

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 28th March, 2007, at 6.30 p.m.
at Roberts Primary School, Roberts Street, Lower Gornal

PRESENT

Councillor Simms (Vice-Chairman) (in the Chair)
Councillors Mrs Ameson, Caunt, G Davies, Evans, Fraser-Macnamara,
Mrs Millward, Mottram, Mrs Ridley and Wright; Mr J Millward (Co-opted
Youth Member)

Officers

Area Liaison Officer, Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services,
Assistant Director Culture and Community Services, Group Engineer
(Traffic and Road Safety), Environmental Protection Manager,
Neighbourhood Manager (Oval and Tudor), Principal Planning Officer,
Marketing and Communications Officer, Area Team Leader (Youth
Service) Mrs M Johal and Mrs J Holland (Directorate of Law and
Property)

Also in Attendance

Sergeant Neil Blakemore – West Midlands Police

Approximately 40 members of the public were in attendance.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of
Councillors Ryder and Stanley.

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CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, offered condolences to
Councillor Ryder on his recent sad loss.

Mrs J Holland

The Chairman announced the impending semi-retirement of Mrs Holland
and thanked her for all the hard work she had undertaken and presented
a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Committee.

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DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Fraser-Macnamara declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No 10 (Delegated Capital Budget) in view of him being a Trustee for Sedgley and District Community Association.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th February, 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed subject to an amendment to Minute No 65(3) to change the word "Road" to "Street".

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PETITIONS

High Arcal Park

A Member referred to the petition that had previously been submitted regarding High Arcal Park and reported that the proposed closure would not be going ahead and that discussions would commence with residents on ways to move the matter forward.

Mobile Mast – Stickley Lane

The Cabinet Member for Finance informed the Committee that a petition had been received from residents regarding the application for a mobile mast on Stickley Lane. She further reported that the Ward Members had submitted a letter of objection, which would be submitted to the Development Control Committee for consideration.

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YOUTH ISSUES

The Area Team Leader (Youth Service) reported on the following events and achievements in respect of the venues indicated:-

- A speed garage event would be held on Friday of this week at the Coseley Youth Centre in partnership with the local neighbourhood police team and young people that had been involved in all organising the event.
- An Easter programme was to be held at Coseley Youth Club, which would include digital photography, art workshops, bike maintenance workshops, Disc Jockey (DJ) workshops and a paintball trip.

- A Members Committee at the Youth Club was being developed and work was currently taking place with a group at Coseley School on a citizenship project.
- Lower Gornal Youth Centre had achieved their ME2 Award. The sensory room had now been completed and the YOF bid had gained an award for “the best project bid submitted in Dudley” and had also been entered into a national youth challenge competition.
- Oval detached project, which had been funded externally for five months was due to end this week but the project had been a great success.
- Sedgley Youth Centre were currently delivering a project around healthy life styles and they were having a DJ Booth built for young people to learn DJ skills.
- Young people from North Dudley had put themselves forward as representatives on Dudley Youth Council.
- Youth services had expected to reach 25% of young people aged between 13-19 years but targets had exceeded and 29.25% had been reached in North Dudley.

The Co-opted Youth Member then briefly reported on an event that had been held to elect candidates onto the Youth Parliament. He then queried the position on provision for a skate park and further queried the suitability of the proposed location. In responding, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture reported that the matter would be revisited by means of a Working Group, with a view to undertaking a survey, once the Youth Parliament had re-convened.

The Co-opted Youth Member further queried the position with staff and on the possibility of extending the opening days of the Youth Club. Another Member commented that the Youth Club needed to be open on Friday nights, as youths had nowhere to go and consequently were more likely to engage in anti-social behaviour. In responding the Area Liaison Officer reported that difficulties had arisen with staff sickness and vacancies but it was expected to fill two vacancies early this year. He undertook to investigate the possibility of opening the Youth Club on Fridays, depending on demand, but pointed out that it would be difficult to recruit staff to work on certain days.

RESOLVED

That the verbal reports regarding youth issues in the North Dudley area be noted.

POLICE ISSUES

Sergeant Neil Blakemore, West Midlands Police reported on issues affecting the North Dudley area and made the following points:-

- There were two neighbourhood policing teams working from Sedgley Police Station, each headed by a Sergeant and consisting of police constables and Policy Community Support Officers.
- Contact details were given to the public to raise issues with the above team directly.
- Panel meetings would be held for Sedgley Team at 2pm on 26th April, 2007 at Queen Victoria School, Gornal Team at 10 am on 5th April, 2007 at the Fire Station and Woodsetton and Coseley Team at 6pm on 4th April, 2007 at Bramford Primary School.
- Each team was concentrating on certain priorities and a number of tactics were being deployed to tackle the issues.
- Team 56 of the Prince's Trust programme had begun at Sedgley and the team had been out in the community fund raising to enable them to complete their community project.

RESOLVED

That the verbal report regarding police issues in the North Dudley area be noted.

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TRANSPORT ISSUES

No issues in respect of transport were raised at the meeting.

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PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) A resident commented that it had been reported in the press that there would be a £1.2 million cash boost for leisure centres and it was queried why Coseley was not mentioned.

In responding, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture reported that the £1.2 million was in partnership with a private company and that the money would be allocated towards installing health and fitness equipment. The company had identified specific centres to invest in for business purposes but would not be investing in Coseley, as it was not deemed to be a viable project.

- (b) Pursuant to Minute No 59(4) it was queried when the speed cameras would be installed in Bradleys Lane.

In responding the Cabinet Member for Finance reported that discussions were ongoing with Safety Camera Partnership regarding the matter.

- (c) It was queried why Arcal Lodge was due to close down and why details of the closure had not been released to the press. Concerns were also expressed about the impact it would have on the residents.

The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that the matter was not within her remit but it was felt that Arcal Lodge was not fit for its purpose and that there were health and safety implications for residents. She undertook to speak to the questioner at the end of the meeting with a view to referring the matter to the appropriate Cabinet Member. The Area Liaison Officer undertook to pursue the matter with the appropriate Director and Cabinet Member and undertook to respond in writing to the questioner concerned and to Members of the Committee.

- (d) A resident referred to Stickleby Lane and expressed concern about the cleanliness of the street and complained that it was infested by rats. It was also queried when the shops would be demolished.

The Assistant Director Culture and Community Services undertook to pursue the matter and to respond in writing to the questioner and to Members of the Committee.

- (e) A resident queried why Coseley Primary School children did not use the swimming baths at Coseley Leisure Centre and used facilities in Tipton instead.

In responding the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture commented that Coseley Primary School did not use the swimming pool facilities at Coseley because the School did not consider that the tuition of swimming lessons were to the required standard. A Member commented that the matter had been raised with the Governors and Head Teacher of the School and it had been indicated that the main concern was the changing facilities, as it was not deemed to be appropriate to have children in the changing rooms at the same time as members of the public. It was pointed out that Tipton Baths had private changing facilities for the children and also had better coaching sessions.

The Area Liaison Officer undertook to liaise with Coseley Primary School with a view to discussing a way forward.

- (f) A resident referred to issues previously raised regarding the national speed limit sign on Cotwall End Road being changed to a 30 mph zone and also of a Nature Reserve sign being obscured by a public footpath sign.

In responding the Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) reported that built-up areas automatically had a 30 mph speed limit but that in rural areas, a Traffic Regulation Order had to be introduced. He reported that the Traffic Regulation Order for the 30 mph speed limit zone for that road had been programmed to be introduced from Monday 4th June, 2007. Regarding signage on Cotwall End Road it was confirmed that the repositioning of the sign would be undertaken in the near future.

- (g) A resident asked for an update on the one-way system and on the position of the footpath in Hopyard Lane to the Straits.

In responding the Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) reported that the path in Hopyard Lane was not a public highway and that it was privately owned. He indicated that the one-way system was being pursued but that there was a delay as an objection had been received. In response to comments made by Members regarding an Ordnance Survey Map (OSM) that showed a footpath in that area, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture commented that an OSM differed to that of a registered definitive map and that the definitive map should be regarded as being accurate. It was also requested that ownership of the land needed to be confirmed.

At this juncture Councillors G Davies, Mottram and Wright left the meeting during consideration of the following question as it related to a planning application, which as Members of the Development Control Committee, they may have to consider at a future meeting of that Committee and rejoined the meeting following its consideration.

- (h) A resident complained about the proposed mobile telephone mast on Stickley Lane.

The Cabinet Member for Finance commented that she had reported on the matter earlier in the meeting and stated that the petition had been received and that the Ward Councillors had submitted a letter of objection.

- (i) A resident asked for an update on the Archives at Mount Pleasant School and queried whether C Block was still an option as it was considered to be too far for residents to get to.

The Cabinet Member for Housing reported that the main issue was to preserve archives and that currently confidential negotiations were taking place. It was confirmed that C block was not out of the equation and that all options would be considered and that an update on the position would be made available when known.

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on requests relating to land and property controlled by the Council.

Members welcomed the proposal that land at Springfield Grove and High Street, Sedgley be allocated for allotment purposes and, upon a query, the Assistant Director Culture and Community Services undertook to respond in writing regarding the number of allotments in Dudley and how many would fit the land in question.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to declare the land at the rear of 63a Mason Street, Coseley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, surplus to requirements and for it to be sold for garden land upon terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (2) That, subject to planning consent being obtained, the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to approve the exchange of land and the variation of rights to allow a conservatory to be built at 1 Billau Road, Coseley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, upon 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 refuse the application to purchase land at Springfield Grove and High Street, Sedgley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for reasons as outlined in the report, and that the Cabinet Member for Law and Property be recommended to approve the appropriation of the land for the purposes of allotment provision.

DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on requests for funding from the Delegated Capital Budget together with an additional request from Upper Gornal Pensioners Club.

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in this matter, Councillor Fraser-MacNamara withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of item 6 of the report and re-joined the meeting following its consideration).

The Area Liaison Officer pointed out that the recommendation in the report should state proposals in paragraphs 3 to 11 and not 3 to 7 as stated. He also confirmed that a further recommendation should be included to reflect that the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors, be authorised to determine urgent applications for capital funding for the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chairman at the first meeting of the Area Committee in the new municipal year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, in the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chairman at the first meeting of the Area Committee in the new municipal year, the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors, be authorised to determine urgent applications for capital funding.
- (2) That approval be given, in principle, to a grant of £5000 to St Andrew's United Reform Church for funding towards a lift to enable the elderly and people with disabilities to access the amenities on the first floor, subject to the church funding the remaining balance of £14000 within one year.
- (3) That approval be given to a grant of £4396.96 to Coseley Comets Drum and Trumpet Corps for funding towards the cost of musical instruments and that the allocation be split equally between the Upper Gornal and Woodsetton and Coseley Ward budgets.
- (4) That approval be given to a grant of £3000 to City Can Cycles for funding towards the purchase of various equipment to upgrade and refurbish cycles and that the allocation be split equally between the Upper Gornal and Woodsetton and Coseley Ward budgets.
- (5) That approval be given to a grant of £1949.97 to Sedgley and District Community Association for funding towards additional building works to allow the extensions to the Community Centre to proceed.
- (6) That approval be given to a grant of £401.75 to Mature Movers for funding towards the purchase of exercise equipment and that the funding requested for the drumming workshop be used to purchase further exercise equipment.
- (7) That approval be given to a grant of £639.50 to 2nd Lower Gornal (St James) Scout Group for funding towards carrying out electrical works to the scout hut in order to comply with European and safety regulations.
- (8) That the application for funding towards a grant of £5000 to Friends of Priors Mill Park, be deferred pending further consultation with Officers in Leisure and Community Services and further enquiries to ascertain how the remaining £31000 contribution to the works would be funded.

- (9) That approval be given to an application for funding received from Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward Members for funding of £2550 towards fencing to secure the area of the Chad Road/Tipton Road embankment.
- (10) That the application for additional funding of £2500 towards gates/fencing for a project that was currently underway, submitted by Turls Hill and Swanbrook Valley Residents Association, be deferred pending further consultations.
- (11) That approval be given to a grant of £420 to Upper Gornal Pensioners Club for funding towards the purchase of equipment for the fun day and use by voluntary organisations.

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TO SEEK SUPPORT FOR A BOROUGH WIDE AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA FOR DUDLEY

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking support for the declaration of a whole Borough Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The proposal for a whole borough AQMA had been supported by the Select Committee on Environment and Corporate Board who had approved consultation through the Area Committees before submitting a report to Cabinet in July 2007.

Arising from the presentation of the report the Cabinet Member for Housing commented that there were major issues with traffic congestion in Brierley Hill and Sedgley and that action should be taken to address the matter and an appropriate air quality strategy pursued. In responding the Environmental Protection Manager commented that there was a major traffic congestion scheme operating in Brierley Hill but pointed out that it would be difficult to extend the scheme to other areas but that other initiatives such as walking to school, car sharing and using bicycles were aimed at reducing congestion.

During the ensuing discussion a Member commented that there was an issue in her Ward regarding smoke billowing out of chimneys due to wood burning stoves and queried what action the Council were taking to address the matter. In responding the Environmental Protection Manager reported that wood burning stoves was a rising trend and pointed out that the Council had the powers to regulate the use of authorised gas and approved appliances that were smokeless and confirmed that complaints were investigated. In response to a further query in respect of garden fires it was reported that complaints should be directed to him for investigation.

The Environmental Protection Manager confirmed that air quality was continually measured and that a small device was placed in and around shops in Sedgley to monitor nitro dioxide and that the measuring device was changed every two weeks and sent away for analysis.

RESOLVED

That the advantages of the declaration of a whole Borough Air Quality Management Area, as detailed in Appendix 1 attached to the report, now submitted be supported and following a period of consultation be referred to Cabinet in July 2007 for approval, insofar as this Committee were concerned.

80 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE JOINT CORE STRATEGY FOR THE BLACK COUNTRY

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the preparation and progress of the Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country including the local consultation events undertaken in Dudley borough.

Arising from the presentation of the report Members commented that there was no need for other options as the Black Country Study had laid out the foundations based on firm evidence and mapped the way forward and now only required the inclusion of technical and other details. In responding the Principal Planning Officer acknowledged that the Black Country Study had laid the foundations but reported that the strategy was a statutory process and that the Core Strategy would have to consider how to take forward the findings from the Black Country Study and consult on the additional details.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report now submitted, on the preparation and progress of the Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country including the local consultation events undertaken in the Borough, be noted.

81 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the current status of responses to questions raised at previous meetings.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report and Appendix to the report, now submitted, be noted.

82 WARD ISSUES

(a) Councillor Mrs Ridley

Referred to a previous issue regarding the lack of car parking spaces at Coseley railway station for the number of commuters that used the station and reported that the issue was still under consideration.

(b) Councillor Simms

Complained about gas repair works that had been carried out on Clarence Street and roads being tarmaced over.

The Group Engineer (Traffic Road and Safety) undertook to investigate the matter.

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FUTURE DATES AND VENUES OF MEETINGS

It was noted that dates and venues of future meetings would be available in May 2007.

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm.

CHAIRMAN