

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Thursday, 19th January 2006 at 7.00 p.m.
at the Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Wilson (Chairman)
Councillor Tyler (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Burt, Debney, Ms Foster, Ms Harris, Miller, Mrs Patrick, Mrs Pearce, Southall and Tomkinson.

Officers

Mr E Lowson (Area Liaison Officer), Chief Executives Directorate, Director of Law and Property and Senior Solicitor (Directorate of Law and Property), Assistant Director (Economic Regeneration), Principal Engineer and Town Centre Manager (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Assistant Director of Education (Directorate of Children's Services), Area Housing Manager (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), and Ms K Smith (Directorate of Law and Property).

Together with 25 members of the public.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 12th December 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the deletion of the words, "but said that all admissions had to follow the due process", as shown at question 18, bullet point four of Minute 63.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Harley and Islam.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ms Harris declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item no 10 (Capital Allocations), in view of her being the Chairman of the Dudley Castle and Beacon Primary Care Trust.

Councillor Tyler declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item 8c (Blaze Park Allotments), in view of his living in close proximity to the allotments and knowing the applicants.

Councillor Southall declared a Prejudicial Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item 10 (Capital Allocations request from West Midlands Police), in view of close family members being employed by the West Midlands Police Authority.

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PETITIONS

The following petitions were submitted by the persons indicated and referred to the officers shown for attention:-

Councillor Ms Harris submitted a petition on behalf of residents of Moor Street and neighbouring roads, with regard to safety issues with speeding traffic in Moor Street and a request for traffic calming measures. The petition was forwarded to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration.

Mr M Coyle submitted a petition on behalf of Dudley residents expressing their concern at the proposed increase in hire charges for the hire of Dudley Concert Hall, Stourbridge Town Hall and Brierley Hill Civic Hall. The petition was forwarded to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration.

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YOUTH ISSUES

The Area Liaison Officer indicated that there were no issues to report at this time.

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PUBLIC FORUM

The following questions were raised by members of the public and responses given as indicated:-

1. A written question with regard to the Wordsley Hospital Site queried the proposed timescales for development and what actions with regard to site security were in place.

The representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment stated that although a development brief for the site had been approved a detailed planning application had yet to be submitted and as such a definitive timescale was not available. He also confirmed that title to the site had transferred from the Health Authority several weeks ago and that security of the site was now the responsibility of the new owners.

2. A request was submitted recommending the Council to stop further decommissioning or demolition of Brierley Hill Baths pending the outcome of a complaint made to the Ombudsman.

The request was further supported by Councillor Ms. Foster who requested that the following motion, seconded by Councillor Debney, be agreed; "That this Committee welcomes the investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman into the decision to close and not replace Brierley Hill Leisure Centre. This Committee demands a halt to the current decommissioning and demolition work pending the outcome of that investigation. This motion be actioned immediately by the Leader of the Council". It was, accordingly,

RESOLVED

That the foregoing motion be supported and that the Leader of the Council be notified accordingly.

3. Concerns were raised about the number and nature of some of the developments in and around Brierley Hill High Street especially those premises that had been converted to "takeaway" use, impacting on the "heart of the community" and the town centre losing its "character". In respect of this a petition was submitted on behalf of the Brierley Hill Community Forum which was forwarded to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration.

The Committee noted and supported the concerns of the Brierley Hill Community Forum in this regard and the representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment stated that developments in Brierley Hill were open to consultation and that the aim was to retain the character of the Town Centre where possible.

MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted in order to heighten public awareness of the Members' Code of Conduct. A copy of the Code of Conduct was attached to the report as Appendix 1 to the report submitted. It was noted that the Code reflected the principles developed by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life and that its aim was to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, co-opted members and church and parent-governor representations on Select Committees.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted be noted.

APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted regarding land and property within the committee's area.

On consideration of the report it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Housing, be recommended to declare 95 Adelaide Street, Brierley Hill, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, surplus to requirements for sale on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to declare 15 William Street, Brierley Hill, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, surplus to requirements for sale on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (3) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to approve the appropriation of the land at Blaze Park, Kingswinford, shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, from Housing purposes to the purposes of the Allotments Act 1925.
- (4) That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended to refuse the sale of land at the rear of 119 High Street, Wordsley, shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons stated in the report submitted.

AREA COMMITTEE COMMUNITY PLAN - AGENDA

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on discussions of the Community Plan Working Group on the need for a local community plan and on the structuring of agendas with key theme items being given priority in the Committee Agenda.

RESOLVED

That the Committee consider one of the following key themes - Community Safety, Youth, Priority Neighbourhoods and Health and Leisure - on a yearly cycle.

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A verbal report of the Area Liaison Officer was given on applications received for funding from the capital allocation of the Committee.

Upon consideration of the recommendations made, it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That application no. 7/05 submitted by 1st Bromley – Pensnett Scout Group for £6,350 towards the refurbishment, making safe and re-opening of their premises, be approved subject to agreement of a schedule of works.
- (2) That application no. 8/05 submitted by West Midlands Police, Brierley Hill Police Station, for £3,000 towards the purchase of bicycles and uniforms for officers covering the Brierley Hill, Brockmoor and Pensnett areas, be approved subject to the bicycles being maintained and returned to the Brierley Hill community should resources be no longer available to utilise them.
- (3) That application no. 9/05 submitted by Reverend Mike Mason on behalf of the Brierley Hill Community Forum, for £5,000 towards the transformation of Hawbush Urban Farm site into a Community Gardens project, although supported in principle, be deferred pending further discussions.
- (4) That application no. 10/05 submitted by the Nine Locks Youth Centre for £5,000 towards the purchase of photographic equipment, be deferred pending further information; and that the youth organisers be invited to attend the next meeting of the Brierley Hill Area Committee Youth Working Group to discuss their exact requirements.

ISSUE RAISED BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Ms. Harris requested that the issue of lorries depositing mud slurry onto Moor Street be looked into with a proposal that the lorries be hosed down before leaving Hills Yard.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

Thursday, 9th March, 2006 at Brierley Hill Civic Hall

The meeting ended at 9:00 pm

CHAIRMAN