

## **NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at 6.30pm  
at Roberts Primary School, Roberts Street Lower Gornal

### **PRESENT**

Councillors: Mrs Ameson, Caunt, Evans, Mrs Millward, Mottram, Mrs Ridney, Ryder, Simms, and Wright, and following his co-option, Mr J Millward (Youth Member).

### **Officers**

The Director of Children's Services (as Area Liaison Officer), The Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal and Democratic Services), The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety (Directorate of the Urban Environment), The Assistant Director Policy and Performance, Neighbourhood Manager – Tudor and Oval; North Dudley Area Housing Manager (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), 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 Sutton and Sergeant Blakemore of the West Midlands Police, Mr Vincent, Operations Commander, Dudley Borough (West Midlands Fire Service) together with approximately 30 members of the public were in attendance.

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1            **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Ryder be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Councillor Ryder thereupon took the Chair).

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2            **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

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3            **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member declared a personal or prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in respect of any items on the Agenda.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2008, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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5 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Mrs Ameson be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

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6 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted setting out the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report submitted, on the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees, be noted.

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7 APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the co-option of persons to serve on the Committee for the 2008/09 municipal year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That Mr Millward – and in his absence Mr Asim Mohammed - be appointed as the co-opted member for North Dudley Area Committee for the 2008/09 municipal year, representing young people in the Borough.
  - (2) That, with the exception of a co-opted Youth Member and in his absence Mr Asim Mohammed, no other co-opted members be appointed to the Committee.
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8 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of working groups for the 2008/09 municipal year.

Councillor Simms proposed, that although the skatepark had been erected on Tenacre Field, the Skatepark Working Group should continue to meet on a quarterly basis, to address any issues of concern which might arise, such as the recently reported fire. He also suggested that Mr D Allen, a member of the Ten Oval and Tudor Residents Association be co-opted to the working group to report on any local incidents should they occur.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the North Dudley Area Committee Capital Allocations Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the working group comprise the Chairman, Councillors Evans, Mrs Ridley, Simms and Stanley.
- (2) That the North Dudley Area Committee Skatepark Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the working group comprise any Member of the Committee wishing to attend, together with Mr Allen, as a co-opted Member.
- (3) In respect of resolution 2 above, that Councillor Simms liaise with the Area Liaison Officer regarding the scheduling of meetings for the Skatepark Working Group.

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#### APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the nomination of members of the Committee to serve on outside organisations, for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

#### RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the organisations indicated for the 2008/09 municipal year or for the term period indicated.

#### Social Inclusion

#### Term of Office

#### **Baggeridge Miners' Welfare Club**

Councillors Mrs Millward and Wright

Annual

#### Community Associations

**Sedgley and District**

Councillor Perry Annual

**Upper Gornal Voluntary Recreational Association**

Councillor Ryder Annual

**Hurst Hill**

Councillor G Davies Annual

**Rainbow (Coseley)**

Councillor Mrs Ridley Annual

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10 PETITIONS

It was reported that a petition, on behalf of young people, for a “kick about pitch” at Tenacre Fields, had been referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration.

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11 CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13 (c) it was

RESOLVED

That agenda item no. 13 be considered as the next item of business.

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12 FIRE ISSUES

The West Midlands Fire Service Operations Commander gave an oral report on fire related issues, reporting that there had been a small increase in vehicle fires in the area. The Fire Service and the Police were working on a joint initiative to investigate burglaries and safety issues experienced by elderly and vulnerable people. Mr Vincent updated on the situation regarding the Skatepark on Tenacre Field, advising that the Fire Service continued to work with the Police, Tenants and Residents Associations, the Neighbourhood Manager and young people.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the oral report on Fire issues be noted.

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## YOUTH ISSUES

The Area Team Manager of Early Years and Youth Development reported on youth issues as follows:

The youth service was currently planning the summer provision for young people, dates of which would be published when finalised.

The Sedgley Youth Centre had successfully gained external funding for Information Technology (IT) equipment for the Centre.

The Gornal Youth Centre was still open three nights per week. A football project outside was trying to attract some of the older members back to the centre. Links had been made with the Church youth club in the village on a Friday evening.

Coseley Youth Centre was open four nights per week.

The Area Youth Forum was working well and it was hoped to deliver a short presentation at the September meeting of the Committee.

The Area Team Manager also presented a short visual presentation, featuring young people enjoying the recently opened skatepark facility at Tenacre Field. In the presentation young people thanked the Committee for its contribution towards the provision of the skatepark, which was proving very popular.

Mr J Millward thanked the Committee for the contribution towards the skatepark, which he reported was very well used during the daytime, although he acknowledged that there were issues at nighttime at the moment.

He reported on the recent visit to the House of Lords by the members of the Youth Parliament who had debated issues, assisted by the Speaker of the House.

Mr Millward also reported on the Environmental Team working with local schools to improve the environment of the area, and encouraged others to become involved.

Mr Millward also commented on a petition which had been submitted on behalf of young people, to the Director of the Urban Environment requesting a football pitch at Tenacre Field. In response Councillor Simms advised that, whilst he supported in principle, the provision of a football pitch, funding needed to be secured for a security camera at the Tenacre Field.

### RESOLVED

That the contents of the oral and visual reports made regarding youth issues in the North Dudley Area be noted.

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## POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Mark Sutton introduced himself to the meeting, having taken up his post in January 2008. He then reported on a reduction in reported crime for Sector A.

He advised that abusive offensive graffiti needed to be addressed as a matter of priority. He encouraged anyone witnessing abusive graffiti to report the matter to the Police.

He updated on the Princes Trust Initiative for wayward young people in the area. He informed on the dates and venues of the future Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings.

In response to comments from a member of the public relating to previously reported shooting incidents at the allotments, the Inspector advised that, following investigations, he could find no reference to any such incident. He undertook to speak with the member of the public on this matter outside of the meeting.

In response to a request from a member of the public that the recently introduced Alcohol Ban in Sedgley be extended to cover the Cotwall End Valley, the Inspector advised that the Ban was specifically for Sedgley Town Centre and could not be extended under its current terms. The Police would continue to monitor whether the Ban had resulted in alcohol related incidents overflowing into the surrounding area. If evidence was found to substantiate the need for the area covered by the Alcohol Ban to be increased, the Police would consider applying for an extension to the area covered by the Alcohol Ban or for a separate ban to be introduced.

Inspector Sutton undertook to liaise with the members of the PACT regarding the appropriateness of daytime meetings, which excluded people who worked full time from attending, and to request that the times be changed to the evening to address this concern.

### RESOLVED

That the oral presentation given regarding police issues be noted.

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## TRANSPORT ISSUES

In the absence of a representative from CENTRO in attendance at the meeting, Councillor Stanley reported orally on the changes to the timetable for transport across the North Dudley Area. He commented that the new services appeared to be working well, especially the new service to Russell's Hall Hospital.

### RESOLVED

That the oral update on transport issues be noted.

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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 relating to nuisance from mini motor bike riders in the Cotwall End Valley. In response, Inspector Sutton undertook to speak with the questioner outside of the meeting, to ascertain the details and carry out an investigation.
2. A member of the public expressed concerns relating to a streaker walking in the Cotwall End Valley for charity last year, as she understood that he intended to apply for a licence to repeat the exercise again. She appreciated that charities needed to raise funds, but felt that this type of fundraising was not appropriate in this particular area. The Area Liaison Officer advised that there was no such licence available. This type of activity was a public order concern and he advised that anyone sighting a streaker should contact the police directly.
3. A member of the public, unable to attend the meeting, had previously queried a number of issues relating to the area in close proximity of the stream at the Cotwall End Nature Reserve. The Assistant Director Culture and Recreation (Directorate of the Urban Environment) had sent a detailed written response to the questioner addressing all the issues raised.
4. In response to concerns expressed by members of the public, in attendance at the meeting, relating to the Cotwall End Valley the Area Liaison Officer advised that all the issues raised had been addressed in the written response of the Assistant Director, Culture and Recreation. The Area Liaison Officer advised that he would be happy to furnish anyone interested with a copy of the written response.
5. A member of the public raised concerns regarding the alleged lack of interest from Ward Councillors and the lack of written notification to residents regarding a recent planning application for properties in the Straits Road.

The Ward Councillors advised that they understood that all planning matters were dealt with strictly in accordance with the Planning regulations and guidance. In respect of the lack of Written notification for the application referred to, when it came to light that some residents had not received the requisite notification, the application was deferred to enable all residents affected to receive appropriate written notification. The Ward Councillors also advised that written notification for planning applications were sent only to residents affected by the application and not all properties in the whole of the area.

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PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE ESTABLISHMENTS 2007/08

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the progress of visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments during the 2007/08 municipal year and requesting further nominations for Members to make visits in the 2008/09 municipal year.

In introducing the report, The Assistant Director of Planning and Policy (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services) advised that Members wishing to take part in the visits would need to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and attend a training programme before undertaking the visits.

Councillors Mrs Ameson, Perry, Ryder and Wright indicated that they would be willing to undertake the visits for 2008/09. Councillor Simms advised that, as he was now a Cabinet Member, he could not now take part in the visits.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report now submitted, on progress of elected Member visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments in 2007/08 and on nominations for visits in 2008/09 be noted.
  - (2) That the Directors of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Children's Services be advised that Councillors Mrs Ameson, Perry, Ryder, and Wright had indicated their willingness to undertake the visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments during 2008/09.
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COMMUNITY RENEWAL SERVICE

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted updating the Committee on the new arrangements for the Community Renewal Service.



The report indicated the structure of the service, as well as reporting on the current position with regard to the development of a Community Renewal Strategy by the Community Renewal Steering Group. The report also described the role of Area Community Renewal Officers, the purpose of the Local Community Renewal Plan, the objectives of the Plan and the accountability arrangements proposed for the service and the role of Area Committees, local task groups and partnerships.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That the proposal to set up a Working Group of the Committee to engage in a further development of the draft Local Community Renewal Plan, supported by the Area Community Relations Officer and the Head of the Community Renewal Service, be deferred for consideration at a future meeting.

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DELEGATED CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted informing on applications received for funding from the capital budget allocation of the Committee as referred to in the report submitted.

In presenting the report, the Area Liaison Officer advised that two of the applications contained within the report submitted had been deferred for further information to be obtained. This information would be presented to the meeting of the Working Group when it considered all the applications to hand. It was intended that these applications, together with other applications already received, be considered at a meeting of the Working Group in July 2008. Following consideration of the applications by the Working Group, the Area Liaison Officer would, when delegated powers, determine the applications as a matter of urgency.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and Ward Councillors, be authorised to determine all applications received to date, as a matter of urgency, following the meeting of the Working Group in July 2008.
- (2) That the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and Ward Councillors, be authorised to determine urgent applications for funding, other than those referred to in paragraph 1 above.

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CONSULTATION ON BT PROPOSAL FOR THE REMOVAL OF PUBLIC PAYPHONES

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on notice received from British Telecom that, owing to changes in the communications culture in recent years, mainly through the increase in mobile phone ownership, they proposed to remove a number of public pay phones in the Borough, three of which were located in the area of this Committee.

In addition, British Telecom had pointed out that they no longer had a requirement to consult on the removal of a public pay phone which had another pay phone within 400 metres. Out of courtesy, however, they had advised the Council that there were a number of pay phones in that category within the Borough that they would be addressing over the forthcoming months.

The purpose of the notice was to provide for consultation, in respect of which British Telecom had indicated that OFCOM had placed responsibility on local authorities to initiate their own consultation process and canvass the views of the local community with the Local Authority.

Members of the Committee expressed concerns that the notice from British Telecom did not provide enough information to enable them to make a decision on the removal of the payphones. Some Members objected to the removals stating that in an emergency there could be a need for a public payphone, if a mobile phone was not available, or did not work.

Members of the Committee requested that the Area Liaison Officer request further information from British Telecom in order to enable them to make an informed decision on the withdrawals.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That the Area Liaison Officer be requested to obtain further information from British Telecom regarding the number of calls, total time of calls and total income from the payphones for the last year, to enable them to make an informed decision.

Councillor Millward

- a) commented that the security cameras recently installed in Gornal were scheduled to be switched on next month.
- b) reported that a petition had been referred directly to the Development Control Committee objecting to the erection of a mobile phone mast on the traffic island Gornal Village.

Councillors Simms and Mrs Ameson expressed concerns that the trees in the hedgerow at Moden Hill were in need of pruning. The Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate this matter.

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22            SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

Information was given regarding the dates for future meetings of all Select Committees, which are held at the Council House, Dudley. Members of the public were welcome to attend such meetings.

RESOLVED

That the information given in respect of the dates of future meetings of Select Committees, be noted.

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23            FUTURE DATES AND VENUES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

It was noted that future meetings of the Committee would be held at 6.30 pm on the dates and at the venues indicated, as follows:

24<sup>th</sup> September 2008 – Lower Gornal Youth Academy, Temple Street, Lower Gornal

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 – Ellowes Hall School, Stickley Lane, Lower Gornal

28<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – Dormston Sports Hall, Mill Bank, Sedgley

8<sup>th</sup> April 2009 – High Arcal School, Arcal Drive, Sedgley

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The meeting ended at 7.40 pm.

CHAIRMAN