

Central Dudley Area Committee – 9th March 2010

Report Of The Director Of The Urban Environment

Urban Environment - Matters Raised At The Central Dudley Area Committee - 19th January 2010

Purpose Of Report

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 19th January 2010 Central Dudley Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Background

2. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities. This diverse range of technical services focus on regenerating the Borough, maintaining our environment to high standards, protecting our communities and promoting leisure and other community services for all.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both Members and the general public, relating to matters such as traffic management, leisure and recreation, regeneration and new development. Few enquiries can be answered immediately, with many prompting further investigation, feasibility studies and public consultation, prior to being reported back to Committee.
4. To keep Committee updated, progress reports are included as an appendix and the proposal resulting from the update is set out at the end of each paragraph.

Finance

5. Where there are financial implications of the actions listed below that impact on Council responsibilities, these will be financed from existing Council resources.

Law

6. Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers the Council to provide recreational facilities in its area.
7. The Council is empowered to improve highways under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980.

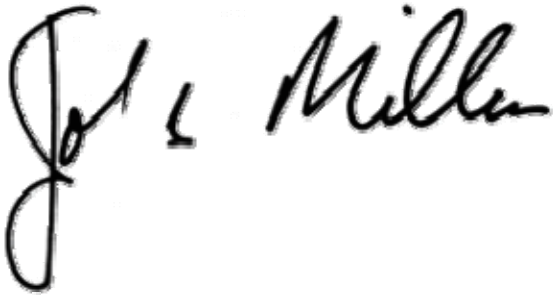
8. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do anything that is likely to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough.
9. Traffic signs are provided under powers contained in Section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to regulations made by the Secretary of State for Transport.
10. Guardrails may be provided under Section 66 of the Highways Act 1990.
11. Pedestrian crossing facilities are provided under powers contained in Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to Regulations made by the Secretary of State.
12. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
13. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.
14. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its area to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.
15. Part IX of the Highways Act 1980 contains provisions relating to the planting, care and control of trees in or on land adjoining the highways.
16. In the care and maintenance of its trees, the Council will owe the normal duty of care under the common law principles of nuisance and negligence.
17. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.

Equality Impact

18. The proposals take into account the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a diverse range of services that affect all sections of the community.

Recommendation

19. That the proposals contained in Appendix 1 attached be approved.



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John B Millar
Director of the Urban Environment

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Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

1. Action Notes from 19th January 2010 Committee.

Appendix 1

DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT THE CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE HELD 19TH JANUARY 2010

1. PETITION - SPEEDING TRAFFIC - CRADLEY ROAD, NETHERTON

Background: Cllr Cotterill presented a petition in relation to problems of speeding traffic along Cradley Road, Netherton from the junction of Saltwells Road to Newtown Lane and the potential increase in the speed of traffic to a more dangerous level arising from the decision of Sandwell MBC to close the junction of Bannister Street with Newtown Lane. In presenting the petition, Cllr Cotterill referred to numerous incidents occurring on Cradley Road due to speeding vehicles and suggested that speed cameras or speed humps be introduced to reduce the number of speeding vehicles along Cradley Road.

Comments: The petitioners' observations regarding the proposed closure of Bannister Street at its junction with Newtown Lane will be referred to our neighbouring Borough of Sandwell. An investigation into the possible introduction of a pedestrian crossing facility in Cradley Road in the vicinity of Cradley Park Road has been completed and analysed. It is intended that, in February, the Cabinet Member for Transportation, in consultation with the Shadow Cabinet Members will make decisions regarding the Local Safety Schemes, Safer Routes to School Schemes and Pedestrian Crossings Programmes for 2010-11. A letter in this regard has been sent to Cllr Cotterill.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

2. ABANDONED TESCO SHOPPING TROLLEYS

Background: A member of the public expressed concern in relation to Tesco shopping trolleys being dumped on public streets and private land around the Burntree Island store. He said he had recently been advised by the staff at Tesco that collecting trolleys is no longer financially viable. I agreed to investigate.

Comments: An Enforcement Officer has spoken with Mr Sargeant and Tesco's Site Manager and the shopping trolleys have now been removed by Tesco. Mr Sargeant has been advised to contact us directly should he have any further problems.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

3. STOURBRIDGE ROAD, HOLLY HALL - PROPOSED PELICAN CROSSINGS

Background: A member of the public asked to be advised on the progress made in relation to the provision of pelican crossings along Stourbridge Road. It was confirmed that the consultation exercise had now been completed and indicated that a meeting had been arranged in early February with the Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member for Transportation to discuss this matter further with a view to determining a date for completion. A letter would be written to the questioner updating him on the outcome of that meeting.

Comments: Officers and the Cabinet Member for Transportation have met with local ward members to discuss the feasibility and any likely consequences relating to the installation of a new crossing at the proposed site. As indicated previously, I am now confident, subject to final approval, that the proposed scheme will be included in our 2010/11 improvement programme. A letter in this regard has been sent to Mr Cumberland.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

4. **OAKHAM ROAD - PROPOSED TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES**

Background: Cllr Ali asked that road traffic calming measures be considered along Oakham Road due to the volume and speed of traffic.

Comments: An investigation will commence during 2010-11 to determine the justification for introducing a Local Safety Scheme in Oakham Road, in comparison with all other requests for such a service. Following the analysis of this investigation, consideration will be given to including sections of Oakham Road in a list from which future years' annual Local Safety Schemes are selected. A letter has been sent to Cllr Ali in this regard.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

5. **ST JOHN'S ROAD - SPEED VISOR**

Background: Cllr Ali referred to the removal of the school crossing patrol at St John's Road and requested that the speed visor previously requested be provided as soon as possible.

Comments: Speed visors are regularly rotated, to have the maximum effect on driver behaviour. Consideration will be given to relocating a speed visor in St. John's Road as soon as possible.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

6. **BLACKACRE ROAD - FLOODING/POTHOLES AND BEAN ROAD GULLY CLEANSING**

Background: Cllr Ali drew attention to problems on Blackacre Road in relation to flooding and potholes and requested that these matters be looked at. He also requested that gully cleaning in Bean Road be considered.

Comments: Potholes in Blackacre Road have been made safe and gullies cleansed. Gullies in Bean Road have also been cleansed as requested.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

7. **BLACKACRE ROAD - RESTRICTED TRAFFIC**

Background: Cllr Waltho referred to concerns raised by residents in relation to the use of the road as a short-cut and suggested that a meeting be arranged with residents, Ward Members and the Police to discuss this issue with a view to resolving the problem.

Comments: A meeting has taken place between Ward Members, residents and representatives of the Police. Further meetings are being planned.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

8. **BUNNS LANE**

Background: Cllr Waltho raised concerns at the response given (*item 15 - Matters Raised at the Area Committee on 4th November 2009*) in relation to Bunns Lane and requested that appropriate Officers contact Ward Councillors for a meeting to discuss this issue as soon as possible.

Comments: Appropriate officers will contact Ward Councillors to arrange a meeting to discuss Bunns Lane

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

9. **WALKER STREET, NETHERTON**

Background: Cllr J Martin drew attention to parking problems in Walker Street, Netherton and requested that a site visit with appropriate traffic officers be arranged to discuss what action should be taken.

Comments: A possible date for a site meeting has been suggested to Cllr Martin.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

10. **CHAMPIONS CHURCH, CINDER BANK**

Background: Cllr J Martin referred to Champions Church, Cinder Bank and asked to be advised when the full carriageway improvements would be completed.

Comments: Improvement work has now been completed.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

11. **SUMMER ROAD - STORM DRAINS**

Background: Cllr Mrs Aston reported that her request at the previous Area Committee held on 4th November 2009, for storm drains in Summer Road to be cleansed had not been done and requested that this action be taken.

Comments: Gully cleansing was done in November 2009 and again W/C 1st February. One gully has a seized grating which cannot be cleaned until the grating has been replaced. This replacement will take place as soon as resources are available.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

12. **BLUEBELL ROAD - SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

Background: Cllr A Finch requested that a survey in respect of Bluebell Road be carried out in relation to Safer Routes to School.

Comments: Bluebell Road will be considered during 2010-11 for possible inclusion in a future year's annual Safer Routes to School programme. A letter in this regard has been sent to Cllr Finch.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

13. **CRADLEY ROAD BRIDGE**

Background: Cllr Cotterill drew attention to the large hole in the bridge at the bottom of Cradley Road and requested that action be taken to repair the hole.

Comments: Officers are currently investigating Cllr Cotterill's enquiry and liaising with the owners of the damaged structure.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

14. **BLACK HORSE PLAYING FIELDS**

Background: Cllr Cotterill drew attention to concerns raised by residents in relation to the behaviour of people using the playing fields at the Black Horse on a Sunday and requested that appropriate action be taken.

Comments: The three major leagues that utilise this facility have been contacted and informed that if this unacceptable behaviour continues use of the facility will be withdrawn. At the same time keys were offered to them so that they can use the on site toilet facilities, but to date there has been no response.

At present there are a total of 11 teams that use the pitches on a Sunday . It seems unfair to penalise all of these teams when it might only be one or two who are behaving inappropriately. Community Renewal has been working closely with local residents to narrow down the offenders and the appropriate leagues have been approached.

Attempts will be made to use the remaining part of the season to liaise with the teams to resolve the problem.

In the interim, local residents are encouraged to report details of the offending players' team strip and the actual time and date of play, as this will enable the offending teams to be clearly identified. An email has been sent to Cllr Cotterill in this regard and also detailing a contact number for reporting this information.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

15. **HOLLY HALL SCHOOL RAILINGS**

Background: Cllr Ahmed requested that the railings outside Holly Hall School be extended.

Comments: During 2010-11, when funds will next become available, consideration will be given to the introduction of a further guardrail near to Holly Hall School.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

16. **POTHoles**

Background: Cllr Ahmed drew attention to the potholes in Steppingstone Street, King Street and High Street and requested that these be repaired.

Comments: Any dangerous potholes either have or will be made safe in Steppingstone Street, King Street and High Street. Steppingstone Street carriageway is in a very poor condition and will be included on the annual resurfacing programme. In the meantime, we will look at whether we can use our mini planer to do some patching works.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

17. **MILKING BANK/RUSSELLS HALL - GULLY CLEANSING**

Background: Cllr Ahmed and Cllr M Davis drew attention to the problem in relation to flooding at Milking Bank and requested that the drains be unblocked. Cllr Davis requested gully cleansing at Russells Hall.

Comments: There have been major flooding issues on this estate, but not as a result of any blocked gullies. Severn Trent Water have accepted that they have a problem with a lack of hydraulic capacity on the main surface water sewer on the estate, but have no immediate plans to remedy the matter.

DUE Officers will inspect the two estates and any identified cleansing will be scheduled accordingly.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

18. MILKING BANK - GRIT BINS

Background: Cllr M Davis drew attention to the lack of grit bins on Milking Bank with particular reference to the Cowley Drive area and requested that this issue be looked at.

Comments: Cllr Davis' request will be investigated in line with the Council's criteria. Numerous requests have been received by the public over recent weeks, owing to the inclement weather conditions. Each request is being actioned on a priority basis.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

19. DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE FREE CAR PARKING

Background: Cllr M Davis drew attention to the lack of free parking in Dudley Town Centre and the adverse effect this has on businesses and requested that this issue be investigated.

Comments: Free on-street parking is available in a large number of streets in Dudley town centre. Parking cannot be permitted in streets where the public highway, bus routes and emergency service routes would be obstructed.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.