

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Thursday 8th November, 2012 at 7.00 pm
at The Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford

PRESENT:-

Councillor Jordan (Chair)
Councillor Hemmingsley (Vice Chair)
Councillors Mrs Billingham, Blood, Boleyn, Foster, Harley, Harris, Islam, J
Martin, Miller and Tyler.

Officers:-

The Director of the Urban Environment (As Area Liaison Officer), Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Manager, Executive Support Team, Head of Traffic and Transportation, Group Engineer, (Traffic and Road Safety), (all Directorate of the Urban Environment); Team Manager - Tenancy and Estate Management (South), (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services): Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager and Senior Account Manager, Marketing and Communications, (Chief Executive's Directorate); Area Team Leader – Youth Service, (Directorate of Children's Services); Mr T Holder, Solicitor and Miss K Fellows (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

together with Inspector G Malpass, West Midlands Police, Mr C Newton, Station Commander and Ms J Winpenny West Midlands Fire Service and 2 members of the public.

28. **OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIR**

The Chair expressed best wishes to Councillor M Wilson, on behalf of the Committee, for a speedy recovery in relation to her recent illness.

29. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J T Jones, Mrs Simms and Mrs Wilson.

30. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member made a Declaration of Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th June 2012, be approved as a correct record and signed.

32. PETITIONS

The following petitions had been received since the last meeting of the Committee:-

- (a) From residents relating to traffic movement in Wall Heath. It was reported that the matter had been dealt with by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.
- (b) From residents regarding Brickkiln Court and Chapel Street, Brierley Hill . It was reported that the matter was being dealt with by the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services.

No further Petitions were presented to the meeting.

33. YOUTH SERVICE REPORT.

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on Youth Service provision for the Brierley Hill area.

Arising from the presentation of the report Members asked questions and the Area Team Leader responded stating that linkages with other voluntary sector organisations were taking place with continuing work with the Dudley Grid for Learning and the High Oak Youth Group which was run by volunteers. He also reported that work in relation to linking with other partners was continuing.

The Area Team Leader also stated that in relation to involving Ward Councillors with continuing youth service work, the Area Youth Worker Mr J Grant, the Centre Manager at Nine Locks Ms C Lewis and the new Area Team Leader would provide Members with up to date information in relation to continuing work and he also invited Members to attend Youth Centres in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area. He also requested Members to provide suggestions as to additional work and service provision that could be conducted and provided to young people.

Councillor Boleyn referred to a visit to the Fantastic Fun Club and expressed praise for both the facility and the events provided for young people.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the Youth Service provision for the Brierley Hill Area and as reported on at the meeting, be noted.

34. FIRE SERVICE

Station Commander Colin Newton of West Midlands Fire Service reported on fire issues in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area, referring to the details regarding fire related incidents during the last quarter in the respective Wards of the Brierley Hill Area Committee area which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He made particular reference to the reduction in the number of accidental fires, arson in residential properties and commercial premises, arson vehicle fires and arson rubbish fires.

He further reported that no injuries had been sustained due to dwelling fires advising that there had been no fatalities due to fires this year compared to ten last year, praising the work of the crews and campaigns that had taken place.

Station Commander Newton advised that there would be Christmas fire safety campaigns.

Councillor Tyler commended the work of West Midlands Fire Service especially in view of the impressive figures regarding the reduction in fire related fatalities.

Councillor Tyler also referred to the organised bonfire event that had taken place at Maidensbridge Primary School, praising the partnership work of those involved, referring to an inspection that had taken place prior to the event, advising that this had shown that all paperwork and details in relation to the event had been completed and had resulted in a successful well organised event at the school and recommended that organised displays should be the way forward in the future.

He also urged the public to check their smoke alarms and replace batteries where necessary.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on at the meeting be received and noted.

35. WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

Inspector Malpass of West Midlands Police reported on the current reduction in percentage figures of crime in the Ward areas of the Brierley Hill Area Committee area.

The restructuring changes within the service and the way in which the police will respond to incidents in the future was outlined and Inspector Malpass reported that the continuous improvement figures would be published the following week.

Councillor Foster congratulated the police stating that it was a credit to partnership working together and organisations working together within the Dudley Borough.

She also referred to the continuous improvement presentation by the Police service that had taken place prior to the meeting and praised the service for the crime reduction results in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on at the meeting be received and noted.

36. BEECH ROAD, KINGSWINFORD

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on issues relating to a specific area in Beech Road, which included a site made up of ground floor shops, maisonettes above and a garage block.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on issues relating to a specific area in Beech Road, which included a site made up of ground floor shops, maisonettes above and a garage block, be noted.

37. THE WORK OF THE JOINT ACTIVITIES GROUP

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the work of the Joint Activities Group.

Following the presentation of the report submitted, Councillor Blood referred to the Rogue Traders Scheme and advised that the Council's Licensing section had been made aware of residents receiving plastic bags for clothing and it not being brought to their attention that the charity concerned would not receive all of the proceeds from the clothing. He also urged members of the public to take note of the small print on the reverse of such bags.

The Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager confirmed that she would liaise with the Council's Licensing section, the Joint Activities Group and the Communications and Public Affairs section and arrange to post a message on the Council's website in relation to this matter.

Councillor Foster praised the excellent partnership working which had resulted in identifying problem areas and directing resources to those areas and expressed appreciation for the work that had been conducted in the Brockmoor and Pensnett areas.

Councillor Tyler referred to the work of the Dudley Strategic Board and praised partnership working including the work of the Police, Fire Service and the Joint Activities Group.

Councillor J Martin thanked the Drug and Alcohol Action Team Manager and colleagues for the report submitted.

The Chair referred to the clean up operation that had taken place at Fens Pool and praised the organisations who had been involved for the work undertaken in the area.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted be noted.

38. CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED

That, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13(c), Agenda Item No's 11 and 10 be considered as the next items of business followed by the remaining agenda items.

39. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no questions to be considered under this agenda item.

40. CONSULTATION ON THE REVIEW OF AREA COMMITTEES.

A report of Scrutiny Chairs was submitted outlining the proposals for a review of Area Committees. The proposals were subject to a consultation period from 1st October to 9th November, 2012 and recommendations would then be submitted to the Cabinet and Council in November, 2012.

During a brief presentation Councillor Tyler referred to the Forum Model in relation to electoral ward boundaries which was appended to the report submitted, advising that area 9 in relation to Halesowen would be split into 2 forums which would give a total of 10 community forums.

Councillor Tyler advised that the forums would meet five times each year and as the forums became more successful those who conducted PACT meetings could be invited to the forums.

He also advised that should there be specific issues that affected certain neighbourhoods, meetings would be held in those Ward Areas with Members travelling to members of Communities.

Councillor Tyler also reported that the allowances for Chairs and Vice Chairs would be divided between the ten forums.

He also reported that the number of senior Officers who had attended Area Committee meetings in the past would be reduced and he urged Members to raise any questions that they could prior to forum meetings in order that comprehensive responses could be provided at the forum meetings.

Councillor Tyler stated that Members would utilise Community Centres where possible for forum meetings.

Following the presentation of the report submitted, Councillor Harley agreed that Area Committees were not engaging with the public and that smaller agendas of local interest were required. He also urged Members to invite and involve the Police in forum meetings.

Councillor Harley also suggested that allowances should not be paid to Chairs and Vice Chairs of Forum Meetings.

In responding Councillor Tyler advised that Members allowances would be reviewed in April, 2013.

Councillor Miller raised concerns that in view of the increase in numbers of forum meetings as compared to Area Committee meetings the costs associated with these could not be met from the existing budget.

In responding Councillor Tyler confirmed that assurances had been provided that the finances for the forums could be met from the existing budget.

Councillor Islam welcomed the proposals contained in the report submitted and advised that over the years the general public had become detached from Area Committees and he hoped that forums would rejuvenate public interest. He also hoped that the effectiveness of forums would remain under review.

Councillor Islam urged Members to retain the emergency procedures for Members to raise questions at forums.

He also suggested that Forums should be publicised by utilising all means available to the Council.

In responding Councillor Tyler confirmed that all means available to the Council, including facebook, twitter, media releases and where possible Members promoting the forums would be used.

He also confirmed that there would be a built in process of ongoing review and a full review would take place after 12 months.

Councillor Foster expressed support for the review, reiterating the importance of ongoing reviews of forums.

It was also confirmed that forums would not be relied upon for Consultation purposes.

Councillor Foster also suggested that a representative from local health services should be invited to attend forums.

Councillor Tyler confirmed that the idea of inviting local health representatives to forums had been investigated and would be welcomed by local health representatives.

Councillor Harris welcomed the proposals to engage the public further and referred to the views of communities and partners in relation to Area Committees confirming that these had been both sobering and interesting and agreed that the model should be introduced in order for dialogue to be developed between the public and members.

She thanked Councillor Tyler for the work he had conducted in relation to the review.

RESOLVED

- (1) That comments on developing the proposals in the report submitted to the meeting on the review of Area Committees be submitted to the Director of Corporate Resources by the deadline 9th November, 2012.
- (2) That comments and views received during the consultation period be collated and considered by the Cabinet and Council during November, 2012.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on recommendations made in respect of applications received for funding from this year's Area Committee Grants budget and to update Members on progress to date.

RESOLVED

1. That the information contained in the report submitted on the following applications determined under the urgent powers be noted:-
 - (a) St Mary's Church Centre, Kingswinford £5,768 requested for general improvements of facilities and to improve disabled access. Application approved.
 - (b) Wordsley Community Association £5,370 requested for computer equipment and to upgrade the flooring at the centre. Application approved.
 - (c) Fens Pool Voluntary Association £2,164.45 requested for furniture and various items of kitchen equipment. Application approved.
 - (d) Enlight Projects, £2,370 (50% of £4,740 request made to both Brierley Hill and Central Dudley Area Committees) to purchase equipment to support the work of the group at Saltwells and High Oak Youth Clubs (shared funding arrangement with Central Dudley Area Committee). Application approved.
 - (e) Top Church Training, £5,000 requested to support the Project Worker's salary for one year and to finance administration costs to set up the Young People's Allowance Fund. Application approved.
 - (f) The Change Consortium £4,957 requested to purchase musical equipment for the People's Orchestra. Application refused on the basis of no direct community benefit for wards within Brierley Hill area. However, the application has been forwarded to the other Area Committees for consideration.
 - (g) Insight for Carers Service, £10,000 requested to fund the reconnection of the gas supply and to undertake significant refurbishment works at the premises. Application approved in the sum of £5,000 with the balance being sought from the remain Area Committees given the borough wide support this organisation provides.

2. (a) That approval be given to the application received from the 2156 (Brierley Hill) Squadron, Air Training Corps TA Centre, for the sum of £5,000 to purchase First Aid, IT and adventure training equipment.
- (b) That the sum of £3,512 on behalf of DMBC Environmental Management Division towards the purchase, erection and energy usage of installing four Christmas trees in the Committee area be approved in principle subject to further information being obtained in relation to the possible duplication of trees within the Brierley Hill area and the possibility of Moor Street Shopping Centre contributing towards the cost of the tree to be erected in their Centre.
- (c) That the sum of £5,000 on behalf of Wordsley Festival Organising Committee to fund the 2013 festival and associated events be approved in principle subject to the provision of further information relating to the organisations Insurance and the provision of invoices relating to the grant funding.
- (d) That the sum of £5,000 on behalf of The Samaritans to replace ineffective CCTV security system be approved in principle subject to the provision of information relating to the need for the CCTV security system.
- (e) That the application submitted on behalf of High Oak Youth and Community Centre for the sum of £5,000 to redecorate and refurbish the premises be deferred pending further information being obtained in relation to the multiple bids received in the past by various organisations utilising the Centre.
- (f) That in respect of the application received from Age UK Dudley in the sum of £740 as a part request towards the replacement and update of IT equipment, a maximum offer of £1480 be made.

42.

MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH JUNE, 2012.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on a number of issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 28th June, 2012. Details of the matters raised at that meeting were set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted.

RESOLVED

BHAC/23

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

43 WARD ISSUES

Councillor Harley requested that signage be placed in Pleasant Close, Wordsley as there had been complaints by local residents in relation to those parking when transporting their children to and from school.

44 CLOSING REMARKS OF THE CHAIR.

This was possibly the last meeting of Brierley Hill Area Committee the Chair thanked members of the public for attending; all the Officers and other parties who attended meetings and those Members who had attended past and present.

45. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of future meetings of the Council's Scrutiny Committees in the current municipal year were received and noted.

46. DATE OF FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE MEETING.

It was noted that whilst the next scheduled meeting date was Thursday 7th March, 2013, this was subject to the review of area committees referred to earlier in the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.

CHAIR