

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 8th June 2010 at 6.30 p.m.
at Saltwells Education Development Centre, Bowling Green Road,
Netherton, Dudley

PRESENT: -

Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Mrs Aston, Cotterill, J R Davies, M Davis, A Finch, K Finch, J Martin, Mrs Roberts, Waltho and Ms Wood.

OFFICERS:

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (as Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director (Environmental Management), Environmental Protection Manager and Principal Environmental Health Officer – All Directorate of the Urban Environment, Head of the Youth Service and the Area Youth Team Leader for the Central Dudley Area – All Directorate of Children's Services, Head of Housing Management – North, The Head of Community Renewal, Social Regeneration Officer, Quality and Complaints Manager – All Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, Principal Solicitor, Ms K Farrington and Mr J Jablonski – both Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Sector Inspector Richard Jones, West Midlands Police – for Agenda Item No. 9

Mr M Lawton, West Midlands Fire Service – for Agenda Item No. 10

15 Members of the public

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Ahmed be elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

(Councillor Ahmed thereupon took the Chair).

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors J D Davies, Sparks and Ms While-Cooper.

Apologies for absence were also received on behalf of Ms Little, Mrs Oakes and Mr Sadiq, who were appointed as Co-opted Members for 2010/11 later in the meeting.

3.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ms Wood declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 11 (Appointment of Working Groups) in relation to Russells Hall Hospital, in view of the fact that she visits Russells Hall Hospital weekly to represent Members of Unison.

4.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor K Finch be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

5.

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9th March, 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed.

6.

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

7.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the co-option of persons to serve as co-opted members of the Committee for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

During the discussion, a Member asked for clarification in relation to the formal co-option of young representatives to the Committee. In response, the Area Youth Team Leader indicated that, for various reasons, the young people she was working with did not wish to be formally co-opted to the Committee but preferred to update the Committee on current activities from the audience. A number of young people would, therefore, attend Committee meetings to give a brief presentation. The Committee welcomed the suggestion made and a Member indicated that Members could meet on a regular basis with the young people to discuss activities taking place and to offer guidance and advice. The Area Youth Team Leader undertook to relay the comments of the Committee back to the young people.

It was also reported that there was a need to arrange for a new person to be co-opted from the Dudley Association of Governing Bodies.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the following persons be re-appointed as co-opted members of the Committee for the 2010/11 Municipal Year, representing the organisations indicated:

Ms. V. Little, Dudley Primary Care Trust.

Mrs. J. Oakes, Dudley Town Centre Forum.

Mr. M. Sadiq, Dudley Centre for Equality and Diversity.

- (2) That the Area Liaison Officer be requested to seek a nominee from the Dudley Association of Governing Bodies for co-option to the Committee.

8.

YOUTH SERVICE

The Area Youth Team Leader gave an oral update on new projects being undertaken by the Youth Service for young people to participate in, with particularly reference to the six-week pilot project undertaken at Woodside Youth Centre in partnership with Dudley Youth Service and Connexions. She informed the Committee that due to the success of the pilot scheme, funding had been made available to enable the Youth Centre to be re-instated on a Monday evening. Other projects included running music facilitated courses with a fully qualified music teacher at the Russells Hall Youth Centre, arranging football and cricket events during the summer months as part of the community games event and the successful clean up project of the St Andrews Ward by local volunteers.

Following the oral update by the Area Youth Team Leader, two members of the Central Area Youth Forum updated the Committee on projects they had been involved in and the current activities and awards they would be taking part in, details of which were included in handouts circulated at the meeting.

In response to questions from the Members in relation to a programme of activities taking place in the Castle and Priory Ward, the Area Youth Team Leader indicated that the programme of activities to be undertaken in the Borough during the summer school break was still in the planning stages and that she would circulate the completed programme to Members direct and would also endeavour to inform community associations and tenants and residents groups of the programmed activities.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information as circulated at the meeting and reported upon orally be noted.
- (2) That the Area Youth Team Leader be requested to circulate the programme of activities for the School Summer Holidays direct to Members and other interested bodies.

9.

POLICE ISSUES

Sector Inspector Richard Jones of West Midlands Police introduced himself to the Committee and reported on current police issues in the area of the Committee.

During the presentation, reference was made in particular to planning that had gone on and was going on in relation to the activities of the English Defence League and in respect of the World Cup.

Sector Inspector Richard Jones also referred to Operation Staysafe, an operation previously referred to at recent meetings of the Committee, that combated underage drinking and anti-social behaviour by identifying offenders and bringing them back to a staysafe centre, where parents were contacted. He indicated that the approach had proved very successful and stated that further staysafe operation dates had been arranged for the near future.

Arising from the presentation, the Committee supported the comments made by Sector Inspector Richard Jones, particularly those relating to the English Defence League and an indication was given of action taken leading to issues hopefully being raised by the Member of Parliament for Dudley North in Parliament.

RESOLVED

That Sector Inspector Richard Jones be thanked for his presentation and that the information reported on be received and noted.

10.

FIRE SERVICE ISSUES

Mr Lawton of the West Midlands Fire Service reported orally on the number and nature of incidents in the Central Dudley Area with particular reference to grass and rubbish fires, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and aspects in relation to void buildings. He also commented that overall the service was working well and updated the Committee on current projects being undertaken by the Fire Service.

In response to a question asked by a Member in relation to the recent fire at Saltwells House, Mr Lawton confirmed that the incident was being investigated along with other fire incidents in the area.

A Member then referred to a vacant building in Cook Avenue and requested that the Fire Service liaise with the Police and appropriate officers from Private Sector Housing to discuss this issue with a view to finding a solution to rectify the problem. In response, the Area Liaison Officer undertook to report the matter back to the appropriate officers.

A Member also requested that occasional reports be received in respect of Police and Fire Service activities in the Saltwells area, the responsibility of another Sector.

RESOLVED

- (1) That Mr Lawton be thanked for his presentation and that the information reported on be received and noted.
- (2) That the Area Liaison Officer liaise with appropriate officers from Private Sector Housing and arrange for the vacant building in Cook Avenue to be discussed with the Fire Service and Police with a view to finding a solution to rectify the problem.

11.

APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of Working Groups of the Committee for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Working Groups below be appointed for the 2010/11 Municipal Year with their existing terms of reference and the composition and membership indicated:

Capital Allocations Working Group – the Chairman of the Committee and one member of each of the five wards, the full membership being Councillors Ahmed, Mrs Aston (Castle and Priory Ward), Cotterill (Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood Ward), J R Davies (St Thomas’s Ward), J Martin (Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews Ward) and Mrs Roberts (St James’s Ward).

Community Renewal Working Group – the full membership being Councillors K Finch (Castle and Priory Ward) and J Martin (Netherton, Woodside and St. Andrew’s Ward), together with any other members who subsequently indicated that they wished to be members of the Working Group.

Russells Hall Traffic Working Group – the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Ahmed, together with Councillors M Davis, J Martin and Mrs Roberts.

- (2) That any member appointed above who does not wish to serve in 2010/11 contact Democratic Services in the Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources and that the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, be authorised to approve the appointment of an alternative member.

12.

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of representatives to serve on outside organisations.

RESOLVED

That the following persons be appointed to serve on the organisations indicated for the period indicated:

Social Inclusion

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------------|
| (a) | Baylies Education Foundation – Mr C L Woodall | Period of three years from 01/10/2010 |
| (b) | Castle and Priory Regeneration Group – Councillor Mrs Aston | Annual |
| (c) | Wrens Nest Community Centre – Councillor Mrs Aston | Annual |
| (d) | Withymoore Island Trust – Councillor J Martin | Annual |
| (e) | St Francis Parish Centre – Councillor A | Annual |

Finch

Community Associations

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|--------|
| (a) | Sledmere – Councillor Waltho | Annual |
| (b) | Woodside – Councillor J Martin | Annual |
| (c) | Priory – Councillor Mrs Aston | Annual |
| (d) | Quarry Bank – Councillor Cotterill | Annual |

13.

PETITIONS

A petition from residents of Mayfield Road, Linwood Road, Rosewood Road and Wrens Nest Road in Priory North was submitted requesting the regeneration of houses and flats be looked into and the member of the public who submitted the petition and Members of the Committee commented upon its contents. The Area Liaison Officer reported that the Housing Revenue Account proposals would be considered at the next meeting of the Cabinet due to be held in June, 2010. It was noted that the petition had been passed to the Assistant Director for Building Services of the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Councillor Simms, Cabinet Member for Housing Services for consideration and attention.

A petition was also received from residents of Foxglove Road, Wrens Nest Estate, Dudley in relation to ongoing anti-social behaviour from residents in that Street. It was noted that the petition would be referred to the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services for consideration and attention.

14.

PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) A member of the public circulated photographs and drew attention to the ongoing parking problems caused by Council employees along Lister Road, Dudley. In response, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) undertook to investigate the point raised.
- (b) A member of the public also raised concern in relation to the parking problems in Lister Road. In response the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) informed the Committee of proposals to alleviate the problems by the opening of a new Recycling site in Blowers Green so that following completion of the move, the concerns raised by the residents should be alleviated by the end of the year. He also undertook to arrange a meeting with officers of the Directorate of the Urban Environment and the three Ward Councillors as requested by a Member of the Committee.

- (c) A member of the public queried why the designated parking areas for taxis in Dudley were never used and suggested that they be used for disabled parking. In response, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) undertook to arrange for the point raised to be investigated and a written response to be sent to the questioner.
- (d) The same member of the public also queried whether King Street should be reinstated for normal traffic use as proposals for the tram system had been cancelled. In response, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) undertook to arrange for the point raised to be investigated and a written response to be sent to the questioner.
- (e) A member of the public referred to the Option Card, which was available to people in managed areas, and considered that its allocation was a postcode lottery. In responding, the Area Liaison Officer suggested that further consideration be given by her Directorate in consultation with Leisure Services as to the operation of the Option Card in the light of the comments made.
- (f) Concerns were made by a member of the public in relation to the work carried out for disabled private residents and disabled council residents. In response, the Head of Housing Management – North undertook to investigate the matter further and respond direct to the questioner.
- (g) It was noted that the points raised, as set out in a letter dated 20th April, 2010 in relation to parking problems along the Kingswinford Road and Hilderic Crescent, would be referred to the Working Group appointed earlier in the meeting to consider traffic issues in the Russells Hall area.
- (h) Thanks were asked to be recorded to those officers involved in arranging for the crossing on the Stourbridge Road arising from a petition submitted to a previous meeting of the Committee.

15.

WARD ISSUES

- (a) Councillor Waltho referred to a forthcoming significant community event, the opening of which was Friday 25th June 2010 and asked that anyone who wished to attend the opening event contact any of the three Ward Councillors for St Thomas's Ward.
- (b) Councillor Ali requested that traffic issues in relation to Oakham Road, Bunns Lane, Blackacre Road linked to King Street be investigated.
- (c) Councillor Ali requested that problems relating to dog fouling in the Tansley Hill area be investigated.

- (d) Councillor Ali drew attention to traffic problems in Hall Street and North Street and requested that these be included and discussed at the proposed meeting between officers and the three Ward Members referred to earlier in the meeting.
- (e) Councillor Mrs Roberts requested that an assessment be carried out in respect of commercial vehicles speeding along the Himley Road.
- (f) Councillor M Davis referred to the gullies on Russells Hall and while acknowledging that efforts had been made to clear them requested that further action be taken.
- (g) Councillor M Davis referred to the new multi-storey car park and two wards due to be built at the Russells Hall Hospital, items which he was not previously been aware of.
- (h) Councillor M Davis referred to the transfer of a Community Renewal Officer to another area and the impact this was considered to have.
- (i) Councillor A Finch queried when the Wrens Nest Estate Office would be opened.
- (j) Councillor A Finch referred to pot holes in and in the vicinity of Maple Road and also thanked the Head of Community Renewal for recent work undertaken.
- (k) Councillor Mrs Aston referred to complaints she had received in relation to Japanese Knotweed and queried the current position in respect of security on the former site of the Duncan Edwards public house. The Assistant Director (Environmental Management) informed the Committee of attempts to contact the owners of the site and indicated that further attempts to contact them were being pursued.
- (l) Councillor K Finch referred to the position in respect of the North Priory Housing Development given recent statements over funding. It was indicated that funding for the project was on hold until the budget statement to be made on 22nd June, 2010 so that hopefully following that statement, the position in respect of the project would be clarified.
- (m) Councillor Ms Wood requested that consideration be given to turning the green space on the Worcester and Hereford Road into a play area.
- (n) Councillor J Martin referred to an e-mail he had submitted to the clerk to the meeting in which he had raised a number of issues concerning the ward on which he considered action was required. The Area Liaison Officer confirmed that all issues had been sent to the relevant officers for attention.

- (o) Councillor Cotterill queried when work would be carried out in relation to a proposed pedestrian crossing on the Cradley Road.
- (p) Councillor Cotterill referred to the railings at the top of Bowling Green Road and the indication that works would be done in 2010/11.
- (q) Councillor Cotterill requested that the lamp standard he referred to that was adversely affecting an elderly couple be moved to alleviate their concerns.
- (r) Councillor Cotterill requested that consideration be given to the applicability of call out charges when employees responded to requests for work to be carried out.
- (s) Councillor Cotterill referred to the notification in respect of double yellow lines in New Street, Quarry Bank and requested that the yellow lines on the left hand side of Quarry Bank High Street be looked at.
- (t) Councillor Cotterill requested that serious consideration be given to the provision of public toilets in Quarry Bank.
- (u) Councillor Ahmed requested that 30mph speed signs be erected on the dual carriageway of the Stourbridge Road.
- (v) Councillor Ahmed requested that the transfer of the Community Renewal Officer referred to earlier on in the meeting be reconsidered.

16.

PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO ADULT AND CHILDREN'S ESTABLISHMENTS IN 2009/10 AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2010/11

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the progress of visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments undertaken by Members of the Committee during 2009/10, and requesting nominations for participation in the rota visits for the 2010/11 municipal year.

It was noted that any members wishing to be involved in the visits would be required to have a full, valid Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

In response to a query from a Member in relation to the possibility of purchasing a ball pool for younger residents in St James's Road as referred to in the report submitted to the meeting, the Quality and Complaints Manager undertook to investigate the matter and respond direct to the Member.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted and the appendices attached to the report, on the progress of elected member visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments during 2009/10, be noted.
- (2) That Councillors Ali, J D Davies, J R Davies, M Davis, J Martin, Mrs Roberts and Waltho be re-appointed as nominees of this Committee to undertake rota visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments in the 2010/11 municipal year.
- (3) That the Quality and Complaints Manager respond direct to the Member concerned in relation to a ball pool for young residents at St James's Road.

17.

BOROUGH-WIDE AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR DUDLEY

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on details of the Air Quality Action Plan proposed for the Borough.

In clarifying a point raised by a Member, the Environmental Protection Manager reported that the proposed consultation for the Air Quality Action Plan was detailed in paragraph 10 and not 9 as outlined in the recommendation section of the report submitted to the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That progress made with developing the Air Quality Action Plan, be noted.
- (2) That the proposed consultation for the Air Quality Action Plan detailed in paragraph 10 of the report submitted to the meeting, be supported.
- (3) That the actions detailed in the Air Quality Action Plan designed to improve air quality within Dudley Metropolitan Borough for the future, be supported.

18.

HIGHWAYS MINOR WORKS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the proposed programmes of work for Local Safety Schemes, Safer Routes to School and Pedestrian Crossings within the Central Dudley Area for the 2010/11 financial year.

A Member queried why a zebra crossing near Russells Hall Residential Home had not been included in the programme. In response, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) indicated that assessments were carried out on a number of factors; however, he undertook to investigate the issue and respond to the Member direct.

Members then requested that instead of installing a zebra crossing near Milking Bank Primary School, consideration be given to a school crossing patrol. In response, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) undertook to report the matter back to the Cabinet Member for Transportation for further consideration.

Further comments from Members included improvements previously requested to the school crossing patrol in Bluebell Road that had not been included in the programme. In response, the Assistant Director (Environmental Management) undertook to investigate the issue and respond to the Member direct.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, subject to resolutions (2) and (3) below, the proposed Local Safety Schemes, Safer Routes to School and Pedestrian Crossings initiatives outlined in Appendices A, B and C of the report now submitted, be supported.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be asked to give further consideration to the issue for a school crossing patrol to be provided near Milking Bank School instead of a zebra crossing as referred to in Appendix C to the report submitted.
- (3) That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be asked to consider the possibility of including a zebra crossing near the Russells Hall Residential Home and a school crossing patrol in Bluebell Road in the Minor Works Programme 2010/11.

19.

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on proposals for the allocation of expenditure from the delegated capital budget of the Committee for the 2010/11 municipal year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the process for the awarding of capital allocations from the capital allocations budget, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted, be approved for implementation in the 2010/11 municipal year.
- (2) That the criteria for awarding capital allocations, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report submitted, be approved for implementation in the 2010/11 municipal year.
- (3) That the accounts criteria for new organisations, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report submitted, be approved for implementation in the 2010/11 municipal year.

- (4) That the residue from the 2009/10 municipal year of £18,981.07 be noted and that the allocation of the residue, carried forward into 2010/11, as indicated in paragraph 10 of the report submitted, be approved.
- (5) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to carry out the recommended actions.

20.

COMMUNITY RENEWAL WORKING GROUP

The Head of Community Renewal updated the Committee orally on the progress of the current key activities and development of the Central Dudley Area Committee Community Renewal Plan.

During the presentation, the Head of Community Renewal highlighted completions of projects and achievements of the Community Renewal Team with particular reference to successful job fairs and information events held throughout the Borough; bids through partners that had been successful into bringing back into use the computer suite at Wrens Nest Community Centre which had led to the development of a job club at the Community Centre; job clubs in operation at St Thomas's Network and Midland Heart Community House; the successful litter pick and environmental day and the completed internal work on the Woodside Community Centre which was operating together as part of the whole community offer on the Woodside school Children's Centre and library links. She also updated the Committee on current and planned key activities, by ward, in the near future, details of which could be obtained from the Head of Community Renewal.

Members requested that a written report be submitted to all future meetings of the Committee on the progress made.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on be received and noted and that written reports be submitted to all future meetings of the Committee.

21.

MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 9TH MARCH, 2010 RELATING TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at the meeting of the Central Dudley Area Committee held on 9th March, 2010, that related to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

22.	<p><u>MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 9TH MARCH, 2010 OTHER THAN THOSE RELATING TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT</u></p> <p>A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 9th March, 2010, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p style="text-align: center;">That the report be noted.</p>
23.	<p><u>SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY</u></p> <p>The dates of meetings of the Council's Select Committees in 2010/11 were noted.</p>
24.	<p><u>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THIS COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The dates of meetings of the Committee arranged for 2010/11 were noted, together with the venues arranged to date.</p>
	<p>The meeting ended at 8.45pm.</p>

CHAIRMAN