

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE – 14th March 2006

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

**URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT THE
CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE - 24TH JANUARY 2006**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 24th January 2006 Central Dudley Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

BACKGROUND

2. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities. This diverse range of technical services focus on regenerating the Borough, maintaining our environment to high standards, protecting our communities and promoting leisure and other community services for all.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both members and the general public, relating to matters such as traffic management, leisure and recreation, regeneration and new development. Few enquiries can be answered immediately, with many prompting further investigation, feasibility studies and public consultation, prior to being reported back to Committee.
4. To keep Committee updated, progress reports are included as an appendix and the proposal resulting from the update is set out at the end of each paragraph.

FINANCE

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

LAW

6. Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers the Council to provide recreational facilities in its area.
7. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do anything that is likely to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough.

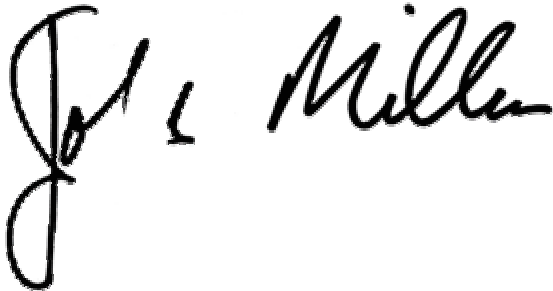
8. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.
9. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its area 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.

EQUALITY IMPACT

12. The proposals take into account the Council's equal opportunities policies.

RECOMMENDATION

13. That the proposals contained in Appendix 1 attached be approved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John B Millar'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Director of the Urban Environment - John B Millar

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Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

Action Notes from 24th January 2006 Committee.

DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT THE CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE HELD 24th JANUARY 2006

1. STREET LIGHTING - QUENTIN DRIVE, DUDLEY

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Craigie submitted a petition on behalf of the local residents requesting that the street lighting be brought up to the approved national standard.

Comments:

Following an extensive on site investigation, engineers concur that the levels of lighting available in Quentin Drive no longer meet existing British and European standards, although the lighting may have been installed in accordance with the standards in force at the time of installation.

Due to a limited budget, requests for improvement have to be prioritised. Engineers have compiled a Lighting Improvement Request Register into which all such requests are entered. Prioritisation is carried out on the basis of a request received, crime statistics for the hours of darkness and engineering condition of any existing street lighting. Quentin Drive has been added to the register for future improvement and works will be programmed in the foreseeable future.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

2. CENTRO BUS STOPS - RUSSELLS HALL ESTATE

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, a member of the public submitted a petition, on behalf of residents of Dudley, expressing their concern at the proposed increase in hire charges at Dudley Concert Hall, Stourbridge Hall and Brierley Hill Civic Hall.

Comments:

Due to the confusion relating to the proposed charging policy, officers are including "charity fundraising event" in the second pricing band for each hall to provide clarity to the charging policy and a substantial reduction for charity events. For example, this will mean that a Saturday night charity concert at Dudley will cost the hirer £600 instead of the current commercial rate of £1100. Officers believe that this will not only offer a preferential rate for the small number of events that have been caught up in this issue (maybe as little as 5) it will also make the pricing structure far more transparent.

3. **CENTRO BUS STOPS - RUSSELLS HALL ESTATE**

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, a member of the public submitted a petition with supporting photographs, on behalf of residents on the Russells Hall Estate concerned that CENTRO had failed to consult with them prior to marking out bus stops in inappropriate locations.

Comments:

Improvement to the 222 bus route infrastructure were publicised through the distribution of some 4,000 consultation leaflets. It is understood that CENTRO is aware of the problems raised by the local residents and a report is being prepared for the PTA to consider the residents' representation further.

The provision of bus stops and shelters is permitted development and does not require planning permission. For Members information it is the current practice that bus stop signs and posts are provided by the bus service operator in consultation with this Council as Local Highway Authority who only advise on any highway safety issues, and shelters are provided by CENTRO following public consultation. Bus routes are a commercial decision for bus operators who consider the suitability of the highway infrastructure and pedestrian access so that the maximum number of households are within 5 minute walking distance of a bus stop.

Whilst we understand the points that are being made by both the ward members and local residents, the provision of public transport infrastructure is provided by other independent bodies.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

4. **LACK OF PRIVACY AND LIGHT - THE BROADWAY, DUDLEY**

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor M Davis submitted a petition on behalf of the local residents who believe their privacy and light has been taken away by houses which have been built too close to existing homes.

Comments:

The petition submitted by the resident was forwarded to Planning Officers within DUE. Consequently, at the time of writing this report, a site visit was being arranged with the residents in an attempt to resolve the issues highlighted to everyone's mutual satisfaction.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

5. **TRAFFIC ISSUES - SCOTTS GREEN**

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Mrs S Morley, on behalf of a Residents' Association, expressed concerns regarding traffic issues at the Scotts Green Close area.

Comments:

Traffic Engineers within DUE are in the process of implementing a 20 mph speed limit in Scotts Green Close and it is hoped this will help address some of the concerns highlighted by the residents in relation to traffic issues, in particular speeding. A letter is to be sent to Mrs Morley confirming that we are in the process of advertising a 20 mph zone in Scotts Green Close which closes on 28th February.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

6. **BABCOCK BRIDGE**

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Mr B Cotterill expressed concern that work did not seem to be progressing on the Babcock bridge and that diversions introduced as a result of the roadworks were causing unnecessary problems for traffic travelling along the Birmingham New Road.

Comments:

Officers from DUE have contacted Mr Cotterill and investigated his enquiry. The roadworks in question were on the A4123 Birmingham New Road which is in the jurisdiction of the Highways Agency. The roadworks have since been removed and the congestion issues alleviated.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

7. **SPEEDING - BOWLING GREEN ROAD**

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, P Randle queried how long residents would have to wait for a response to their petition, submitted in 2004, requesting action to reduce speeding in Bowling Green Road, and whether it was feasible to have a one-way system around Netherbrook School.

Comments:

A local safety scheme consisting of mobile speed cameras, signing and a reactive speed sign is outlined in Appendix A of the Highways Minor Works Capital Programme being reported to the 14th March Central Dudley Area Committee. Although this scheme is subject to approval, hopefully it will be implemented and have a positive impact on the speeding in Bowling Green Road.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

8. PERIMETER FENCING - SELBOURNE PUBLIC HOUSE

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, D Davy expressed concern regarding the unsafe perimeter fencing and the dumping of rubbish on the former Selborne Public House.

Comments:

Officers from DUE have visited the site and identified that there is a problem. Unfortunately, as the development is private, the Council cannot take direct action. However, enforcement officers are liaising with the developer in an attempt to resolve the situation to everyone's mutual satisfaction.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

9. RESURFACING WORKS - GREEN ROAD, DUDLEY

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, D Davey requested that Green Road be resurfaced.

Comments:

It has now been confirmed that Green Road will be resurfaced as part of the 2006/07 Highways Maintenance Programme commencing in April.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

10. IMPROVED STREET LIGHTING - CHURCH STREET, QUARRY BANK

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Cotterill requested that the lights in Church Street, Quarry Bank be brought up to an acceptable standard.

Comments:

Church Street, Quarry Bank is already included in our current Street Lighting refurbishment/replacement programme and it is anticipated that these works will commence early in the new financial year. The new street lighting scheme will comprise of vandal resistant street lighting lanterns with improved light distribution and compliant to the latest British and European standards.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

11. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING - BOWLING GREEN ROAD

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Cotterill raised, on behalf of Councillor Male, the need for a pedestrian crossing near Bowling Green Road, to allow residents to cross the road safely. This issue had been raised some time ago. The increased volume of traffic is making it extremely difficult for pedestrians to cross the road safely.

Comments:

It is considered that a pedestrian crossing in this position would conflict with the safe and effective operation of the adjacent traffic signal controlled junction.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

12. TRAFFIC LIGHT SEQUENCE - COPPICE LANE

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Cotterill raised, on behalf of Councillor Male, the need for the sequence of the lights at Coppice Lane and Pedmore Road, and the lights for the filter lane turning left to be investigated and rectified.

Comments:

The phasing of the traffic signals at the junction of Coppice Lane and Merry Hill are operating in accordance with their preplanning sequence. Modifications to the left turn filter arrow took place several years ago to prevent drivers wishing to turn left driving across the pedestrian footways endangering pedestrians and local residents.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

13. CHRISTMAS YEW TREE - HIGH STREET, QUARRY BANK

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Sparks requested that the Directorate of the Urban Environment review its policy so that in future it would be possible to reintroduce the previous custom of lighting up the yew tree growing in the Church Yard at the top of Quarry Bank High Street at Christmas, rather than, what happened recently, the use of a Christmas tree which was erected and lit, using the power point previously used to light the yew tree.

Comments:

An investigation will be undertaken to look at the feasibility of putting festoon lighting in the yew tree, growing in the church yard at the top of Quarry Bank High Street.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

14. PARKING PROBLEMS - SCOTTS GREEN CLOSE

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Hart highlighted the need for a final solution to the longstanding problems at Scotts Green Close. The Head Teacher of the Holly Hall School had indicated that he would be willing to enter into discussions with Officers regarding using some land in front of the school to relieve the problems of parking.

Comments:

Officers are aware of the suggestion made by the Head Teacher to ease local congestion adjacent to the school and would wish to attend a meeting to discuss such a proposal further.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

15. BARRIER - RUSSELLS HALL SKATE PARK

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Hart raised concerns at the lack of an obstruction to prevent bikers vandalising the turn on the skatepark at Russells Hall Estate.

Comments:

This matter has been investigated but unfortunately there is no additional funding to install barriers to prevent access to the skate park. Should the facility continue to develop in the future and additional funding become available, then this option will be reconsidered.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

16. REMOVAL OF ST JAMES'S ROAD REPAIR SIGNAGE

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Craigie expressed gratitude for the resurfacing of St James' Road, but requested that signage be removed advising of the repair work which was carried out in November 2005.

Comments:

The signs making motorists aware of proposed highway maintenance works have now been removed.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

17. BUS STOP - NEW ROWLEY ROAD

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor J Davies asked why a bus stop situated in New Rowley Road for over forty years was to be replaced by a shelter.

Comments:

Councillor J Davies has been contacted in relation to this matter and informed of the appropriate protocol relating to the CENTRO appeals process. Officers within DUE will advise and assist local ward members, whenever appropriate, in relation to problems of this nature.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

18. DOG FOULING - NEW ROWLEY ROAD

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor J Davies requested enforcement action against dog fouling in the New Rowley Road area.

Comments:

Councillor Davies' concerns have been brought to the attention of our enforcement team and extra patrols will be undertaken in the New Rowley Road area in order to deter and take enforcement action where necessary.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

19. "H" MARKINGS - WALKER STREET AND SWAN STREET, NETHERTON

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Mrs Coulter highlighted the need for "H" markings near the day nursery in Walker Street, Netherton and at Swan Street to be introduced

Comments:

Councillor Coulter was advised that the sign in Walker Street was scheduled for the next financial year and that the situation regarding Swan Street would be investigated.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

20. TRAFFIC ISSUES - HURST LANE

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Bradney raised concern that accidents at Hurst Lane were to be monitored rather than action taken to prevent them, as indicated in paragraph 15 of the report of

the Director of the Urban Environment ("*Matters Raised at the CDAC - 8th November 2005*").

Comments:

A local safety scheme was introduced in Highbridge Road/Hurst Lane in 2003/04. This route will continue to be monitored during the next 3 years to determine the effectiveness of the implemented scheme or if additional measures are required. Resources for Local Safety Schemes are limited and targeted at sites to reduce actual accidents.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

21. **PEDESTRIAN CROSSING - HOLLY HALL AND LEVEL STREET, BRIERLEY HILL**

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Bradney raised the need for a pedestrian crossing between Holly Hall and Level Street, Brierley Hill and signage advising of speed limits along the stretch of busy road.

Comments:

The request for an additional pedestrian crossing in Pedmore Road/Highgate Road will be added to the assessment programme for year 2007/08.

All appropriate speed restriction signs are provided in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

22. **PEDESTRIAN CROSSING - HILLCREST SCHOOL**

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Bradney raised the request by Hillcrest Board of Governors for a pedestrian crossing outside of Hillcrest School, and the increase in traffic since the introduction of the bypass.

Comments:

Traffic Engineers will investigate the issues of pedestrian safety adjacent to Hillcrest School, with a view to ascertaining the extent of the problem and possible solutions that are available given the close proximity of the junction of Hill Street and an existing crossing in Simms Lane.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

23. TRAFFIC LIGHTS - OAKHAM ROAD AND DIXONS GREEN ROAD

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Ali highlighted the need for traffic lights on the junction of Oakham Road and Dixons Green Road.

Comments:

Traffic Engineers within DUE are proposing a new traffic roundabout at the junction of Oakham Road and Dixons Green Road which is considered a better solution to the local traffic problems rather than install traffic signals. This new scheme will form part of the 2006/07 Highways Minor Works Capital Programme reported earlier at this Committee.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

24. DOG FOULING ENFORCEMENT - CORNWALL DRIVE

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Ali requested dog fouling enforcement in the Cornwall Drive area.

Comments:

Councillor Ali's concerns have been brought to the attention of our enforcement team and extra patrols will be undertaken in the Cornwall Drive area in order to deter and take enforcement action where necessary.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

25. PROPOSAL FOR A DUDLEY TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB/STADIUM

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Ali raised his disappointment at the lack of a joint directorate report submitted to CDAC regarding his proposals, made at a previous meeting, for a football club stadium facility in Dudley.

Comments:

A statement was read out at the meeting by the Assistant Director - Environmental Management, advising of a planning briefing which the Director of the Urban Environment had issued in respect of identifying a suitable site for a Dudley Town Football Club stadium, or other similar facility within the Dudley area and stated that a progress report would be submitted to a future meeting of the committee.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

26. CHICANES - RUSSELLS HALL ESTATE

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor M Davis raised the matter of chicanes on the Russells Hall Estate which he considered were causing more accidents than there were previously.

Comments:

Investigations show that there is a reduction in the number of accidents on the Russells Hall Estate as a result of the local safety scheme.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

27. INCREASED TRAFFIC VOLUME - CINDER BANK

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Rahman expressed concern regarding the increased volume of traffic and resulting adverse effect on air quality in the Cinder Bank area.

Comments:

Officers from DUE have carried out air quality monitoring in Cinder Bank since Councillor Rahman raised this issue previously. Results show that the air quality in Cinder Bank does not breach the UK Air Quality objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide. The air quality is not good, but no worse than many other similar locations on main roads within the Borough.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

28. ROAD SURFACE - HILLCREST SCHOOL, NETHERTON

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Rahman highlighted the poor state of the road immediately outside the Hillcrest School, Netherton.

Comments:

The road adjacent to Hillcrest School, Hill Street, Netherton, is included in the Highway Maintenance Programme for 2006/06 which will commence in April.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

29. GREEN WASTE COLLECTIONS

Background: At the Central Dudley Area Committee on the 24th January 2006, Councillor Aston enquired whose responsibility it is to collect the waste left following the green collections.

Comments:

Officers from DUE have contacted Councillor Aston, the problems that exist have been identified and appropriate measures will be taken to clear up any fly-tipping or residual waste.

Proposal: That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.