

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Monday, 15th November, 2010 at 7.00 p.m.
at Wollaston Village Hall, Bridgnorth Road, Wollaston

PRESENT:-

Councillor Kettle (Chairman)

Councillors Adams, Attwood, Banks, Barlow, Hanif, Knowles, Lowe, Mrs. Rogers, A Turner, Mrs Walker; and Mr. G Downing, Miss D. Grant and Mr. R. Owen.

OFFICERS:-

The Acting Director of Children Services (Acting Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director, Planning and Environmental Health, Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety, Regeneration Project Manager (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Group Accountant (Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement), Area Youth and Community Worker, Area Detached Youth and Community Worker (Directorate of Children's Services), Mr R Clark, Principal Solicitor, Mrs J Elliott, Licensing Officer and Mrs J. Rees (Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources)

Also in attendance:-

Inspector E. Boyle (West Midlands Police); Mr. C. Wood and Ms J. Winpenny (West Midlands Fire Service) together with approximately 40 members of the public.

43 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Cowell, L Jones, Lowe Mrs. P. Martin and Ms P. Shepherd.

44 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Adams and Mrs Rogers declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of a late agenda item regarding a request for permission from the Committee to carry out path improvements and associated works at Swinford Common, in view of their Presidency and Chairmanship of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park group respectively.

Councillor Hanif declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of agenda item 13 (Capital Allocations – application by Valley Road Youth Centre), in view of his relationship with a person attending the Centre.

Councillor Mrs Walker declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of agenda item 13 (Capital Allocations – application by Valley Road Youth Centre), in view of her relationship with a pupil attending the school.

Councillor Attwood declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of agenda item 12 (Measures to assist cycle access to High Street, Stourbridge) in view of his being the Member Champion for cycling.

45 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27th September, 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following:

- (a) That the Committee note, with regard to the resolution in Minute No 37, that in view of information which was supplied to the Acting Area Liaison Officer at the end of the last meeting, the application was not proceeded with and that a revised application will be reconsidered by the Committee this evening.
 - (b) That the name of Sergeant Boardman be replaced with that of Sergeant Gordon in the list of attendees.
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46 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

It was reported that no petitions had been received prior to the meeting and no petitions were submitted at the meeting.

47 YOUTH ISSUES

Mr. Owen reported on Youth Issues, and on events organised by the young people of Stourbridge to raise awareness of the Youth Forum. He also informed on activities which had taken place during October half term, including drama and dancing events, which were well attended.

Miss Grant reported on organisations which she was currently working with, including the Sutton Council for Young People and Norton Youth Group. She also informed on a leaflet which was circulated giving details of the Stourbridge Youth Service Provision.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the oral reports on Youth Issues, be noted.

RESOLVED

That the oral presentation on the 2011 Census be deferred for consideration to a future meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM

1) A member of the public expressed concerns regarding the unkempt state of the changing rooms at Swanpool playing fields, graffiti on the walls of the changing rooms and the fencing outside the building and the smell of the toilets. He questioned why the Committee of the Friends of Swanpool park had not met for over 12 months and what had happened to a donation made to the Friends of Swanpool park by the organisers of the funfair held over twelve months ago.

2) Another member of the public also questioned what had happened to a donation to the Friends of the Swanpool park group and whether the money could be used to install benches in the park to entice the young people to congregate away from the toddler playground and reduce acts of anti social behaviour.

The Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health undertook to discuss the concerns with her colleague in the Culture and Leisure Division of the Directorate of the Urban Environment and ensure a written response was sent to the questioner.

A Member of the Committee advised that the Friends of the Swanpool park group was still in existence and he undertook to investigate what had happened to the funding and to advise the questioner accordingly.

3) The same member of the public expressed concerns for the safety of users of the underpass near the bus station and questioned whether a surface crossing could be introduced on the Ring Road.

A Member of the Committee advised that the possibility of a surface level crossing had been investigated many times and there was no evidence to support the installation of a level crossing at that point. He also reported that there were plans to revamp the underpass once the new bus station was completed.

Inspector Boyle informed that the Police were aware of concerns regarding safety in the underpass. Following the reports of concern there had been no criminal incidents reported in the underpass, and only three in Stourbridge town centre.

- 4) A representative of the Wollaston Village hall expressed concerns regarding the pot holes in the driveway up to the Centre, which were causing serious problems.

The Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health undertook to investigate the concerns and send a written response to the representative.

- 5) A member of the public questioned why his street was never cleaned.

The Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health undertook to investigate the concerns and advise the questioner of the details.

- 6) A member of the public queried why, as advertised in the local press, in the current economic climate it was considered necessary by Personnel to employ two people on part time contracts, at a cost of over £50,000 to address a cost trimming exercise within a Directorate which should have been under the control of existing management and the Cabinet Member.

A Member of the Committee advised that the arrangements referred to had been dealt with in what had been advised was the most cost effective way. A written response would be sent to the questioner.

- 7) A member of the public questioned whether he would be able to speak under the agenda item on capital allocations.

- 8) Another member of the public sought clarification as to whether or not members of the public could speak on agenda items, other than in the public forum.

In response, the Chairman advised that members of the public would be allowed to speak outside of the public forum, should time allow.

- 9) A member of the public commented on the speed of traffic leaving the Swanpool playing fields near Studley Gate and Duncombe Street. He also commented on drivers parking on the road rather than using one of two car parks available when attending the playing fields, due in part to the potholes on the car park.

Another member of the public suggested that perhaps traffic calming measures could be introduced to reduce the speed of traffic in this area.

A Member of the Committee suggested that it be made a condition of the hire of the playing fields that drivers park on the car parks available and give consideration to the speed at which they travel.

The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate the concerns and submit a written report to a future meeting.

Inspector Boyle undertook to work with the Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety to resolve the concerns referred to above.

POLICE MATTERS

Inspector Boyle gave an oral presentation on police matters in the Stourbridge Area. A copy of his report was circulated for information, which included updates on Operations Verve, Elf and changes to how Police Community Support Officers were to be utilised in the future.

Inspector Boyle reported on the Community Payback scheme, and encouraged anyone who felt they could benefit from this scheme to contact the Police either through the Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings or their local Councillors. Work which could be undertaken, free of charge, under the scheme included the removal of graffiti, clearance of litter and overgrown areas.

Inspector Boyle circulated the latest recorded crime figures, which showed a reduction in the Stourbridge area. He encouraged those present to seek advice on security to deter crime during the Christmas period.

RESOLVED

That the oral report on police matters be noted.

FIRE SERVICE MATTERS

Mr. C. Wood reported on fire matters regarding the Stourbridge Area Committee, including joint partnership working on void derelict buildings. Reported fire figures had been reduced during the current period, but arson continued to be a problem across the Dudley Borough as a whole.

Mr Wood encouraged drivers to clear their windscreens prior to setting out on early morning journeys to prevent road traffic collisions and parents were encouraged to seek advice on fitting child car seats correctly and safely. The Fire Service would be working jointly with the Police and Police Community Support Officers to encourage passengers, especially young children to use seat belts.

With the Christmas season approaching, Mr Wood suggested some Christmas safety measures such as replacing old Christmas tree lights and not leaving cooking unattended.

In response to comments from a Member of the Committee regarding whether the War Memorial Club building could be made secure and the costs of securing the building reclaimed from the owner of the property, the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health advised that although the Council worked closely with the Fire Service and Police to ensure privately owned properties were made secure, the Council was reluctant to undertake boarding up prior to securing the necessary funding, as it was a costly exercise to reclaim the costs through the court.

RESOLVED

That the oral report on fire matters be noted.

52

EXTENSION TO STOURBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN DESIGNATED AREAS

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on a proposed Designated Order to declare Stourbridge Bus Station and the Old Quarter of Stourbridge, places where the consumption of alcohol would be prohibited.

The Principal solicitor advised that should the proposal be approved, there would be a need to cover the cost of the requisite signage. He suggested that, should the proposal for a Designated Order be approved, the cost of the signage could be shared equally between the West Midlands Police and Stourbridge Area Committee, from the Committee's capital allocations budget.

Members of the Committee supported the application for the Designated Order, but queried whether the signage could be considered as capital and who would be responsible for making the formal application for funding. It was suggested that it would be appropriate for the Police to complete the application form and forward to the Area Liaison Officer.

The Area Liaison Officer undertook to investigate the funding of the signage for a previous order banning the consumption of alcohol in a designated area. The Licensing Officer undertook to submit a report on the effects of the Designated Order six months after the introduction of the ban, to allow time to monitor the Order's impact.

Resolved

- (1) That the making of a Designated Order for Stourbridge Town Bus Station and the Old Quarter, Stourbridge, be supported.
- (2) That the Area Liaison Officer be requested to liaise with the Police regarding the completion of an application form to be submitted and considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

53

MEASURES TO ASSIST ACCESS FOR CYCLISTS INTO HIGH STREET, STOURBRIDGE NEAR THE CHECKERS INN

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on proposals to introduce easy cycle access, to the Stourbridge High Street, near the Checkers Inn, as indicated on the plan attached as Appendix A to the report submitted, as a means of encouraging cyclists away from the pavements.

Some Members of the Committee supported the proposed measures, whilst others expressed concerns regarding the mix of pedestrians and cyclists and possible consequential accidents, in particular with relation to disabled and frail pedestrians.

Members of the Committee requested that in future the exact costs of projects referred to in reports submitted should be included under the finance paragraph.

54

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on two applications for funding from the Committee's Capital Allocation budget.

The applicant and a representative of Ridgewood School spoke in support of the application by Project Gambia for a grant for £450 for the purchase of a camcorder and accessories and £550 for sports equipment, advising that the project, which involved students of the school working with children in Gambia, would enable the students to gain leadership skills which could not be taught in school and would enable them to have a more rounded approach to life upon their return. The representative indicated that some of the sports equipment to be purchased would be left out in Gambia when students returned home.

Some Members of the Committee and the co-opted member for young people supported the application.

Some Members of the Committee expressed concerns that some of the equipment for which funding was being requested would be for the benefit of young people outside of the Stourbridge Area. Others expressed concerns that only a small group of young people from Stourbridge would benefit from the application.

Some Members of the Committee considered that the funding of such equipment was not within the remit of the Committee.

In answer to issues expressed by the Committee, the Legal Advisor advised that the purchase of the camcorder, which would return with the students, was a capital investment which could be supported. However, sports equipment which might remain in Gambia, could not be supported.

The Acting Area Liaison Officer advised that part of the work undertaken by the students would be used throughout the whole of the Borough.

The Area Community Worker spoke in support of the application by Valley Road Youth Centre and explained the reasons for the resubmission of the application.

The Acting Area Liaison Officer advised that the revised application was slightly in excess of the Committee's 50% match funding criteria. Members of the Committee agreed that the full amount of the grant should be approved, despite being in excess of the match funding requirement, in view of the need for facilities to occupy young people and discourage anti social behaviour in the Stourbridge area.

RESOLVED

- (1) That approval be given to the application by the Project Gambia for the purchase of a camcorder for a project run for and by students at Ridgewood High School, Stourbridge, subject to confirmation being submitted to the Acting Area Liaison Officer of the actual cost of the camcorder.
- (2) That approval be given to the application by Valley Road Youth Centre for £3,970, to cover the costs associated with the installation of basket ball goals and the resurfacing and marking out of the Sports Hall at the Centre be approved.

55

PROPOSED TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER TO CONTROL WAITING IN THE GREATER STOURBRIDGE AREA

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on proposals to introduce Traffic Regulation Orders to Control Waiting Areas in Stourbridge as indicated in Appendix A to the report submitted, and in the plans attached to the report.

In presenting the report, the Group Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) reported on proposals for traffic regulations for a large number of areas within the Stourbridge area, which had been advertised between 27th May and 25th June, 2010. The proposals had been drafted in response to public requests for yellow lines and one-way streets and made over a number of years. Both petitions and letters of objection had been received to some of the proposals whilst other proposals had been supported by the local community.

Mr Dunn, the first named petitioner had indicated that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding proposals under Plan Number TM 2931A (proposals to extend double yellow lines in Hall Street, Oldswinford.)

Mr Dunn's mother spoke on his behalf as he was unable to attend the meeting. Mrs Dunn stated that the petition objected to the proposals to install double yellow lines in Hall Street as indicated, but that residents would be happy with a shortened version of the scheme. The petitioners believed that the problems described by the person who had requested the double yellow lines were not as severe as stated. The introduction of double yellow lines would cause inconvenience to a bigger number of local residents.

As a consequence of the objections in the Petition, the original scheme would not be proceeded with.

A representative of the Hanbury Hill Baptist Church spoke in support of shorter proposals for Hanbury Hill, Stourbridge and thanked the Committee for supporting a shorter proposal.

The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety reported orally on the following proposals which would not be proceeded with, due to objections received:

- a) the proposal for Cobden Street, which had been requested by a resident on the grounds that space would be reduced for residents' parking. Following two objections to the proposal, this proposal would not be proceeded with.
- b) Proposals for the main sections of Monkswell Close and Walthamstow Court would not be pursued, following the receipt of two petitions jointly containing 25 signatures and 12 individual objections.
- c) Two objectors had pointed out that a family whose vehicles obstructed the junction of Hagley Road and Whitehall Road had now moved out and therefore this proposal would not be proceeded with.
- d) Four objections were received to a proposal for double yellow lines in Holly Grove and the proposal was withdrawn.
- e) Seventy nine objections, and a petition containing 84 signatures, were received to proposals to extend double yellow lines in Parkfield Road, as a result of which the proposals were withdrawn.
- f) Four letters and a petition of 16 signatures were received to a proposal to introduce double yellow lines in Spring Street, Lye, as a result of which the proposal was withdrawn.

The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety also reported orally on proposals for traffic regulation orders, as indicated on the plans submitted to the meeting, where objections had been received but which were still recommended for approval, together with schemes which had not been objected to and were therefore recommended for approval:

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be advised of the Committee's recommendation concerning traffic regulation orders, as now reported:

- 1) that no further action be taken with regard to Cobden Street, Monkswell Close, Walthamstow Court, Hagley Road/Whitehall Road, Holly Grove, Stourbridge, Parkfield Road, and Spring Street, Lye.
- 2) that the proposal for double yellow lines in Brook Road, Stourbridge, outside and opposite the "Labour In Vain" public house, as shown on the plan number TM 2932C, be not progressed, but reconsidered at a future meeting of the Committee.
- 3) that an extension to the existing double yellow lines in Green Street, Greenfield Avenue, Stourbridge, as set out on the plan number TM 2927A, be progressed.
- 4) that a proposal for Blue Badge parking bays for disabled motorists in Stourbridge High Street, Stourbridge, as shown on the plan number TM 2928A, be progressed.

- 5) that double yellow lines at the sharp bend in Worcester Street, together with double yellow lines at the junction of Hanbury Hill and College Road, Hanbury Hill and Pepper Hill, Stourbridge, as shown on the plan number TM 2929A, be progressed.
- 6) that proposals for 'no waiting at any time' and 'no waiting between 8 am and 3 pm Monday to Friday' orders in Mill Race Lane, Stourbridge, as shown on plan number TM 2947A, be progressed.
- 7) that a shortened scheme to extend double yellow lines in Hall Street, Oldswinford, as shown on the Plan number TM 2931A, be not progressed.
- 8) that the proposal for a no stopping order on the Broadway, Norton on the school entrance, as shown on plan number TM 2955, be progressed
- 9) that double yellow lines at the junctions of Chaddesley Drive and Hagley Road and Leaholme Gardens and Hagley Road, Pedmore, as shown on the Plan number TM 2934, be progressed.
- 10) that the proposal for shorter double yellow lines at the junction of Hagley Road and Parish Gardens, Pedmore, as shown on the Plan number TM 2935A, be progressed.
- 11) that the amended proposals for 'no waiting order' in Gayfield Avenue, near the school crossing and Turners Lane, as shown on the plan number TM 2941A, be progressed.
- 12) that the proposal for double yellow lines in the Birmingham Street Stourbridge, and a very short length of double yellow line in Mount Street, at its junction with Vauxhall Road as shown on the Plan number TM 2946A, be progressed.
- 13) that the proposal for double yellow lines in Clarke Street, at the junction of South Road, Stourbridge, as shown on the Plan number TM 2959 be progressed.
- 14) that proposals for double yellow lines in Bridgnorth Road, Wollaston, as shown on the plan number TM 2922 be progressed.
- 15) that proposals for double yellow lines in King Street, Wollaston, as shown on the plan number TM2923 be progressed.
- 16) that proposals for no waiting restrictions between 8 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday on the Broadway, Norton, as shown on plan number TM 2925 be progressed.
- 17) that proposals for double yellow lines in Coventry Street and Lower High Street Stourbridge, as shown on plan number TM 2926A be progressed.

- 18) that proposals for a 'no stopping order from 8 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday' in Grange Lane, Pedmore on the school entrance markings, as shown on plan number TM 2953, be progressed.
- 19) That proposals for a 'no stopping from 8 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday', on the school entrance markings at Hagley Road, Pedmore, as shown on plan number TM 2954, be progressed
- 20) that proposals for double yellow lines at Bredon Avenue Lye, as shown on plan number TM 2936 be progressed.
- 21) that proposals for double yellow lines in Grange Lane and Grange Road Stourbridge, as shown on plan number TM 2937, be progressed.
- 22) that proposals for a prohibition of waiting at any time order in Charles Road junction with South Road, Stourbridge, as shown on plan number TM 2958, be progressed
- 23) that proposals for a prohibition of waiting at any time order in John Corbett Drive, Stourbridge, as shown on plan number TM 2975, be progressed
- 24) that proposals for a traffic regulation order at Old Park School, Thorns Road, Brierley Hill, as shown on plan number TM 3077, be progressed
- 25) that proposals for double yellow lines in Church Road and Priory Road, Oldswinford, as shown on plan number TM 2932C, be progressed.
- 26) that the proposal for double yellow lines in Church Avenue, Corbett Crescent, Kenyon Close, Queens Crescent and Vicarage Road, Amblecote, as shown on plan number TM 2939, be progressed
- 27) that the proposal for double yellow lines in Hudswell Drive, Withymoor, Brierley Hill, as shown on plan number TM 2940, be progressed
- 28) that the proposal for the removal of the existing no waiting at any time order in Old High Street, Quarry Bank, as shown on plan number TM 2942, be progressed
- 29) that the proposal for the prohibition and restriction of waiting from 8 am to 3 pm Monday to Friday in Rufford Road, Stourbridge, as shown on plan number TM2944, be progressed
- 30) that the proposal for 'no waiting order between 8 am and 9.30 am on Monday to Friday' in Thorns Road, Brierley Hill, as shown on plan number TM 2948, be progressed

- 31) That the proposal for a 'no stopping order between 8 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday' in The Broadway, Norton, as shown on plan number TM 2955, be progressed
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56 EMPTY SHOPS GRANT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on proposals to progress the Empty Shops Grant Initiative in Stourbridge Town Centre and Local Centres, including a proposal to reallocate the funding allocated to Wollaston Centre to Amblecote and Lye local centres as there were no empty shops in Wollaston.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the content of the report be noted,
 - (2) That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration be requested to agree to the reallocation of the previously allocated Empty Shops Match funding from Wollaston to Amblecote and Lye Local Centres.
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57 REQUEST TO UPGRADE THE PATH THROUGH SWINFORD COMMON

The Assistant Director of Planning and Environmental Health reported orally on a late request for permission from the Committee, as Trustees for Swinford Common, to approve proposals for path improvements and an upgrade of amenities to be carried out at Swinford Common, as part of a series of pedestrian and cycle links to Healthy Hub sites in Dudley. The Project was supported by Ward Members for Norton. The work would be paid for by the Healthy Towns Project and required completion prior to the onset of winter weather.

Members of the Committee requested that the cost and timescales for the work be circulated to them.

RESOLVED

That the request for the upgrade of the path through Swinford Common and associated work be supported.

58 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs Walker:

- a) expressed concerns regarding dangerous and inconsiderate parking outside the Withymoore School and in neighbouring side streets, due to lack of staff parking and suggested that spare green land in front of the school could be used to resolve the problems.

The Group Engineer Traffic and Road Safety undertook to investigate these concerns.

- b) informed of the recent award to Stourbridge by the Fair Trade Foundation and questioned whether suitable signage in recognition of this could be arranged. This matter was to be referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration.

59 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

RESOLVED

That the dates and venues of future meetings of all Select Committees held at the Council House, Dudley, be noted.

60 DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

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

17th January, 2011 at 7.00 p.m. at Redhill School, Junction Road, Stourbridge; and

8th March, 2011 at 7.00 p.m. at Hob Green Primary School, Hob Green Road, Pedmore Fields, Stourbridge.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN