

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE – 31st January 2005

REPORT OF THE AREA LIAISON OFFICER

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the written responses made to questions asked at previous meetings.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At meetings of this Committee held on 13th September 2004 and 15th November 2004, it was indicated that written replies would be sent to the questioners concerned. The responses are as indicated.
- 2.2 In response to a query by a member of the public, regarding the replacement of windows at the Withymoor changing rooms, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment has written to the questioner, advising that investigations had shown that 2 windows at the rear of the building are boarded up and a third is a polycarbonate window at a high level. All of the windows have been vandalised on numerous occasions and previously replaced. The windows are scheduled to be replaced again in due course.
- 2.3 In response to concerns expressed by a member of the public, regarding the unsatisfactory condition of the road and pavement surfaces in the Portland Drive, Portland Crescent and Greenroyde area, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment has written to the questioner, apologising for the delay in sending a written response, owing initially to the lack of an address on the question slip handed in, and explaining that it was considered that the surface of the footway and carriageways in Greenroyde could be extended by an application of micro asphalt. It was not considered appropriate to use micro asphalt in Portland Drive and Portland Crescent, partly on account of problems with surface water drainage in the area. It was considered necessary to re-kerb and resurface the footways followed by an overlay to the carriageway. Work on Portland Drive has already commenced and it was envisaged that the work in Portland Crescent and Greenroyde would be completed early in 2005.
- 2.4 In response to comments expressed by a Councillor from a neighbouring Ward, regarding the need for residents of the Cradley and Foxcote Ward to be included in the public consultation exercise on proposed sites for a skatepark facility within Wollescote Park, the Assistant Director, Culture and Community Services has written to the Councillor concerned, confirming that the consultation exercise,

authorised by the Stourbridge Area Committee, on a skatepark facility at Wollescote park, will be carried out in accordance with the Council's agreed practice, which states that all residents living within a 400 metre radius of the proposed sites should be included in the consultation, and that this includes residents from the Cradley and Foxcote Ward.

- 2.5 In response to concerns expressed by some members of the public, relating to housing issues at Greenfield Avenue and Ballarat Walk, the Area Housing Manager for Stourbridge has written to the residents, advising that:
- a) Following completion of the replacement windows it has been observed that the area is now being kept clean and tidy.
 - b) The foliage in the area is scheduled for pruning in the very near future.
 - c) The previously referred to community safety bid, has been successful, and as a direct result, new fencing, a lockable gate and new slabs where necessary, will be provided.
 - d) The condition of the surface of the car park will continue to be monitored.
 - e) There is an obligation on the Directorate of the Urban Environment to consult anyone directly concerned with applications to fell trees, and it is likely that this is the reason for a notice being placed on the tree in question.
- 2.6 In response to complaints by a member of the public, relating to acts of anti social behaviour causing nuisance and damage to the Wollaston Community Centre, the Parks Development Officer has written to the complainant, advising that the concerns which she expressed have been referred to the Areas Football Forum, who in turn have discussed the matter with the offending visiting football team leaders, and as a result of the discussions the stated problems should be resolved.
- 2.7 In response to concerns expressed by a member of the public, relating to the poor state of the Wollescote Park tennis courts, the withdrawal of tennis court fees, the de-regulation of time allocation and the resulting effect of these issues on other tennis courts within the Borough, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment has written to the member of the public, advising of the reasons for the withdrawal of court fees. He further advises that it currently it is not practical to have "site dedicated" staff within each park, due to the limited staffing resources within the parks service. In order to attempt to resolve the other difficulties expressed by the member of the public, relating to the booking of tennis courts, a meeting is to be arranged with the members of the public concerned, in an effort to discuss and resolve the issues.
- 2.8 In response to concerns expressed by a Member of the Committee, relating to the unacceptable condition of the gents toilet block in the Ryemarket, Stourbridge, the Assistant Director, Environmental Management has written to the Member concerned, advising that a "deep" steam clean of the block has now been undertaken. It is acknowledged that there is a need for improvements in the overall standard of facilities and this will be considered as part of the 2004/05 public convenience maintenance and repair budget.

- 2.9 In response to complaints by a member of the public, relating to why Withymoor Community Association had been excluded from the consultation exercise on the proposed community sports facility at Withymoor Village, the Head of Design and Projects has written to the secretary of the Association, apologising for the genuine oversight in failing to include the Community Association in the consultation. A review of procedures has been undertaken to ensure that such groups are not excluded from any similar future consultations. The Head of Design and Projects has also advised that the consultation process had included the blanketing of 1,080 households in the vicinity and discussions at 2 subsequent Area Committee meetings, which demonstrates considerable community support for the proposals. The Withymoor Community Association will be invited to attend the opening ceremony of the project, which is due for completion in 2005.
- 2.10 In response to the concerns expressed by a Member of the Committee, relating to the fact that none of the public toilet facilities in Stourbridge are open on Sundays, the Assistant Director, Environmental Management has written to the Member concerned, advising that, the question of Sunday opening of public toilet facilities in Stourbridge will be considered in the next review of public toilet facilities.
- 2.11 In response to a request by a Member of the Committee, for improved signage at Bell Street Multi Storey Car Park, the Assistant Director, Environmental Management has written to the Member concerned, advising that tariff boards are situated on each level of the car park to indicate whether it is a short stay or long stay area; a large sign is provided at the entrance to the car park advising that long stay parking is available on the upper floors. When the car park is refurbished the concerns expressed will be taken into consideration.
- 2.12 In response to a query from a member of the public, relating to a request for a recycling box, and the lack of a written response to the original request at a previous meeting, the Head of Waste Care Environmental Management has written to the member of the public, advising that arrangements have been made to issue him with a recycling container, and that the scheme, which currently covers half of the Borough, is scheduled to service the remainder of the Borough by Spring 2005.
- 2.13 In response to a query as to who is responsible for the maintenance of the lifts in the Ryemarket car park, at Stourbridge, and whether an adjoining supermarket are charged for the use of the lifts for transporting their trolleys back to the supermarket, the Team Manager, Parking Management has written to the member of the public, apologising for one of the lifts in the Centre being out of order during his recent visit to the centre. No charges are made for the use of lifts, supermarket staff provide a valued service to the public by retrieving the trolleys from the car park and returning them to the store, thus avoiding any inconvenience to other car park users. The concerns will be passed to the management of the supermarket when parking issues are next discussed.
- 2.14 In response to comments from a member of the public, relating to the proposed open space improvements at Withymoor, the Head of Design and Projects has written to the member of the public, advising that:

- a) the remit for spending S106 monies is limited by time and distance from the development site generating the funding. The nearby playing field site which is in need of remedial work, is still in possession of the developer and the work needs to be undertaken before it is accepted by the Council.
- b) the allocation of S106 monies is set out within the original funding agreement. The basketball court will provide multi-purpose provision for a number of ball games as well as a kick about area.
- c) The public consultation included all the properties on roads within the 400 metres catchment area of the proposed basketball facility.
- d) The address list used for postal coverage was considered correct and therefore representative of the households within the stipulated area.
- e) In respect of the siting of the facilities and the noise generation, the site is 56 metres from the nearest residential boundary and therefore within the Council's policy guidelines of 50 metres.
- f) As the Council is in the process of developing a policy on lighting and CCTV provision within its green spaces, no comments can yet be made on this matter.
- g) The Council has liaised with the West Midlands Crime Prevention Officers for the south of the Borough but the local OCU was not contacted.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 That the Committee notes the contents of this report.

4.0 FINANCE

4.1 There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report.

5.0 LAW

5.1 Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 The report takes into account the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Pink slips handed in at previous meetings of the Stourbridge Area Committee.

8.2 Correspondence sent in response by Council Officers.

John Polychronakis

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J. POLYCHRONAKIS, DIRECTOR OF LAW AND PROPERTY
AND AREA LIAISON OFFICER

Contact Officer: Joan Rees Democratic Services Officer
- Ext. 5242