by the Licensing and Safety Committee.

The plan of the proposed designated order was referred to and it was stated that the statutory procedure including consultation and advertising had to take place before the Order could be made by the Council.

It was reported that once the Order was made, this would provide the police with additional powers to deal with the offender.

It was further reported that the Council must erect signage in the designated area, to warn members of the public of the effect of the Order. It was suggested that the part costs of providing signs in the sum of £2,500.00 be met from the Area Committee’s Capital Allocations’ budget. It was indicated that the Police would part fund the signage from their own resources in the sum of £2,000.00.

It was indicated that consultations had taken place with in particular the Police, Schools, Hospitals and Chemists, and any comments of the Area Committee would be brought to the attention of the Licensing Committee.

There was general support for the order, and a number of questions and comments were made following the presentation in particular:-

- The need for an up to date map of the designated area.
- Concerns of further displacement to other areas, should the proposed Order be approved;
- The position in relation to a possible Borough wide ban;

At the request of Councillor Foster, Inspector Bradley provided details of the background to the proposed Order, making particular reference to:-

- The anti-social incidents involving alcohol during the preceding twelve month period;
- The displacement from other areas, where alcohol bans had been implemented;
- The problems experienced by shopkeepers, traders and the general public due to the anti social behaviour, involving alcohol;
- The proportionality of and evidence gained to support the proposed alcohol ban;

It was reported that should evidence be gained to support alcohol bans in other areas within the Borough in the future, the situation would be re-appraised, and the appropriate Order would be applied for.

In responding to a question from Councillor Foster, Inspector Bradley reported that the Inspector for the surrounding areas, of the proposed alcohol ban had been contacted and an additional application for a further Order could be made, however at present there was no evidence that outside the proposed area there were particular anti social behaviour problems relating to alcohol.

In responding to a further question from Councillor Foster, the Senior Solicitor reported that the Council's Legal Department had forwarded letters to all licensees in the area of the proposed ban, advising of the implications of the Order as far as their customers were concerned, as the proposed Order would not affect those drinking alcohol on the curtilage or within garden areas of licensed premises.

In responding to a question from the member of the public, it was reported that following the arrest of a person should they require support to give up alcohol, they would be offered this, by the Police Communities Together Team and referrals were also made to Aquarius.

RESOLVED

That the Interim Director of Law and Property be informed that this Committee supports the proposed Designation Order for Brierley Hill Town Centre, as shown on the plan attached as part of the report as Appendix 1 to the report, and that the cost of signage, in the sum of £2,500 be met from the Committees 2008/09 Capital Allocations Budget, subject to any part fund of the costs from the police.

PUBLIC FORUM

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

- (a) A question was raised by a shop owner regarding the possibility of time restrictions on the parking bay(s) outside the premises, as these were constantly used by members of the public for lengthy periods of time. The Section Engineer, (Traffic and Road Safety) would respond to the questioner.
- (b) A question was raised in relation to the lack of drainage in Tansey Green Road. The Section Engineer, (Traffic and Road Safety) would liaise with the questioner and carry out investigations.
- (c) Questions were raised relating to speeding traffic and the accident rate in Tansey Green Road, Pensnett. The Section Engineer, (Traffic and Road Safety) would respond to the questioners.
- (d) Questions were raised in relation to the approval of the planning application for the extension of the library in Kingswinford, in relation to alleged lack of consultation, and on problems with vehicular and pedestrian access whilst the work was being carried out.

Councillor Miller, responded stating that the statutory consultation period of thirteen weeks had taken place in relation to the proposed planning application, and once a contractor was in place to carry out the work, there would be a meeting with the local residents.

Following further concerns it was agreed that the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health would liaise with the Assistant Director, Libraries and Archives and Adult Learning and provide a full written response to questioners.

- (e) In response to questions raised in relation to Hauc Construction continuing to operate without planning permission, and the accumulation of rubble, hard core and dirt on the site, it was agreed that the Assistant Director of Planning and Environmental Health would liaise with the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards and provide a written response to the questioners.
- (f) In responding to several questions raised in relation to the closure of Wartell Bank from Dawley Brook, the Area Liaison Officer indicated that it had been agreed that a meeting would be held on 26th February, 2009, between Principal Officers and local businesses. It was agreed that the matter would be reported on at the next meeting of the Area Committee.
- (g) Questions were raised relating to the regeneration of Brierley Hill; difficulties with parking in Cottage Street, and problems with the lack of parking spaces for shoppers especially on market days, due to the landscaping on the parallel route, and in respect of the fountain in Brierley Hill High Street. The Senior Account Manager referred to the Council's Regeneration newsletter, that had been distributed to both members of the public and members of the Committee prior to the meeting, providing details of the town centre regeneration.

The Area Liaison Officer also advised that plans included linking the Merry Hill Centre to Brierley Hill High Street, which would encourage and promote shoppers to attend the High Street.

The Section Engineer, (Traffic and Road Safety), would inspect Cottage Street, and provide a full response to the questioner.

The suggestion in relation to the Fountain would be referred to the Principle Conversation Officer and Borough Archaeologist.

- (h) In responding to several questions, in relation to the siting of the new academy, it was reported that the public consultation had ended last week, and the Oasis Consultation would continue until the 13th of February, 2009. Following the Oasis Consultation a decision would be made.

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted in respect of recommendations made at a meeting of the Committees Capital Allocations Working Group held earlier that day that had been received for a capital allocation.

The Area Liaison Officer, in informing the Committee of the recommendations made also referred to an updated request received from Wordsley South Road Flying Club and to a deferred application of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the sum of £900 be approved in respect of the request made by Barnardo's 'Time for Me' Project, representing a contribution towards the cost of the conversion of attic space at the Source Youth Centre in Barnet Lane into an arts and crafts room.
- (2) That the application received from The Wordsley South Road Flying Club, be refused, as this would not be a request in accordance with the criteria set for applications.
- (3) That the deferred application for the sum of £4,872.00 towards the cost of building refurbishment be approved in respect of the request made by The Citizens Advice Bureau.

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MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER, 2008.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at its meeting held on 4th December, 2008.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on a number of issues raised at the meeting of this Committee held on 4th December, 2008, be noted.

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WARD ISSUES

Written responses to the Ward issues raised by a Member, Councillor Mrs Jordan, in advance of the meeting were circulated to Members and the audience prior to the start of the meeting. The questions received and responses given were as follows:-

(a) Footpath over open land

- Local resident feels that the footpath on land adjacent to Brockmoor Community Centre is in the wrong place.
- The footpath is constructed in Wilson Road approximately 15m from the junction of Hickman Road.
- The pedestrian traffic from Cressett Lane Estate use a walkway into Wilson Road, then in a direct line across the green to the bus stop in Pensnett Road.
- The footpath should have been constructed at this point, on this bend, where both sets of pedestrian from Hickman Road and Cressett Lane could use this path.

Response:

- Where there is an area of open land, it is not unusual for 'desire lines' to emerge as the general public will often choose to take the most direct route that they can.
- However, it does not follow that a formal footpath should be provided along these lines and the landowner is not compelled to provide one.
- In this instance, the Local Authority are the landowners and initial enquiries indicate that it comes under the control of Housing who will be contacted to seek their views on the matter. A response will then be provided to Councillor Mrs Jordan.

(b) The fence that runs along the Dell needs replacing.

Response:

- A site inspection carried out this week found that the section of fencing around the Dell Recreation Ground is in a reasonably good state.
- The section of fencing that runs along the length fronting the Fens Pool and Buckpool Nature Reserve does vary in terms of quality and stability.
- Given the overall number of fences around the site, the Senior Warden based at the Dell will contact Cllr Jordan directly to identify the precise location of the fences to be replaced so that the necessary work can be carried out.

(c) Why it is taking so long to obtain the larger road signs to indicate that there is no through road to Pensnett Road from High Street, Brockmoor?

Response:

Traffic and Transportation Engineers have reported that the signs were put up this week.

- (d) In response to the request of Councillor Islam regarding the re-siting of the radio aerial for Bridge Radio Station from Stourbridge to Dene Court, Chapel Street, given problems of interference with modern communication systems and fears regarding health it was

RESOLVED

That the Assistant Director of Housing and the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised that the Committee oppose the siting of the radio aerial on Dene Court, Chapel Street, for the reasons outlined above.

- (e) In response to comments made it was agreed that the Area Liaison Officer would report to the next meeting of the Area Committee on 2nd April, 2009 providing details of the St George's Day Parade which would be taking place in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area.

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SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

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

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DATES OF FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

That the following date for the remaining meeting, and venue in this municipal year be noted:-

Thursday 2nd April, 2009 at The Brier School

The meeting ended at 9.05 p.m.

CHAIRMAN