

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Wednesday 28th January 2009 at 6.30 pm
Dormston School Sports Hall, Mill Bank, Sedgley

PRESENT

Councillor Ryder (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Ameson (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Caunt, Evans, Mrs Millward, Mottram, Perry, Mrs Ridley, Simms,
Stanley and Wright.

Officers

The Interim Director of Law & Property (as Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director - Culture and Recreation and the Group Engineer - Traffic and Road Safety (Directorate of the Urban Environment); The Interim Assistant Director – Early Years, Youth and Education, The Area Team Manager - Early Years, Youth and Education and the Area Youth Worker Early Years, Youth and Education (Directorate of Children Services), Interim Director of Older People (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services) and Mrs Joan Rees (Directorate of Law and Property).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Inspector M Sutton of the West Midlands Police, together with approximately 30 members of the public.

57 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors G Davies and Mr J Millward and Mr S Vincent, Operations Commander, Dudley Borough (West Midlands Fire Service)

58 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member declared a personal or prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct, in respect of any items to be discussed.

59 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3rd December 2008, be approved as a correct record and signed.

60 YOUTH ISSUES

The Area Manager of Early Years, Youth and Education gave an oral update on youth issues in the North Dudley area including:

- (a) activities for young people during the half term and Easter holidays,
- (b) plans for the Area Youth Forum's residential in Wales during February half term,
- (c) the success of the sexual health drop in at Coseley Youth Centre,
- (d) partnership working with the police to address issues of anti social behaviour at Lower Gornal Youth Academy,
- (e) activities at Sedgley Youth Centre, including mentoring skills, cooking skills and a girl's night,
- (f) the Connexions Bus operating on Tuesday evenings in Upper Gornal and detached youth worker teams working in the North of Dudley

In referring to Minute No. 46 of the previous meeting, Coseley Ward Members requested an update on the re-provision of the Coseley Youth Centre, advising that they would be willing to attend any meetings on this matter.

In response, Councillor Caunt informed of discussions he had recently had with Officers from the Directorate of Children's Services, to determine a budget for this project and on the need for young people to be consulted. Councillor Caunt had asked the Directorate to consider two possible options for the re-provision of the service namely:

- (a) the garage building alongside the scout hut, or
- (b) a new build on a local park.

He suggested that there was a need for an urgent meeting of Ward Members, Youth Club Forum and Officers of the Directorate of Children's Services to discuss the Coseley Youth Club's future site. It was anticipated that the new youth club would be operational by October 2009.

Ward Members expressed appreciation for the support indicated for the re-provision of youth services in Coseley.

The Interim Assistant Director of Early Years, Adult and Education advised that meetings would be arranged to consult with young people on their views. He would ensure that Ward Members and young people were fully informed on the options available.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the content of the oral report on the youth issues be noted.
- (2) That the Interim Director of Children's Services be requested to arrange a meeting between the appropriate Officers from Children's Services, the architect, Ward Members and the Committee Members of the Youth Club to ensure that a new youth club was operational before October, 2009.

61

POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Mark Sutton gave an oral report on Police issues in the North Dudley area, commenting that in general, reported crime figures were down on same period last year. He advised that the information on the Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings were available on the Police website and on police initiatives to deal with anti social behaviour issues relating to youths driving mini motorcycles and other anti social behaviour in the North of Dudley. Additional over time funding had been secured to combat issues in the Ellowes Hall area. He encouraged those in attendance to report incidents of crime to enable the Police to respond.

A Member of the Committee commented on the very prompt response from the Police following the reporting of a recent incident of car vandalism in the Coseley area.

A Member of the Committee expressed appreciation for the support received from senior Police Officers for their input into a meeting at Brierley Hill Police station the previous evening. The Member also apologised in advance of the next PACT meeting for the non attendance of all Sedgley Ward Councillors who were already committed to a long standing previously scheduled engagement.

A Member of the Committee raised concerns related to six dead crows which had recently been shot with a four bore shot gun. As a licence was required for the holding of such fire arms, she requested that police take action on this matter. Inspector Sutton undertook to investigate the matter.

RESOLVED

That Inspector Sutton be thanked for his oral report on Police issues, and that its contents be noted.

62 FIRE ISSUES

In the absence of a representative of the West Midlands Fire Service no issues were discussed under this item.

63 TRANSPORT ISSUES

In the absence of a representative of Centro, the Area Liaison Officer advised that issues raised at the previous meeting, which had been sent to Centro, had been forwarded to the Managers of the local garages who operated the services referred to for a response. No response had yet been received.

A Member of the Committee informed that he had spoken to the Manager of Stourbridge bus station regarding an issue of Stourbridge college students being left behind at the Stourbridge bus station. The bus station Manager had undertaken to investigate the issue.

RESOLVED

That the issues raised under transport issues be noted.

65 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 requested a progress report on traffic calming measures to slow speeding traffic on Ettymore Road and Ettymore Road West. The Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety, advised that funding was not available during the current financial year for such a scheme, but that the request would be considered for inclusion in the annual traffic calming programme during the next financial year.
- (2) Two members of the public raised concerns regarding drainage problems between the path from Uplands Avenue to Hickmerelands Lane. They had been advised that the necessary remedial work had been completed, but the path continued to be water logged. The Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety, undertook to speak with the questioners outside of the meeting to ascertain all the details and have the matter investigated and for a written response to be sent to them.

- (3) A member of the public raised concerns relating to difficulty with access to Beechfield Grove and the Bramford Estate, due to cars driving on the grass verge between the junction of Beechfield Grove and the main Chad Road, especially late at night. They also requested that a further bollard be erected on the grass verge to prevent cars driving on the grass verge. The Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety, undertook to investigate the concerns and send a written response to the questioner.
- (4) A member of the public raised concerns relating to the difficulty for people with visual and hearing impairments to take part in consultation on local issues, if documentation in an appropriate format was not available at the start of the consultation. He also expressed concern at advice given on this matter. The Area Liaison Officer undertook to discuss the concerns raised with the Head of Marketing and Communications and for a written response to be sent to the questioner.

A Member of the Committee also undertook to investigate the concerns, as the same matter had been raised in another arena earlier in the day.

- (5) A member of the public raised concerns regarding the alleged delay in introducing a one way system in Hopyard Lane, and the construction of a footpath, which he considered should have been undertaken by the Property Developer and completed by 2007. A Member of the Committee and the Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety, advised that, following the consultation on the proposed one way system, some residents had objected to the proposal, and therefore a one way system had never been agreed. The Director of the Urban Environment had been unable to obtain permission to erect a sign regarding this matter on the land. Under the terms of the Section 106 Agreement, the Developer had five years in which to construct the said footpath and in the meantime, the Council were unable take any further action.

Another Member of the Committee commented that he had no recollection of there ever being an accident in that area and did not consider there was a need for a one way system.

- (6) A member of the public expressed concerns regarding illegally parked cars in Ettymore Road especially private hire vehicles (white taxi cabs), for long periods of time. The drivers of the private hire vehicles were also witnessed urinating on the land owned by the Salvation Army. The Chairman advised that incidents of illegally parked private hire vehicles required an appropriate response from the Police and the Licensing Officer.

Members of the Committee, who were also Members of the Licensing and Safety Committee, commented that private hire vehicle drivers were well aware of where they could and could not park whilst waiting for fares. They reminded members of the public that should they use private hire vehicles from a taxi rank, the vehicles and drivers were not covered by insurance. The Police had the power to issue a fixed penalty to any taxi cab driver parked illegally.

Other members of the public commented that they were aware of the private hire vehicles parking illegally at 5pm in the evening near the Clifton Cinema, Sedgley. It was also commented that other vehicles also parked illegally on the taxi rank, which was for use by hackney carriage (black cabs) licence holders only.

Inspector Sutton undertook to investigate the matter.

- (7) A member of the public expressed concern relating to irresponsible parking at the junction of Providence Road and Ivyhouse Lane, particularly around licensing open hours of the Ex -Servicemen's Club located at the corner of this junction.

The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety advised that in the short term illegal parking was the responsibility of the police. In the longer term, he undertook to investigate the matter and send a written response to the questioner.

67 CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on applications received for funding from the Allocation Budget of the Committee and which had been considered by the Area Committee's Capital Allocations Working Group which had met on the 6th January 2009.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and Ward Councillors, be authorised to determine urgent applications for funding.
- (2) That the application by the St Andrew's Church (Sedgley) for £5,600 towards the upgrade of the heating system in the building, be refused, on the basis that the Church had recently received funding towards the installation of a lift.
- (3) That the application by First Lower Gornal Scouts Group for £9,200 towards the provision of a disabled shower and toilet facilities, be deferred to the next meeting of the Working Group, to enable a more detailed breakdown of quotations to be considered.

- (4) That the application by TFK Coseley Netball Club for £2,500 towards the purchase of training equipment and uniforms for the Club, be refused on the grounds that the majority of the items listed in the application were of a revenue nature, but that the Club be advised to submit a further application for items of a capital nature.

68 COMMUNITY RENEWAL WORKING GROUP

The Community Renewal Officer gave an oral report on the progress of the North Dudley Community Renewal Plan, following a recent meeting of the Community Renewal Working Group and the outcomes from that meeting. In making the report, the Community Renewal Officer indicated that, in future it was intended that written report be submitted to meetings of the Committee. Terms of reference had been approved at the first meeting of the Working Group held on 4th December, 2008 together with a strategy for the Community Renewal in North Dudley indicating where the Service was currently and how to improve and address issues of concern.

At the second meeting of the Working Group in January 2009, a structure for involvement of voluntary organisation representatives, was agreed in Principle, together with an agreed understanding that representatives of other professional organisations, such as health, police and fire services, could be invited to future meetings of the Working Group, on an as and when basis, should an item specific to their organisation need to be discussed.

The next meeting of the Working Group was scheduled for 3rd March 2009.

In response to a query regarding parking issues at Coseley railway station, the Community Renewal Officer advised that the problem to be resolved involved a general lack of parking in the area in close proximity to the railway station.

RESOLVED

That the Community Renewal Officer be thanked for her oral report on Community Renewal and that the report be noted.

70 WARD ISSUES

- (a) Councillor Mottram
- (i) gave an oral update regarding the proposal for a one way system at Roseville Shopping Centre, informing that Centro had now agreed to support the proposal.

The Group engineer – Traffic and Road Safety informed that following the agreement of Centro for the proposal, which would have a positive impact on the shopping centre, work could now be progressed and a progress report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

- (ii) requested information as to why the Gating Order at the File Cutters, approved in December 2008, had still not been actioned. He had been advised that the delay would be in the region of three months. In response the Area Liaison Officer undertook to investigate the delay and send a response to Ward Members.
- (b) Councillor Mrs Ridney reported concerns regarding issues at the Rainbow Community Centre, of which she was a Member. The issues had been reported to Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services for consideration and attention.
- (c) Councillor Mrs Millward requested that the current venue not be used for future meetings of the Committee.

71 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

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

RESOLVED

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

72 DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

The date and venue of the next meeting of the Committee was noted as Wednesday 8th April 2009 at 6.30 p.m. at High Arcal School, Arcal Drive, Sedgley.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

CHAIRMAN