

**REGENERATION, CULTURE AND
ADULT EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday, 12th September, 2011

At 6.00 pm in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor K Turner (Chairman)
Councillor Islam (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Ali, Attwood, Caunt, G H Davies, Evans, Knowles, Mottram and J Woodall.

Officers

Assistant Director Housing Strategy and Private Sector (Lead Officer to the Committee); Assistant Director Culture and Leisure, Head of Planning and Head of Traffic and Transportation (All Directorate of the Urban Environment); Assistant Director Libraries, Archives and Adult Education (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services) and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

Also in attendance

Mr Scott (for agenda item number 5)
Mr I Harrobin and a colleague – Complex Developments Ltd (for agenda item number 7); and
Councillor Stanley (Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture)

13 **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Simms.

14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ali declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 5 – Petition regarding parking in Dudley Town Centre – as he was involved in the initial consideration of this matter at the meeting of Central Dudley Area Committee held on 18th January, 2011. Councillor Ali left the meeting for the duration of the consideration of this matter.

15 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 8th June, 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed.

16 PETITION REGARDING PARKING IN DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources (as Petitions Officer) was submitted on a request from a petitioner for a review to be undertaken of a petition regarding car parking provision in Dudley Town Centre.

Central Dudley Area Committee at its meeting held on 18th January, 2011, had considered a report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted, on this matter and had resolved to note the report and that comments made be referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for further consideration.

It had been established, following that meeting, that that Directorate did not propose to report further on the issue.

Under the Council's Petition Scheme a petition organiser not satisfied with the outcome of the Council's consideration of the petition may request a review of the outcome by the Council's relevant Scrutiny Committee.

Mr Scott, one of the petition organisers, had requested a review, and was present at the meeting, and so, in accordance with the scheme, could address the Committee for up to three minutes. Comments had also been received from Councillor M Davis, a ward member, which would be read out as he was unable to attend the meeting.

The Committee may not override any decision made but the appropriate decision taker must consider any recommendations made by the Committee.

Following the introduction given Mr Scott addressed the meeting and referred to discussions he had had with the Leader of the Council and officers on this matter and on the progress made. He also commented on the need for additional car parking, even of a temporary nature, in view of the disruption that would be caused over the next months by work being undertaken by utility companies.

In this regard he queried whether Stone Street Square could possibly be used and if not requested that other sites be looked at where additional car parking could be provided particularly for the period of disruption.

The Lead Officer to the Committee then read out comments received from Councillor M Davis who commented in particular on the use of Stone Street Square for car parking and other measures, including a ban on the use of double yellow lines, as a means of ensuring support for shop keepers in the town and encouraging people to shop in the town centre.

In response to comments made, the Head of Traffic and Transportation reported that 55 on street car parking spaces had either been or were to be introduced. Also that sites in New Mill Street and off the Inhedge were being investigated as possible sites for additional car parking. The 55 spaces were distributed fairly evenly across the town centre and equated, approximately, to the spaces lost by the closure of Stone Street car park.

Members then raised a number of questions/comments and particular comments and responses given were as follows:-

- The works started in April and were scheduled to last eighteen months although works were currently ahead of schedule.
- That the Assistant Director, Culture and Leisure would inform Councillor G H Davies of the number of events booked for Stone Street Square in the next few months.
- That the new one way system involving Stone Street and the provision of additional car parking was considered to be a success and that car parking provision on Flood Street/King Street was well used.
- It was considered that temporary short term car parking should be provided, in view of the works, especially over the Christmas period.

Following questions and comments made, it was

RESOLVED

That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to inform the Cabinet Member for Transportation of the recommendation of this Committee that investigations be undertaken into the possibility of providing additional car parking spaces over the Christmas period in order to relieve the position given the ongoing works being undertaken in the Town Centre.

17 PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised under this Agenda Item.

18 GLASS FEASIBILITY STAGE 2

In his introduction to this matter the Assistant Director Culture and Leisure referred to the ongoing work that had been undertaken since the last presentation to this Committee in March, 2011. It was hoped that a report would shortly be finalised for submission to Cabinet.

Mr Ian Harrobin of Complex Developments Ltd, one of the Council's partners in this project, was then introduced to the Committee.

Mr Harrobin, in his presentation, which was displayed visually at the meeting, commented on the vision and components for a new Museum of Glass which would bring together the glass collections at Broadfield House, the Redhouse Cone and those in storage, some ten thousand items, onto one site, with provision for parking, and build upon previous investment in Redhouse Cone.

The presentation set the project in its local context, within the Glass Quarter Regeneration Opportunity Area, and plans were shown indicating the connection of the Redhouse and Whitehouse sites through an underground tunnel running under the High Street.

The usage of the various levels in the buildings was also indicated with exhibition areas, a café, offices and conference/seminar area.

As part of the overall project a revised planning application had also been submitted for family housing involving a reduction in the number of units to be provided to that previously envisaged.

Regarding the application for ERDF funding for the project it was reported that this was being finalised and once agreed by the Council's Cabinet would be submitted for approval. Once approval had been obtained an application for Heritage Lottery Funding would be progressed.

Overall it was considered that the Museum of Glass could eventually have the potential level and impact of other similar facilities. The vision could also become a reality in 2013 but this was dependent on many factors all falling into place and funding streams secured.

Following the presentation given members asked a number of questions/made comments and responses to particular questions and comments were as follows:-

- Traffic levels in relation to the housing to be provided had been accounted for as the revised planning application would provide for fewer traffic movements given the reduction in housing to be provided and those traffic movements would be less than occurred during the sites previous usage. Also traffic movements would be split between those involving residential traffic and those using the buildings at the front of the site. The consultants were also aware of difficulties involving Marine Crescent and the humped back bridge.
- Consideration had been given to the provision of a bridge rather than a tunnel to link the site however a bridge over the canal had not been considered to be feasible given the narrow towpath. The tunnel would though it was considered enhance the visitor experience.
- Regarding funding it was hoped to finalise the ERDF funding bid in the near future subject to Cabinet approval with a decision in, approximately, February/March, 2012. Once ERDF approval had been obtained a start could then be made whilst the Heritage Lottery funding application was progressing.
- Whilst it was acknowledged that the overall collection comprised some ten thousand items clearly not all the items could be displayed and some items would be subject to the Council's acquisition and disposals policy. Consideration would be given to those items to be displayed and the finest examples would principally be shown including the highlights the collections of cameo glass.
- An assurance was also given that bequeathed items had been identified.

It was also considered that, if an assessment of the collection had not been made recently then one should be carried out.

- Regarding the involvement of the British Glass Foundation comments were made about their involvement and that the consultants were working with them and the Council. Their fund raising activities were also referred to as was their role as experts which would be utilised in aspects such as items to be displayed and possibly sold. It was also considered that they could be involved in any potential trust arrangements in the future.
- That the consultants would liaise with British Waterways regarding the provision of additional overnight stops for visitors to moor their canal boats.

At the conclusion of comments and questions the consultants were thanked for the presentation given.

RESOLVED

That the information given, and as displayed at the meeting, in respect of the Glass Feasibility Stage 2 project, be noted and that the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to arrange for a further presentation to be given to the Committee in due course following further development of the project.

19 DUDLEY ARCHIVES AND LOCAL HISTORY RELOCATION

The Black Country Library Services Project Manager submitted a presentation on the proposed relocation of the Dudley Archives and Local History Service.

The presentation was displayed visually at the meeting and paper copies were available. A copy of the presentation would be uploaded to the Committee Management Information System.

It was noted that the new building would form part of a redevelopment project on Castle Hill and would be located on Tipton Road, next to the Black Country Living Museum. Details of the proposed location and of external and internal views were shown.

Subject to planning approval, which it was hoped to obtain at a meeting of the Development Control Committee in October, 2011, the project should begin later this year with a view to opening in the summer of 2013.

Members then asked questions relating in particular to the design of the new building in relation to that of the museum and the consultation that was being undertaken with residents/users on the use of the building and in relation to the planning application submitted, both these consultations having begun in June.

Arising from a further query the Assistant Director undertook to inform Councillor Caunt of the costs of carrying out a renovation scheme involving archives at the Molineux Hotel, Wolverhampton.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the presentation, and as reported at the meeting, on the proposed relocation of the Dudley Archives and Local History Service, be noted.

20 BLACK COUNTRY LIBRARY PROJECT

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted updating the Committee on the planned outcomes and progress of the Black Country Library Project.

In her presentation of the report submitted the Black Country Library Services Project Manager reported that her secondment to the project had begun on 1st August, 2011. She informed the committee that the secondment included a strategic management role for the Library, Archives and Adult Learning Division of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the planned outcomes and progress of the Black Country Library Project, be noted.

21 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS REPORT FOR THE 2010/11 FINANCIAL YEAR AND RELATED MATTERS

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on contributions that had been approved, received and spent under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) during the financial year 2010/11 and information on Section 106 and Unilateral Undertaking Legal Agreements that had been signed during 2010/11.

Arising from the presentation of the content of the report, and its Appendices, the Head of Planning undertook to circulate to members of the Committee a list of attendees at the recent seminar held on Section 106.

The Head of Planning also reported that two further pieces of work were currently being developed involving a Question and Answer web page in respect of planning obligations and information on web pages which would enable searches to find information relating to Section 106 matters.

Regarding the Question and Answer web page this could be accessed via the Members Portal and was entitled 'Planning Obligations – a Guide for Members'. Both these pieces of work were currently works in progress and therefore comments would be welcomed from members on their content. In this regard Councillor Caunt referred to a recent search he had made and the circumstances that had arisen as a result of his search.

Both these new web pages were demonstrated and it was further noted that in respect of the information in respect of Section 106 Agreements currently only details in relation to monies received had been developed although other aspects would be developed in due course. It was further noted that guides would be provided on these applications and links sent in due course.

Arising from further comments made regarding the receipt of monies and whether any monies were lost the process involved in dealing with Section 106 obligations was outlined and the assurance given that, given the monitoring involved and the effort expended by officers in relation to this matter, the Council did not intend to lose any Section 106 monies. This process was though a rolling process and so there were a number of reasons why the amount of monies approved differed from that actually received in any one year. It was further emphasised that only in those cases where a scheme did not commence was any money lost.

Arising from queries made by the Chairman in relation to planning applications numbers P10/0631 and P08/1926 the Head of Planning undertook to investigate the points made and respond direct to the Chairman. Similar comments were also made in respect of a site in Wordsley.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on contributions that had been approved, received and spent under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) during the financial year 2010/11 together with information on the Section 106 and the Unilateral Undertaking Legal Agreements that had been signed during 2010/11, be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

CHAIRMAN