

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE – 8th MARCH, 2012

REPORT OF THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA LIAISON OFFICER

**MATTERS RAISED AT THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE
ON 10th NOVEMBER 2011**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 10th November, 2011, Brierley Hill Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Council.

BACKGROUND

2. The Council provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both members and the general public, relating to a range of services. Few enquiries can be answered immediately, with many prompting further investigation, feasibility studies and public consultation, prior to being reported back to Committee.

FINANCE

5. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

LAW

6. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders are largely governed by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
7. Provisions relating to Highways including trees thereon are contained in the Highways Act 1980.

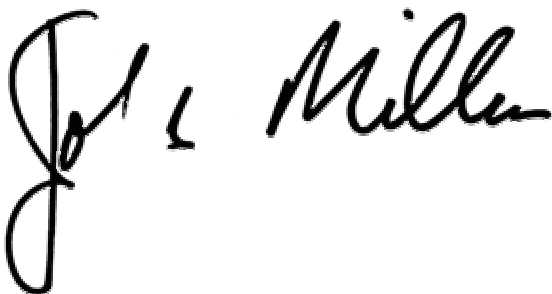
8. Provisions relating to the Council's Housing stock are contained in the Housing Act 1985.
9. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its areas to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.
10. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area.

EQUALITY IMPACT

14. This report is consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity policy. There is no direct effect on children or young people.

RECOMMENDATION

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



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Brierley Hill Area Committee Liaison Officer

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**PROGRESS REPORT ON MATTERS RAISED AT THE
BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE ON 10TH NOVEMBER 2011**

PETITIONS (Minute 24)

In respect of the petitions received:

Issue: (1)

From residents requesting the Council to install floodlights on the play area of Wordsley Park.

Response:

Please refer to Ward Issues minute 30.

Issue: (2)

A petition and written question (minute 26 b) was received regarding the proposed change in traffic flow in Earl Street, New Street and Barnett Lane, Kingswinford and the potential problems this would cause.

Response:

A further consultation exercise took place with the objectors. After consideration was given to the results of the consultation, the scheme was amended. The modified proposals are currently being considered by Ward Members.

PUBLIC FORUM

Issue: Minute 26 (a)

A written question was received regarding concerns in relation to stray horses impacting upon the habitat and use of Fens Pool Nature Reserve. It was reported that a task and finish working group within the Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee had been appointed in order for proposals to be formulated to deal with the issues after which, a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Area Committee.

Response:

The Council, in partnership with the Police, the RSPCA and other animal welfare organisations have been actively working on reducing the number of stray and illegally grazing horses in the borough. During the previous twelve months, in excess of 100 horses have been removed from the highway. At its peak there were some 90 horses on Fens Pools Nature Reserve alone, this has now been reduced to 30.

A Scrutiny Committee Working Group was established to consider various issues including a review of current and historic practice and the current provision of Council owned grazing land. The Working Group also received representations from the RSPCA about animal welfare and from the Police about the problems of horses on the highway

A draft policy has been developed covering four main areas of policy: horses on the highway, illegally grazing horses, Council grazing land and the promotion of responsible horse ownership

and welfare. The policy will be presented to the Regeneration, Culture & Education Scrutiny Committee on 7th March.

Issue: Minute 26 (c)

A written question was received regarding concerns in relation to Youth Service and the alleged impact that this was having on anti social behaviour particularly on Bells Lane, Wordsley. The Area Liaison Officer advised that The Director of Children's Services and the Council's Community Safety team be requested to respond direct to the questioner.

Response:

Written responses were provided to the questioner by the Assistant Director, Children's Services and the Anti- Social Behaviour Unit Manager

Issue: Minute 26 (e) (f) (g)

Matters relating to the closure of New Bradley Care Home; requests from Members that a Special Meeting of Brierley Hill Area Committee be convened; and that a compromise be sought to avoid closure.

Response:

A progress report was given to the Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee on 26th January, 2012. The Committee was informed that a draft report on New Bradley Hall and proposals for conducting the consultation process would be circulated to all Members of the Council for their comments. The consultation period will commence from 6th February 2012 until the end of April. The findings of the exercise will be submitted to a meeting of the Cabinet in due course. A further update report will be submitted to the meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee on 28th March, 2012.

WARD ISSUES

Issue: Minute 30

Councillor Mrs Simms proposed a dispersal order in relation to anti social behaviour activities which were taking place in King George V Park, Wordsley. It was proposed that the dispersal order should apply to Bells Lane, Barnett Lane and Cot Lane, Kingswinford and remain in force for a period of six months.

Councillor Mrs Jordan suggested that the Dispersal Order also encompass Lawnswood Road.

Response:

Officers met with local councillors, residents neighbouring the park and the Police in December to discuss the issues of anti social behaviour.

The main concerns appeared to be from residents on Bells Lane complaining about young people congregating on the children's play area. A survey of the number of cases reported to the Police during the nine months prior to the meeting revealed that 12 incidents had been logged. Residents on Lawnswood Road had also noticed a significant decrease in ASB over the last 12 months.

ASB in the park itself seemed to be limited however small amounts of litter and broken glass are often found around the play area which is cleared away on a Monday morning. The residents who live at the Lodge House on Lawnswood Road had noticed a significant decrease in ASB over the last 12 months. They were very averse to encouraging more young people to go onto the park in the evenings

There is a youth shelter on the Park near the main car park on Lawnswood Road which is not well used .It was suggested this shelter could be used for young people to congregate. However in discussions this was considered to be too far from Bells Lane.

It was noted that most of the young people enter the park using the pedestrian access on Bells

Lane. Although the Council employs a security company to lock up the site at dusk this seemed to be ineffective at dealing with the problem, so it was decided at the meeting to leave all pedestrian entrances to the park open and just to secure the car park on Lawnswood Road at dusk.

A suggestion was made by the Police to create a youth area west of Bells Lane about 100m into the park and encourage usage by lighting it at night. Officers have undertaken some preliminary costings which would require planning permission before implementation. The approximate cost would be £21k and if it were to include a covered youth shelter, a further £10k should be added.

Other proposals of enhancing the sporting activity in the park were suggested. A sports coach could be brought in to deliver activities during peak periods along the same lines as at Priory Park.

It was also suggested that if local residents formed a Friends Group then they may gain access to a variety of funding which could go some way to solving some of these problems. This proposal was favourably received by residents.

Issue: Minute 30 (continued)

Councillor Mrs Harley referred to the provision and price of residential parking permits within the Birmingham area, indicating that such a scheme would be popular within the Kingswinford area.

Response:

The Group Engineer Traffic and Transportation, has written to Birmingham City Council seeking information about their approach to residents' parking schemes. Once the details have been received and the information duly considered, a report will be presented to a future Area Committee meeting

Issue: Minute 30 (continued)

Councillor Mrs Jordan referred to a report in relation to Japanese knotweed thanking the Area Liaison Officer and his Officers for developing a policy to deal with this. She urged those present to report sightings of the knotweed to the Council in order that it could be disposed of. She also requested confirmation as to how Japanese knotweed was disposed of.

Response:

A comprehensive response was provided by the Group Engineer, Civil Engineering to Councillor Mrs Jordan.