

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Thursday, 6th December, 2007 at 7.00 p.m.
at The Kingswinford School, Water Street, Kingswinford

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Wilson (Chairman);
Councillor Tyler (Vice Chairman);
Councillors D Blood, Mrs E Blood, Ms Boleyn, Ms Foster, Harley, Ms Harris, Islam, Lavender, Miller, Nottingham, Southall and Tomkinson.

Officers

The Director of the Urban Environment (as Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration), Head of Sport and Recreation, Principal Engineer (Traffic and Transportation), Tourist and Development Officer and the Manager of the Executive Support Team - all Directorate of the Urban Environment), Area Housing Manager for Brierley Hill, Senior Solicitor (Ms Kidd) and the Assistant Principal Officer (Democratic Services) (Mr Sanders) - both Directorate of Law and Property.

In Attendance

Mark Carpenter, Dan Gardner and Dan Kearns, as representatives of young people in the Kingswinford community for item 5 on the Agenda. (Presentation of DVD on Anti-Vandalism in the Kingswinford Area).

Pupils of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Mill Street, Brierley Hill to present a petition submitted under Agenda item number 4.

28 members of the public.

38. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillor Ms Jordan and Inspector Jones.

39. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Southall and Mrs Wilson declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in relation to item number 7(c) on the Agenda (Land Off Albion Street, Wordsley) in view of their membership of the Development Control Committee.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4th October, 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed.

40. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

A petition from parents and carers of children attending St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Mill Street, Brierley Hill, drawing attention to road safety hazards in crossing Mill Street and seeking the provision of a zebra crossing or a pelican crossing, was submitted. Pupils of the school gave a presentation in support of the petition.

In the discussion, the Principal Engineer (Traffic and Transportation) confirmed that a crossing at Mill Street was in the assessment programme for such provision within the Directorate of the Urban Environment currently.

RESOLVED

That a report on traffic safety in Mill Street, including reference to a road crossing facility be submitted to the meeting of the Committee in April 2008.

41. YOUTH ISSUES

(a) Kingswinford and Community – Anti-Vandalism

A DVD, presented by three young persons from the Kingswinford School, Mark Carpenter, Dan Gardner and Dan Kearns, raising awareness of vandalism issues in the Kingswinford area, was shown.

The DVD covered the impact of vandalism on the community, not only in terms of its nuisance value but also in terms of its financial cost, the morale of local residents and the workload of the emergency services. Messages from the Police, Fire Service and Head Teacher of the Kingswinford School on the matter were included in the DVD.

The ease by which perpetrators of relatively minor instances of vandalism could be led into engaging in more serious anti-social and criminal activity was demonstrated. Also illustrated was the very damaging effect a criminal conviction could have on the future of a young person in terms of career and life prospects.

The DVD acknowledged that vandalism was as unacceptable to most young people as it was to the rest of the community and gave a clear message to young people who engaged in vandalism that the vast majority of young persons in Kingswinford were very much opposed to such activity.

RESOLVED

That the DVD be received and noted, and that representatives be thanked for their work.

(b) Skate Park Provision

The Chairman of the Young People's Working Group of the Committee and the Head of Sport and Recreation reported on the conclusions of the Working Group, at its meeting held on 12th November, 2007, regarding its investigations into skate park provision.

Three outdoor sites had been investigated, those at the Source Youth Centre, Lawyer's Field and King George V Park. The Head of Sport and Recreation indicated that Lawyer's Field had failed to meet RoSPA guidelines on the distance from neighbouring properties and that, while the Source Youth Centre met that criteria, there was already significant local opposition to the siting of a skate park at that location. In relation to the King George V Park, the Working Group had taken into account both the Masterplan for Dudley and the views of the Friends of the Park, neither of which included provision for a skate park. In addition, the football pitches already laid out at the King George V Park and Lawyer's Field remained needed for that purpose.

In view of the evident unsuitability of the three outdoor sites investigated, the Working Group was now exploring the possibility of locating a skatepark in an indoor facility, perhaps in conjunction with other sports or recreational uses.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the oral reports now given be noted.
- (2) That the advice that the three outdoor sites should not be pursued, for the reasons stated above, be accepted and that the proposal of the Working Group to explore the possibility of siting a skatepark at an indoor facility, be supported.

A question was asked on action that might be taken to prevent youths congregating on the corner of Marsh Crescent and Quorn Crescent, Wordsley, usually at weekends. The questioner alleged that the youths were engaging in various anti-social activities, including depositing cans, bottles, food packaging and food on the pavement and road and urinating in the street, against garden fences. It was agreed that the Area Liaison Officer would arrange for the issue to be investigated by the Community Safety Team within the Council and for the matter to be reported to the Police.

A question from a resident on the location of schools and other educational establishments proposed to be established/ discontinued in the light of the Building Schools for the Future programme, and the means by which the public would be consulted, was referred to the Director of Children's Services for a response.

43. LAND ISSUES

(Councillors Southall and Mrs Wilson, having declared a personal interest in this item, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in relation to the report on land off Albion Street, Wordsley (Agenda item number 7(c)) took no part in the discussion on this item in so far as it related to that matter. Councillor Mrs Wilson vacated the Chair, which was assumed by the Vice Chairman, Councillor Tyler, for the discussion on the issue)

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on applications received in respect of land and property owned by the Council.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised to refuse the applications submitted by the tenants of 12 Avon Close to lease the land adjacent to that property and by the owner of 14 Avon Close to purchase land adjacent to that property, both as indicated in the plan attached to the reports submitted to the meeting, for the reasons stated in the report.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Personnel, Law and Property be advised to approve the granting of a vehicular access agreement to the owner of 32A New Street, Wordsley over the area hatched in the plan attached to the report submitted to the meeting, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (3) That consideration of the application now submitted for the purchase of land off Albion Street, Brierley Hill be deferred for a further site visit by the Committee and that the Managing Director of Longlife Buildings be invited to attend the site visit, when arranged.

44. BIG LOTTERY APPLICATION – THE BLACK COUNTRY URBAN PARK

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted giving an update on the current position regarding the application for funding under the People's Millions Lottery for the Black Country Urban Park Project.

In presenting the report, the Project Manager emphasised the benefits to the area the success of the bid would have, explained the voting arrangements and urged all persons present to lend their support to the project, by voting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Black Country Urban Park Project be supported.
- (2) That the engagement of the public and business in the promotion of the project be supported and that the public be urged to vote for the project in the week commencing 26th November, 2007.

45. PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF DRIVING ORDER – HOLBEACHE LANE AND OAK LANE, KINGSWINFORD

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted, seeking consideration of the introduction of a Prohibition of Driving Order in Holbeache Lane and Oak Lane, Kingswinford in the light of objections received during the statutory period and from consultation engaged in earlier.

Correspondence from the Centre for Equality and Diversity, the Community Law Partnership and the West Midlands Consortium Services for Traveller Children, opposing the Oak Lane proposals, was circulated. The Community Law Partnership had also requested the provision of documentation produced in relation to the Oak Lane issue and had asked for a decision to be deferred pending their substantive response.

RESOLVED

- That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended:-
- (1) That the closure of the Holbeache Lane element of the proposed Order, as shown on plan TM2601, be proceeded with; and
 - (2) That consideration of the Oak Lane element of the proposed Order be deferred for 12 months in order to enable extensive consultation to be carried out with travellers and their families at the caravan site at that location.

46. BRIERLEY HILL SUSTAINABLE ACCESS NETWORK – PUBLIC ART
STATUE REPRESENTING YOUTHFUL ENDEAVOUR

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on an offer made by Mr and Mrs J Hickinbottom of Dudley to donate a life sized bronze sculpture representing youthful endeavour to be sited along the new Brierley Hill Parallel Route in memory of their late son, Thomas, a promising young sportsman who had posthumously won the Duncan Edwards Award for his achievements in boxing.

In reporting the offer, the Principal Engineer (Traffic and Transportation) indicated the current position with regard to progress on the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network. In so doing, he confirmed that the project included plans to enhance the route with sympathetic landscaping and art work.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Director of the Urban Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, be recommended:-
 - (a) That the offer of the sculpture by Mr and Mrs Hickinbottom be accepted with thanks.
 - (b) That the plinth be shaped in the design of a boxing ring corner.
 - (c) That the inscription be engraved in the font and the wording set out in paragraph 7 of the report now submitted.
 - (d) That the statue be sited in accordance with paragraph 5 of the report now submitted.
- (2) That the progress report on the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network Project, as given orally by the Principal Engineer, be noted.

47. CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the recommendations of the Capital Allocations Working Group on applications for funding from the Capital Allocations budget of the Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the application by City Can Cycle for a grant in the sum of £3,407 for the funding of a fully equipped, sign written twin axle box trailer to provide a mobile workshop facility for use by the organisation throughout the Borough be deferred pending further information to be supplied by the organisation, including more detailed information on the nature of the proposed expenditure, the position of the organisation regarding Criminal Records Bureau checks and the submission of the financial accounts of the organisation.
- (2) That the application by the Springfield Neighbourhood Tenants and Residents Association for the allocation of the sum of £500 further to the sum of £5,000 awarded previously by the Committee to enable the Association to secure funding from the Landfill Tax Credit scheme in connection with their project for the provision of enhanced landscaping, planting, parking and access improvements, be approved.

48. MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON 4TH OCTOBER 2007

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 4th October 2007, in relation to services provided by the Council.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

49. WARD ISSUES

- (1) Councillors Ms Foster and Tomkinson expressed the view that, in many cases, volunteers at Community Centres would benefit from greater administrative and clerical support which they understood was available from the Council. In his capacity as Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Councillor Miller indicated that the matter was currently under consideration and undertook to arrange for a report back to the Committee to be made. It was agreed that the issue be referred to the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services.
- (2) At the request of Councillor Southall, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Economic Regeneration) agreed to arrange for the terms of a letter sent to members regarding Area Committee Bus Review Panels to be clarified.

- (3) Councillors Ms Harris and Tomkinson expressed concern about the consultation machinery engaged in by CENTRO regarding changes to bus routes. Various members were dissatisfied on the apparent limited extent of consultation and disagreed particularly with the practice of CENTRO in accepting members' representations only if they had been sent by all three members of an electoral ward. It was agreed that the Director of the Urban Environment would seek to clarify the situation and report back.
- (4) Councillor Ms Harris drew attention to the vandalised condition of the Youth Shelter at Hawbush Road and expressed the need for it to be demolished. The matter was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for investigation.
- (5) Councillor Ms Harris expressed concern at the length of time the scaffolding at the former bank building at High Street, Brierley Hill had been in place and made the point that it was blocking the access road. The matter was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for investigation.

50. SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

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

51. NEXT MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The dates and venues of future meetings of the Committee in the current municipal year were received and noted.

The meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN