

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 14th June, 2005 at 6.30 p.m.
at Sledmere Primary School, School Drive, Off Buffery Road, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillors Ali, Mrs Aston, Bradney, Mrs Coulter, J Davies, M Davis, Finch, Johnston, Rahman, Sparks, and C L Woodall and, following the appointment of co-opted members, Ms H Edwards.

OFFICERS:

Director of Social Services (Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management), Mr J Butler and Mr R Dugdale (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Mr J Boyle and Mr S Rice (Directorate of Social Services), Mr R Eynon (Directorate of Housing), Mrs C Bacon and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law and Property).

Together with Sergeant N Bason (West Midlands Police) and approximately 20 members of the public.

1 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor Rahman be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Councillor Rahman thereupon took the Chair).

2 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31st March, 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cotterill, Ms Craigie, Hart and Male and Mrs V Little, Mrs J Oakes and Mr Sadiq and the Assistant Director of Education (Resources and Planning) and Superintendent Green (West Midlands Police).

5 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor J Davies be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

6 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

The following petitions were submitted by the persons indicated and referred to the officers shown for attention:-

- (a) From residents of Russells Hall, submitted by Councillor M Davis, requesting the supply of dropped kerbs in the following terms "at no cost in line with the supply of the same on the Wrens Nest and Lodge Farm Estates. For many years we have witnessed priority treatment to other areas when our own, now accepted as most vulnerable, gets absolutely nothing and gets plagued with through traffic and the hospital parking nightmare" - referred to the Director of the Urban Environment and Director of Housing.
- (b) From residents of Bunns Lane and adjoining streets, Dudley submitted by Councillor M Davis, regarding alleged anti-social behaviour by the residents of and visitors to a property in Bunns Lane, Dudley - referred to the Director of Housing.

The first named on the petition also spoke on the content of the petition and arising from this he was asked to speak to Councillor J Davies at the end of the meeting on this matter.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted setting out the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees. Reference was also made to a revision to the terms of reference of Area Committees agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 19th May, 2005, in respect of the second term of reference regarding local community plans in that the Council agreed that it should no longer be a specific requirement to produce a separate local community plan however this would not prevent any individual Area Committee from developing its own plan if appropriate.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and appendices to the report, submitted on the terms of reference, as revised, and the protocol for Area Committees, be noted.

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CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration of the co-option of members to serve on the Committee for the 2005/2006 municipal year.

RESOLVED

That, subject to them agreeing to serve, the following persons be re-appointed as co-opted members of the Committee for the 2005/2006 municipal year, representing the Organisations indicated:-

Mrs V Little - Dudley Beacon and Castle Primary Care Trust

Ms H Edwards - Dudley Association of Governing Bodies

Mr M Sadiq - Dudley Racial Equality Council

Mrs J Oakes - Dudley Town Centre Forum

Mrs P Goodyear - DOSTI

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APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration of the appointment of working groups in the 2005/2006 municipal year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Central Dudley Area Committee Community Plan Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year with its existing terms of reference but that the working group comprise all the members of Central Dudley Area Committee with meetings being held prior to meetings of the Area Committee with a report on the proceedings of the working group to the Area Committee meeting later that day.
- (2) That the Central Dudley Area Committee Allocations Working Group be re-appointed with its existing terms of reference and that the working group comprise the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Central Dudley Area Committee and one member of each ward comprising the Committee; and that the membership comprise Councillors Rahman, J Davies, Mrs Aston, Mrs Coulter, M Davis and Cotterill/Male.

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APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking the nomination of members of the Committee to serve on outside organisations.

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the organisations indicated for the 2005/2006 municipal year or for the term periods indicated:-

Castle and Priory Regeneration Group - Councillor Mrs Aston

Castle High School Foundation

- Councillor M Davis - 3 year term from 17.09.05.
- Councillor Ali - 3 year term from 13.07.05.
- Mr M Sadiq - 3 year term from 17.09.05
- Councillor Finch - 3 year term from 17.09.05

Wrens Nest Community Centre - Councillor Mrs Aston

Withymoore Island Trust - Councillor Bradney

St. Francis Parish Centre - Councillor Finch

Community Associations

- (i) Dudley Wood - Councillor Male
- (ii) Sledmere - Councillor Ali
- (iii) Woodside - Councillor Rahman

(iv) Priory - Councillor Mrs Aston

(v) Quarry Bank - Councillor Cotterill

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YOUTH ISSUES

It was reported that there were no youth issues to be considered at this meeting of the Committee.

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PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman advised that questions would be taken from the floor should there be any time remaining when written questions had been addressed. Questions and answers were then given as follows:-

- (a) In response to a question regarding the funding for the signage that has appeared in Dudley Town Centre relating to the alcohol ban it was reported that the Director of Law and Property had been able to identify the necessary monies to enable the signage to be put up.
 - (b) Arising from a question asked regarding the role of the Chief Executive of the Council and the African Caribbean Cultural Centre Action Group regarding an African Caribbean Cultural Centre, it was reported that the Chief Executive had written to the questioner and that the Area Liaison Officer would inform members of the content of that correspondence and take up the issue with the Chief Executive. Members also asked that a meeting be held between the Chief Executive, Area Liaison Officer, Duncan Lowndes of the Directorate of the Urban Environment, the three ward members representing St. Thomas' ward and representatives of the African Caribbean groups involved.
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WARD ISSUES

- (a) Councillor M Davis

- (i) Expressed concern that he had not received feedback to issues raised at the last meeting of the Committee and referred to issues raised at paragraph 3 of Agenda item 18 in relation to Priory Park and the Russells Hall Skate Park on which it was noted that there was no funding available at present to provide any lighting in or adjacent to Russells Hall Skate Park. Councillor Davis also referred to the unlawful parking at Ashenhurst Road, Russells Hall Estate and the need for measures to be put in place to restrict parking or ensure parking was made available for residents given the unsatisfactory position at the moment. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment undertook to look at the matters again, as appropriate, and arrange for responses direct to Councillor Davis.
- (ii) Commented on the condition of Walters Row outside Grange Park. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment agreed to look at this matter and arrange for a response direct to Councillor Davis.
- (iii) Raised concerns regarding the carrying out of works to paths and driveways on the Russells Hall Estate to some properties only and on works done to void properties when similar works were not being carried out to occupied properties. A representative of the Directorate of Housing would be requested to investigate the points raised and arrange for a response on these matter to be sent direct to Councillor Davis.
- (iv) Raised again the issue of trees in St. James's Road and requested that the trees be looked at. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment undertook to action this matter.
- (v) Referred to a notification he had received regarding a pelican crossing at Queens Cross, Dudley which he considered to be inappropriate and suggested more appropriate locations in High Street and at the junction of Stafford Street and High Street, Dudley. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment would arrange to look at this matter and respond direct to Councillor Davis.

- (b) Councillor Bradney referred to a problem with children riding motorbikes through local parks and on football pitches causing damage to parks and being a danger to users of the park and pedestrians. He mentioned that Wolverhampton M.B.C. had formed a plan to curb this and requested that details of that plan be obtained or Dudley develop its own plan. The Police had been contacted in relation to this issue and it was considered that an approach needed to be developed between the Council and the Police in this regard not only in relation to the incidents referred to by Councillor Bradney but also in other areas as well given that it was not a localised problem. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment would investigate this matter, in consultation with the Community Safety Team and Directorate of Housing, and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.
- (c) Councillor Mrs Coulter reiterated the comments made by Councillor Bradney referring to similar problems raised with her by residents. She also wished to have recorded her thanks to the officers concerned for works carried out to steps to the bank at the lower part of Highbridge Road.
- (d) Councillor Ali
 - (i) Requested that resurfacing works be carried out to Green Road following the resurfacing works done to Buffery Road. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment undertook to look into this matter and respond direct to Councillor Ali.
 - (ii) Referred to a letter that he had received from residents from Greenfels Rise, Oakham in respect of the alleged inappropriate use of resurfacing material in that road. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment was requested to investigate this matter and respond direct to Councillor Ali.
 - (iii) Called for more street lighting from the Flood Street site to Blackacre Road. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment would look into this matter and respond direct to Councillor Ali.
 - (iv) Called for traffic lights at the Oakham Road junction, Dixons Green, to be installed as soon as possible. A representative from the Directorate of the Urban Environment would investigate this matter and respond direct to Councillor Ali.
 - (v) Referred to the activities of Green Corns Limited and whilst welcoming the raising of the issue by Ian Austin MP in the House of Commons requested that a letter be sent to the appropriate Minister calling for the curbing of the activities of this organisation. The Area Liaison Officer would write on behalf of the Committee to the appropriate Minister concerned.

- (e) Councillor Woodall
 - (i) Reiterated comments made earlier about the nuisance caused by the inappropriate riding of motorbikes, which appeared to affect Council estates including Sledmere and Rosland. He asked for increased police vigilance.
 - (ii) Thanked Police Community Support Officers who attended promptly to deal with a gathering of youths in an area who had alcohol. He requested that Housing Officers keep a watch on void properties so to prevent any misuse by such youths. A representative of the Directorate of Housing would action this matter.
- (f) Councillor Johnston reiterated previous concerns about people on small motorbikes but also raised concerns about the inappropriate use of quod bikes. He considered that this was a growing problem that needed to be dealt with.
- (g) Councillor Finch requested that Council Officers and the Police tackle the problems of vandalism and drinking on Priory Park and asked for action on the litter problem at Wrens Nest. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment would arrange for these matters to be actioned and respond direct to Councillor Finch.
- (h) Councillor Mrs Aston referred to lighting in Richborough Drive and to the steps in Woodcroft Avenue. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment would arrange for these matters to be investigated and respond direct to Councillor Mrs Aston.
- (i) Councillor J Davies
 - (i) Queried the inclusion of Grazebrook Park as a site for inclusion in the Brownfield Land Pilot Project (Agenda Item No. 18 on the Agenda for this meeting) especially as it contained a war memorial. Further consideration would be given to this matter when considering that latter agenda item.
 - (ii) Referred to the need to ensure that the fencing at Buffery Park removed to facilitate the holding of a fair was reinstated when the fair left. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment to action this matter.
 - (iii) Referred to the land between shops in Hall Street from which rubbish was continually being removed and asked for temporary fencing to be erected to prevent the dumping of rubbish. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment to investigate this matter and respond direct to Councillor Davies.
- (j) Councillor Rahman

- (i) Thanked officers for the work done to restore Woodside Community Centre following damage done to it.
- (ii) Referred to the lack of security fencing at Woodside Community Centre and Highgate Primary School. The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning was requested to investigate this matter and respond direct to Councillor Rahman.
- (iii) Requested the removal of a mobile building in Highgate Road. A representative of the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning to action and respond direct to Councillor Rahman
- (iv) Requested action to prevent motorists speeding in Darby End Road. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment to investigate this matter and respond direct to Councillor Rahman.
- (v) Requested the provision of children's play area facilities in the site off Cole Street playing fields. A representative of the Directorate of the Urban Environment would investigate this matter and respond direct to Councillor Rahman.

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APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted regarding land and property within the Committee's area.

Upon consideration of the report and comments made it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Personnel, Law and Property be recommended to approve the sale of the Leasehold interest of 11A New Street, Dudley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (2) That further consideration of the proposed disposal of the site of 141 and 142 Pedmore Road, Dudley, as shown on the plans attached to the report submitted, be deferred pending the holding of a site visit.
- (3) That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended to approve the application to purchase land fronting 46 King Street, Dudley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, and that such sale be subject to the granting of a legal order under the Planning or Highways Act and be on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.

- (4) That further consideration of the request made for a licence over Council owned land at the rear of 28 Dudley Wood Road, Dudley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, be deferred pending the holding of a site visit.
- (5) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure be recommended to refuse the application made to purchase land at 96 Lynbrook Close, Netherton, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons indicated in the report submitted.
- (6) That the Cabinet Member for Personnel, Law and Property be recommended to refuse the application made to Lease council owned garage sites at New Road, Dudley, as indicated on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons outlined in the report submitted and that the Director of Law and Property be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the future use of this garage site.
- (7) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure be recommended to approve the sale of land adjoining 20 Richborough Drive, Dudley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, to developers on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (8) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure be recommended to declare the land adjacent to 117 Himley Road, Dudley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, as surplus to requirements for addition to the land disposals programme for sale on the open market for new build residential development purposes for the best price reasonably obtainable and on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.

15

PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO SOCIAL SERVICES ESTABLISHMENTS NOVEMBER 2004 - APRIL 2005

A report of the Director of Social Services was submitted on the progress of visits to Social Services establishments undertaken by Members, actions taken in response to member visits and their comments and issues arising from the rota visits.

Arising from consideration of this matter it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and appendices to report, submitted on progress of elected member visits to Social Services establishments November 2004 - April 2005, be noted.

- (2) That Councillors Ali, Mrs Aston, Mrs Coulter, J Davies, M Davis, Johnston, Rahman and Woodall be approved as the nominees of this Committee to undertake rota visits to Social Services establishments in the year 2005/06.
 - (3) That the Director of Social Services be requested to check on the position regarding criminal record bureau checks for members undertaking visits.
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16

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted seeking consideration for the process for allocating expenditure on the delegated capital budget for the 2005/06 municipal year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the criteria and process as previously agreed be continued for the municipal year 2005/06.
 - (2) That the new budget amount be divided equally between the five wards with a discretionary maximum of £2,000 per organisation as outlined in paragraph 2.5 of the report submitted.
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17

ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS - NATIONAL BROWNFIELD LAND STRATEGY PILOT PROJECT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the inclusion of Dudley in a Pilot Project undertaken by English Partnerships on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to produce a National Brownfield Land Strategy. Members were also invited to suggest suitable sites in the vicinity of Dudley Town Centre for inclusion in the Pilot Project. An initial shortlist of sites for inclusion in the project was set out at Appendix B to the report submitted and contained sites at Hall Street/Porter Street, British Gas/Transco site, High Street/King Street, Grazebrook Park and allotments and Lister Road/New Road.

Following a presentation by Rupert Dugdale on this matter, Members raised concerns at the inclusion of Grazebrook Park and the grassed areas at Lister Road/New Road whilst supporting the other three areas and requested that sites in wards other than St Thomas's be identified. It was also suggested that land opposite that suggested in Lister Road/New Road and in Wolverhampton Street be included in the shortlist of sites for inclusion in the project and requested information on land in Council ownership so that other sites could be identified.

Overall, Members welcomed the project with the reservations outlined above.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and appendices to the report, submitted on the English Partnerships - National Brownfield Land Strategy Pilot Project, be noted and that the Committee support the officers ongoing work in relation to this project subject to the comments outlined above.
- (2) That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to give consideration to the possible sites mentioned for inclusion in the project and forward to Members the information requested regarding land in Council ownership so that further suggestions for inclusion might possibly be made.
- (3) That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to submit reports to future meetings of the Committee on this initiative.

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URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT THE CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE - 31 MARCH, 2005

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on a number of issues relating to that Directorate raised at the meeting of this Committee held on 31 March, 2005.

RESOLVED

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

19

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on responses to questions asked under the public forum item at the meeting of this Committee held on 31 March, 2005.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

20

DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

- (1) That the dates and venues of future meetings of the Committee as follows be noted:-

6 September, 2005 - Dudley Concert Hall
8 November, 2005 - Hillcrest School and Community College
24 January, 2006 - Saltwells Educational Development Centre

- (2) That, if available, Priory Primary School be the venue for the meeting of this Committee scheduled to be held on 14 March, 2006.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

CHAIRMAN