

Stourbridge Area Committee - 25th June, 2012

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Responses to Issues

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Committee of written responses made to questions asked at a previous meeting.

Background

2. At a meeting of this Committee held on 20th June, 2012, the issues below were raised, in relation to which responses made are as follows:

A petition from residents of Priory Road, Oldswinford was submitted requesting the extension of double yellow lines installed at the junction of that road with Church Road. The Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety has responded to the petition organiser that two extensive sets of double yellow lines had been proposed for the Church Road residential area in 2004 and 2011 but that, on both occasions, original proposals had been objected to with the consequence that each introduced scheme was much smaller than that advertised. In relation to the petition, the Group Engineer commented that there was little doubt that a new set of double yellow line proposals for Church Road would be equally unpopular with the Oldswinford community (this was instanced by the member of the public who spoke against the petition at the meeting of the Area Committee and the Group Engineer indicated that, since the meeting, he has received a letter objecting to the installation of further yellow lines in Church Road). Attention was also drawn in the response to the yellow “hatched box” installed in Church Road at its junction with Priory Road which, while not removing all right-turning difficulties, has eased turning movements in Priory Road. In the light of this information, the Group Engineer advised the petition organiser that no action to extend the double yellow lines at Church Road would be taken.

3. On consideration of Fire Issues, a member of the Committee asked that arrangements be made for the yellow hatched box adjacent to the Fire Station on Stourbridge Ring Road be maintained in good condition. The Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety has duly asked the relevant division in the Directorate of the Urban Environment to consider whether maintenance to the hatched box is necessary currently, and if so, to take appropriate action.

4. A petition from residents of Bredon Avenue was submitted asking when gas central heating was to be installed in the properties numbered 20-42 Bredon Avenue. The Assistant Director of Housing has responded to the petition organiser that, while it is appreciated that the preference of most people is to have gas central heating, Dudley has a number of homes that are heated by electric night storage heaters. Recognising the preference of its tenants, the Council has a replacement programme based on date of the system, i.e. replacement of the oldest first, and systems installed in 1992/93 are currently being replaced. Systems in Bredon Avenue were installed around 1994 and on the current programme it is estimated that replacement will be around 2015.

The Assistant Director has indicated to the petition organiser that, In the meantime, she would be happy to arrange for an energy adviser to visit her and the other petitioners to look at maximising the heating in their homes.

5. A problem with drains at Junction Road was reported to the Committee by a local resident. In response, the Directorate of the Urban Environment have established that the highway gullies outside of the property referred to are clean and operating normally. The two gullies on the opposite side of the road next to a grass verge, however, were covered in mud. An order has been placed to modify these two gullies with a short length of kerb and a weir plate to reduce the frequency of the grates becoming blocked with debris off the verge.
6. In the discussion on Police Matters, reference was made by a local resident to problems of car parking along Junction Road on Sundays, when the adjacent playing fields were being utilised for football matches. A suggestion was made that the problems could be alleviated to some extent if arrangements were made for the gates to the playing fields to be opened, thus allowing football traffic a hardstanding off road facility for parking.

In response, the Assistant Director has responded that Junction Road Playing Fields are one of the main sites in the Stourbridge for Youth Football as there are two full size pitches and two mini soccer pitches, which are used every week during the season and for practice in pre-season.

The street has properties along one side and football teams are encouraged to park on the pitch side of the road. There is a small grassed / gravel area inside the maintenance gate where cars could park. However there is a concern that should this be allowed to take place those accessing this area might want to drive further into the open space whilst children are running about playing football on the site, with a consequential increased risk of injury. This would require some internal fencing to be erected and additional hardstanding provided and currently there are no resources available to fund this work.

This Assistant Director recognises that the problem is common across a lot of the Council's pitches where 'on street' parking is relied on for teams and spectators and is a particular problem where youth football is concerned as this generally involves significant numbers of family members attending and higher numbers independently using cars to travel to the venue.

Writing to the teams and leagues regarding parking sensibly in the street or car sharing has previously proved fruitless or has only had a short term impact on the problem. Equally the casual use of the site for training and practice in the off season can often be more problematic as numbers attending on these occasions

can be higher than for formal matches and there are very few measures that could be taken to counter this.

A possible solution at Junction Road would involve the use of car parking facilities within the School campus but that is not something that can be guaranteed and requires the schools agreement.

7. In response to representations made about dog fouling and litter in the Stepping Stones and Junction Road vicinity, the member of the public who raised the issue has been advised by the Waste Enforcement Manager, Waste Care that officers from the Directorate of the Urban Environment have been monitoring the area with visits having taken place on 8th March and the 23rd March 2012 and that the area will continue to be monitored as and when officers are in the locality. The member of the public has also been asked if he considers these arrangements acceptable and invited to let the Waste Enforcement Manager know if there are any specific times in the day when he feels this problem is more prominent in order that endeavours may be made to target these times.
8. A number of issues were discussed at the last Area Committee meeting regarding the bowls facility at Wollescote Park and certain matters that required attention.

The Assistant Director (Culture and Leisure) has held a number of internal meetings to establish the facts of the matter and to identify how the current difficulties could be resolved.

The key issue that the bowls club want to see addressed relates to their inability to play on Sundays given the 'no ball games' restriction contained in the Trust document governing the 'Stevens Parks'. Officers have taken Counsel's advice on this matter and a detailed report has been received identifying the options that could address this issue.

A report will be brought to the next area Committee meeting with the full details of the options available to seek the views of members. The other matters relating to charges for the green and pavilion can all be addressed once the above issue has been determined.

9. In approving an application by the friends of Mary Stevens Park for the closure of the park to the public but for the park to be open to those who paid an admission fee, to enable the holding of a May Day Event; the Committee resolved that, should such a request be made in future, the Committee, as Trustees, would consider the request only if it was supported by a written report included on the agenda for the meeting. In acknowledging the concerns raised by members with regard to the manner in which the application was submitted, the Area Liaison Officer has subsequently reiterated the Committee's concerns in writing. Following that correspondence, the firm which provided the entertainment for the event, S and B Events Limited, has given an assurance in writing that this will not happen again.

Finance

10. There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report.

Law

11. Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

12. The report takes into account the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

Recommendation

13. The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.



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Jane Porter
Area Liaison Officer

Contact Officer: Richard Sanders, Democratic Services
Directorate of Corporate Resources
Telephone: 01384 815236
e mail: richard.sanders@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers:

Minutes of the meeting of Stourbridge Area Committee held on 20th February, 2012 and associated correspondence.