

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 8th November, 2005 at 6.30 p.m.
at Hillcrest School and Community College

PRESENT:-

Councillor Rahman (Chairman)

Councillors:- Ali, Mrs. Aston, Bradney, Cotterill, Mrs Coulter, Ms. Craigie, J. Davies, M. Davis, Finch, Hart, Johnston, Male and Sparks; Ms. H. Edwards, and Mr. Sadiq

OFFICERS:

Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (As Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment, (Environmental Management), Regeneration Manager, Section Engineer; Senior Engineer (Directorate of the Urban Environment); Principal Project Officer, Dudley Area Manager Housing, (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services); Assistant Director Community Education Division, Area Team Leader Youth and Community, Detached Youth Worker, Project Manager Netherton Regeneration Centre (Directorate of Children's Services), Mr. K. Edwards, Principal Solicitor and Mrs. J. Rees (Directorate of Law and Property)

Mr P Adams and Mr. Collins, representing CENTRO; Katie Giles, Tarja Williams, Rachel Bennett, representing Young People, were in attendance at the meeting together with approximately 30 members of the public.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 11th October, 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to:

The name of Councillor Cotterill being deleted from those present and added to the apologies for absence from the meeting.

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MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Mrs Coulter commented that Members of the Committee had not received written responses from the Assistant Director, Planning and Resources (Directorate of Children's Services) following the Special meeting of the Committee to discuss Primary School Review.

Councillor J Davies commented that Members of the Committee had not received copies of the Director of Childrens Services' written responses to questions asked by Members of the Committee and members of the public at the Special meeting of the Committee to discuss Primary School Review.

The Director of Adult Community and Housing Services indicated that she understood that the Assistant Director from Childrens Services had responded to members of the public but it appeared may not have copied in Councillors from the Area Committee. She advised that relevant copies would be forwarded.

Councillor Bradney commented that the report requested at a previous meeting, regarding traffic issues at the lights at Merry Hill had not been submitted.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared personal interests in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of certain applications to be considered at Agenda Item No. 11, in view of their respective associations with groups making applications for funding:

Councillor Cotterill, in view of his being Honorary Member of the Quarry Bank Community Association Management Team.

Councillor Mrs Coulter, in view of her being a member of the Cancer Support Group; her friendship with Police Officers at Netherton Office and her friendship with the Treasurer of the Netherton and Woodside Partnership respectively.

Councillor Mrs Aston, in view of her being a member of the Committee of St. Francis Parish Church and her being on the Committee of the Senior Citizens Enterprise Woodworking Group).

Councillor Finch, in view of his being on the Committee of the St Francis Parish Church Committee and his being on the Committee of the Senior Citizens Enterprise Woodworking Group respectively.

Councillor Johnston declared a Prejudicial Interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No 11 (Capital Allocations) in view of his being Priest in charge of the St Francis parish and Chair of the Parish Church Committee

Councillor Rahman declared a Prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No. 11(Capital Allocations), in view of his being a Chairman of the Netherton and Woodside Partnership.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Woodall.

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RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

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

- (a) From Councillor J Davies, on behalf of local residents, objecting to the proposed development of The Green at Lister Road and Grazebrook Park. The Petition was referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention and for forwarding to the Highways Agency for attention
 - (b) From Councillor Mrs Aston, on behalf of local residents, requesting the closure of the steps opposite Woodcroft Avenue. The petition was referred to the Director of the urban Environment for attention.
 - (c) From Councillor M Davis, complaining at the lack of parking control, and the lack of parking spaces due to the recent expansion of Russells Hall Hospital. The petition was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration and to the Chief Executive of the Dudley Group of Hospitals for attention.
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CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED

That Agenda Item 10 (Netherton Business and Learning Centre) be considered as the next item of business.

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NETHERTON BUSINESS AND LEARNING CENTRE

The Assistant Director, Community Education Division gave a visual presentation on the Netherton Business and Learning Centre project, which was a culmination of work undertaken over the past two years involving a number of local groups and partnerships. The aim of the Centre was to provide facilities for the young and old, and to allow easy access for all. The name "The Savoy Centre" had recently been agreed upon for the building which was on the previous site of the Savoy Cinema. The Centre was on target for its scheduled official opening on 27th January 2006. Members of the committee and members of the public were invited to attend the official opening and receive a tour of the building. It was hoped that the Centre would be well used by local people.

RESOLVED

That the Assistant Director, Community Education Division be thanked for the presentation, the contents of which were noted.

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INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN DEMOCRACY

Members of the Kates Hill Youth Forum, Miss K Giles, Miss T Williams, Miss C Benjamin and Miss R Bennett gave a visual presentation on how young people had been encouraged and supported to become involved in local democracy.

The presentation highlighted work undertaken through Neighbourhood Management working in partnership with Youth Services to actively engage the young people of Kates Hill in local democracy and issues of concern expressed by young people. A survey carried out by the Kates Hill Young People's Forum identified the following issues as being important to young people:-

- (1) Environmental issues, including cleaning Kate's Hill area, getting rid of rubbish; street lighting for Corporation Park, the alleyway by Mytton Close, Holyhock Road and Cawney Bank.
- (2) Employment – the need for community based facilities to get careers advice and information about college courses.
- (3) Community – the need for a social event to bring everyone together

The information gathered was being collated and would be set out in a report to be prepared by the Youth Forum. The report would be circulated in due course. The Kates Hill Youth Forum expressed anticipation of being Members of the proposed Central Dudley Area Committee area youth forum.

Members of the Committee and a representative of the Primary Care Trust indicated their willingness to engage with young people outside of the meeting to discuss areas of concern and possible solutions to those concerns. The young people undertook to send a copy of future reports on Youth issues to the Primary Care Trust, who would investigate any health issues affecting young people.

Members of the committee expressed their appreciation of the work done and the high quality of the presentation.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Members of Kates Hill Youth Forum present be thanked for their presentation, the contents of which were noted.
 - (2) That the Members of Kates Hill Youth Forum be invited to attend future 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:-

- (1) In response to concerns expressed by a member of the public, regarding traffic problems in Coppice Close, Quarry Bank, and the previously requested introduction of a “U” turn from the right hand filter lane at the foot of Merry Hill, the Assistant Director, Environmental Management advised that, following a site visit, to investigate the matter, the yellow box and signage requested had recently been installed. He advised however, that it was professionally considered more dangerous to introduce a “U” turn at this juncture.
- (2) A member of the public requested traffic calming measures for New Street, Quarry Bank, especially in the light of a serious accident recently, which he described in detail. The Assistant Director, Environmental Management, responded that following investigations, New Street did not meet the Council’s current criteria as a priority area requiring the introduction of traffic calming measures. In light of the information provided, he undertook to investigate the situation further.
- (3) A member of the public asked the Ward Members of St Thomas’ Ward, if they could clarify whether they had been invited to attend a meeting, held on 14th October 2005, to discuss the possibility of providing a new cultural centre for Dudley, and whether or not they had attended. Councillor J Davies undertook to respond in writing to the questioner. Councillor Ali expressed surprise at not receiving an invite, but could not explain why he had not received an invitation to attend the meeting. Councillor Woodall was absent from meeting.
- (4) A member of the public asked why there been no debate allowed at the recent Council meeting on how Council owned property was allocated in Dudley, when Councillor M Davis had submitted a motion for such a discussion.

The Chairman advised that, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, any motion put to full Council must have a proposer and a seconder before it could be debated. As the motion referred to did not have a seconder, there was no opportunity for any debate to take place.

The Area Liaison Officer confirmed that the procedure explained by the Chairman was in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

- (5) A gentleman expressed the view that a report explaining the reasons for the refusal to introduce a "U" turn near Coppice Close needed to be submitted so people could understand the safety reasons referred to. He asked whether it would be possible to arrange a site visit to investigate this matter and for a written report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee. The Assistant Director, Environmental Management, advised that it was his understanding that the reasons had been explained adequately, but that he would organise a further site visit, to include the Head of Traffic and Road Safety, and for a written report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
- (6) A member of the public expressed surprise at, what he saw, as the apparent lack of concern by Officers and Councillors regarding issues expressed at the meetings. He considered it appropriate to organise site visits for all issues. The Assistant Director, Environmental Management, advised that Officers and Councillors really did appreciate all the concerns expressed by members of the public and that all reported concerns were investigated. Due to limited funding, however, there was a need to prioritise the concerns expressed by residents. All requests were considered and investigated using the same criteria.

WARD ISSUES

Councillor Cotterill raised:-

- (1) The need for traffic calming measures at New Street, as a special case, due to the large volume of speeding traffic in that area.
- (2) The need for a site visit, to include the Head of Traffic and Road Safety, to discuss the issue further. He undertook to attend a site visit when organised.
- (3) The need for new fencing at Victoria Road Cemetery to prevent acts of anti social behaviour.
- (4) The previously requested, need for a line of trees to be planted to block out the Bromley Street Industrial Estate.

- (5) The need for resurfacing of the road at Marlow Close.

Councillor Male raised

- (1) The need for Officers to speak up in support for Wards within the Central Dudley Area Committee, when consideration is given to the programme for the introduction of traffic calming measures and resurfacing of local roads, and also the need for the decision makers to explain the reasons for their decisions openly.
- (2) The need for a solution to traffic problems at New Street and Saltwells Road.
- (3) The need for a crossing in the vicinity of Halesowen and Bowling Green Road, to allow safe access to the local store and bus stop.
- (4) The need for an assessment to be carried out on Cole Street regarding possible road safety measures.

Councillor Finch raised

Concerns regarding void properties on the Castle and Priory Estate where rubbish was left and repairs were not carried out before the properties were re-let.

Councillor Hart raised

- (1) Her gratitude to all Officers for addressing all the matters she raised at the previous meeting.
- (2) The need for her previous request to be considered for a way forward to draw to a conclusion the traffic problems at Scotts Green Close.
- (3) Action to be taken against acts of dog fouling on the Russells Hall Estate.
- (4) The need for bollards or some similar obstruction, to be installed at the entrance to the Russells Hall Skatepark to prevent motorcycles entering and using the skatepark facility inappropriately.

Councillor Ms Craigie raised

- (1) The urgent need for the trees in St James' Road to be pruned.
- (2) The need for the lamp posts in St James Road to be replaced or repaired, as exposed live wires on the lamp posts were causing a danger.

- (3) The lack of accessibility for fire appliances and concerns regarding anti social behaviour at Butterfield Court.

Councillor J Davies raised

- (1) The Gulley between Buffery Road and Warrens Hall Road.
- (2) The need for fencing to prevent fly tipping at the garages on New Road.
- (3) Concern for health and safety of children at St Peters Road bridge, where a false tunnel had been inserted, as a result of which there was now a twenty foot drop onto the walkway below with no warning of the danger.

Councillor Mrs Coulter raised

The need for a firm date for completion of work on the pelican crossing at Northfield Road.

Councillor Bradney raised

- (1) The need for traffic calming in Northfield and Halesowen roads.
- (2) The need for traffic calming measures in the Sling at Netherton, even though it is an unadopted road.
- (3) The need for traffic calming measures to be introduced at New Road Cinderbank.
- (4) The need for traffic calming at Hurst Lane (not Coppice Road as stated in the Appendix to the report at agenda item 14.

Councillor Ali raised

- (1) Concern over the loss of Dudley football club and cricket pitch and the need to lobby MP's and others to encourage funding into the area for some type of sports' stadium to be erected.
- (2) The need for action to be taken to reduce the volume of traffic travelling from Dudley via Cinderbank, on roads not suitable for the amount of traffic.
- (3) The need for a venue for Cradley Speedway to put Dudley's name on the Map.
- (4) A request for a joint report, from all directorates, for the next meeting of the Committee, to identify possible suitable sites and possible sources of funding to enable the building of a suitable stadium in the Dudley area to allow speedway events, football and cricket matches to take place.

- (5) The need for the graffiti on the footbridge at Castle Hill to be removed.
- (6) The need for unsightly overgrown shrubs around Cavendish House to be removed.

Councillor M Davis raised

- (1) The need for appropriate action to be taken regarding acts of anti social behaviour by youths at the bungalows of elderly residents' sheltered accommodation in Merryfield Road. The Chairman requested that a letter to be sent to the police requesting their consideration of this matter.
- (2) The need for discussion with contractors who pruned trees on the Broadway and St James Road, regarding the pruning, which Councillor Davis did not consider had been carried out correctly.
- (3) Concerns regarding inconsiderate parking, blocking driveways in the area.

Councillor Rahman raised

- (1) Concern at the lack of response from the Directorate of Children's Services to his previously expressed concerns regarding the lack of fencing at Highgate Primary School and Woodside Community Centre, which allowed acts of anti social behaviour to be carried out, such as broken windows which have to be repeatedly repaired.

Councillor Mrs Aston raised:

Concerns regarding poor drainage on the Wrens Nest Estate.

APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

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

Members of the Committee commented that should the matter of 141/142 Pedmore Road, Netherton be brought before the Committee again, more concrete proposals for the land should be contained within the report.

In support of the application to purchase land adjoining 46 St Thomas' Street, Netherton, the owners of No 46 commented that, in their view, the land was not as described in the report. They stated that they were continually having to collect rubbish left by young people gathering on the land referred to. They also complained at the cost of them having to put in a request to purchase the land, only to have their request refused.

The Chairman advised that the matter of the fee applied to every application, and was not a matter for the Committee to consider. The decision as to whether to sell the land or not lay with Members of the Committee, who would, prior to the meeting have visited the site and taken into account the comments contained with the report submitted.

Upon consideration of the report and comments made thereon, it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised to refuse the application to dispose of the land at 141/142 Pedmore Road, Netherton, as shown on the plans attached to the report submitted, for the reasons stated.
 - (2) That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be advised to refuse the request to purchase land adjoining 46 St. Thomas Street, Netherton, Dudley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons stated.
 - (3) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be advised to refuse the request to purchase land at the rear of 82 Warrens Hall Road, Dudley, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons stated.
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WEDNESBURY TO BRIERLEY HILL EXTENSION - MIDLAND METRO

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking comments on the Design guide for the construction of the Metro from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.

Mr Adams and Mr Collins gave a visual presentation on behalf of CENTRO, outlining the proposals for the proposed construction of the Metro within the Central Dudley Area. In response to questions from the Committee he detailed the proposed route.

Comments on the presentation by members of the committee, included:-

Concerns regarding safety issues in King Street, to which Mr Adams advised that the trams travelled in their own track and at a speed commensurate with the safety of the public.

Concerns that Russells Hall Hospital was not on the route indicated, to which Mr Adams advised that the route had been identified in the early 1990's. He advised that the route was not open to discussion at this stage, and that it was either accepted as shown, or not at all. This was because funding had been approved for the scheme as it stood and had already gone out to consultation at an earlier stage.

RESOLVED

- (1) That Mr Adams and Mr Collins be thanked for their presentation, the contents of which were noted.
- (2) That the Cabinet member for the Environment be advised of the Committee's support for the construction of the Metro from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(Councillors Mrs. Aston, Mrs. Coulter, Finch, Johnston and Rahman withdrew from the meeting whilst applications for a capital allocation were considered.)

(Clouncillor J Davies - in the Chair)

In the absence of the Chairman, The Vice-Chairman took the Chair. A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the recommendations of the Capital Allocations Working Group regarding applications made for funding from the capital budget of the Committee and setting out the balances remaining for each Ward, should all the recommendations be approved:

A representative of the Netherton Woodside Partnership expressed dismay that the application by her hard working group had been recommended for refusal, when other smaller applications had been approved. Councillor Davies advised that the recommendation was in no way a reflection on the good work carried out by the Group, but as a direct result of the criteria used by the Capital Allocations Working Group when considering applications for funding. In response to comments made by Members of the Committee, the Principal Project Officer undertook to request that, at their next meeting, the Capital Allocations Working Group look again at the criteria used for granting funding.

Upon consideration of the report and comments made thereon it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the following amounts be awarded to the organisations stated:

<u>Name of Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Limes Road Club	Computer equipment plus storage cupboard plus replacement cups and mugs.	£2,050

St. Francis Parish Church	Supply and installation of lamppost near to the community steps and replacement crockery.	£1,300
Senior Citizens' Enterprise Woodworking Group	New woodworking machines.	£806
Neighbours News	Printer	£2,958.58
Cancer Support (DHB)	New lighting projector and updated software	£2,310
Cole Street Methodist Church	Emergency light fittings	£940
Dudley Little Theatre	Wardrobe storage equipment.	£500
Netherton Police Office	Five pedal cycles and equipment	£2,000
Quarry Bank Community Centre	Lightweight tables	£1,170.85

- (2) That the following applications be deferred until a Member from the St. Thomas's Ward was available, to attend a meeting of the Working Group.
- (a) From the Black Carer's Group
 - (b) From OSCAR Dudley.
- (3) That the following application be refused:-
- (a) The Duncan Edwards statue - payment of Borough Artist's expenses.
- (4) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to carry out the recommended actions.

QUEENS CROSS CEMETERY - VANDALISM AND SECURITY

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted advising of action taken, as a direct result of a petition submitted to a previous meeting of the Committee and resulting comments, to try to resolve problems and acts of vandalism and ant-social behaviour in the Cemetery at Queens Cross.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

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THE THOMAS LESLIE TIBBETTS GIFT

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted seeking agreement for the adoption of the name "The Thomas Leslie Tibbetts Gift" to a gift, which is to be registered with the Charity Commission.

RESOLVED

That the Director of Law and Property be advised of the Committee's agreement to adopting the name "The Thomas Leslie Tibbetts Gift" as the name of the Charity relating to the land shown on the plan attached to the report submitted, and the Director of Law and Property be requested to make the necessary application to the Charity Commission.

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GREENCORN

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on the current position with regard to planning requirements in respect of properties acquired by Greencorns in the Dudley Borough.

Members of the Committee asked whether written confirmation had been received from Greencorns of their intention to withdraw from Dudley and whether they could acquire properties under the name of some other organisation. The Area Liaison Officer and the Principal Solicitor advised that there had been communications between Greencorns and the Director of Law and Property, but that such communications was highly confidential and could not be divulged. However, it was considered that the reports in the press stating that Greencorns intended to withdraw from Dudley were correct. They also advised that other organisations could potentially be able to purchase properties owned by Greencorns. There were no laws to prevent organisations or individuals purchasing property already owned by Greencorns.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that there were no plans at present to change how looked after children were cared for by the Local Authority. She also advised that she was not aware of any plans by the Local Authority to purchase properties owned by Greencorns.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

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DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT – MATTERS RAISED
AT THE MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE HELD ON 6TH SEPTEMBER,
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 6th September, 2005.

RESOLVED

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

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DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

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

24th January, 2006 - Saltwells Educational Development Centre
14th March, 2006 - Priory Primary School (to be confirmed)

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

CHAIRMAN