

## **CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at 6.30 p.m.  
at Dudley Concert Hall, St James's Road, Dudley

### **PRESENT: -**

Councillor J R Davies (Chairman)  
Councillor K Finch (Vice Chairman)

Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Mrs Aston, Cotterill, Mrs Coulter, M Davis, A Finch, J Martin and Waltho; Mrs Edwards, Ms Little and Mrs Oakes

### **OFFICERS:**

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (as Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management), Head of Museums, Greenspaces and Bereavement Services, 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, Community Renewal Officer, Principal Project Officer, Youth Offending Manager – All Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit Development Manager – Chief Executive's Directorate, Principal Solicitor, Ms K Farrington and Mr J Jablonski All Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources

### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Inspector C Downen, West Midlands Police

Mr M Lawton, West Midlands Fire Service

20 Members of the public

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### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors J D Davies, Mrs Roberts, Sparks and Ms While-Cooper; Mr Sadiq, Mr Robinson and Miss Hutton.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ali declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item Number 12 – Safer Routes to School 2009/10 Castle High School, Dudley – Proposed Restriction of Waiting Order in Priory Road, Dudley, in view of the fact that he is a Foundation Trustee for children who attend Castle High School.

Councillor Cotterill declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item Number 15a(1) – Capital Allocations (St Andrew’s Resident’s Trust), in view of the fact that he is known to some of the Members of the Trust.

Councillor Mrs Coulter declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item Number 15a(1) – Capital Allocations (St Andrew’s Resident’s Trust), in view of the fact that she is known to some of the Members of the Trust.

Ms V Little declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item Number 12 – Safer Routes to School 2009/10 Castle High School, Dudley – Proposed Restriction of Waiting Order in Priory Road, Dudley, in view of the fact that she is a Foundation Trustee and a Governor at Castle High School.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the substitution of the words “A member of the public” for the words “The Chairman of the Governors of Holly Hall School” in the preamble to minute 51(g) (Public Forum).

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YOUTH SERVICE – INFORMATION REGARDING FACILITIES  
ACCESSED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

A report of the Director of Children’s Services was submitted on the activities being undertaken by the Youth Service for young people in each ward comprising the area of the Committee, and related matters.

During the discussion, The Area Youth Team Leader updated the Area Committee on new initiatives going on this year; in particular, the introduction of a new youth centre at St Thomas’s Network, Beechwood Road. The youth centre had started on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 and was open to young people on a Wednesday evenings.

Reference was also made to a new trial project starting at the end of the month with Police Community Support Officers in the St Thomas's Ward where a youth club would be set up for young people to turn up and engage in activities offered by the youth club. The new scheme would be set up initially for three months, opening on a Sunday afternoon. Depending on the outcome and the volume of use by young people, the facility might be developed into a permanent youth centre.

The Area Youth Team Leader also indicated that the February Half Term programme of activities was now available and would be circulated to members directly.

On consideration of the report, a number of questions were asked in relation to the information provided in Appendix 1. Questions asked and responses given included the following:-

Further to a request by Councillor J Martin that the actual activities being carried out in each ward be included in the report and to further comments made by Members it was agreed that the Area Liaison Officer would arrange for discussions to take place with Councillor J Martin, The Area Youth Team Leader, Director of Children's Services, the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Ms Porter) and herself to ascertain the information required to be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

In relation to the statistical information contained in the Appendix to the report in relation to Meadow Road Youth Club, the Area Youth Team Leader confirmed that figures for Gateway were not included in the report, as these were not linked to the Dudley Youth Service.

In relation to the introduction of the new youth centre at St Thomas's Network, Councillor Ali queried whether the centre had been set up to re-instate the previous youth centre, which had closed two years ago. In response, the Area Youth Team Leader indicated that the provision being offered to the young people was not greatly different from that of the previous youth club, however, the way in which the scheme was being operated was different. Councillor Ali also queried the statistical information contained in the Appendix to the report in relation to the level of engagement in the St Thomas's Ward, in which he had observed that involvement of young people in youth activities in other wards appeared to be low. In response, the Area Youth Team Leader clarified that the figures contained in each respective ward represented the number of young people attending youth facilities across the borough rather than just their local ward.

In response to a request from Councillor Ali for further information on the youth club, the Area Youth Team Leader undertook to supply the information.

A question was asked by Councillor A Finch in relation to Meadow Road youth centre in that he queried whether it was being utilised to its full potential and asked whether more could be done to make young people more aware of the activities being offered at the youth centre. In responding, the Area Youth Team Leader indicated that her team would continue to work towards making youth provision more accessible and available for young people in the area of the youth centre.

Further comments made by Councillor A Finch relating in particular to the cost effectiveness of the premises would be referred to the Assistant Director of Children's Services for response. In response to comments made by Councillor Waltho regarding previous arrangements made for youth co-option, the Area Liaison Officer indicated the current position and that she and the Area Youth Team Leader would be working closely with the young persons and ways in which to engage them would be considered.

Councillor Mrs Coulter requested additional information in respect of the activities being offered and attendance figures in relation to "Netherton and Woodside" as outlined in the table to the Appendix of the report. In responding, the Area Youth Team Leader agreed to respond to the Member direct.

Councillor Cotterill commented on the low-level of youth provision being offered in the Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood Ward and suggested that the empty caretaker's house on Quarry Bank High Street might be utilised for youth and police drop ins.

In relation to Russells Hall Rockies Youth Club, Councillor M Davis queried why the level of engagement was relatively low by young people from St James. The Area Youth Team Leader indicated that the session was a targeted disability youth night and young people attended from across the area not just the local ward.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted on Youth Service – information regarding facilities accessed by young people, be noted.
- (2) That the Officers referred to above take the action referred to them, as indicated.

#### RESOLVED

That, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c), Agenda Item Number 14 (Community Renewal) be considered as the next item of business.

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## COMMUNITY RENEWAL WORKING GROUP

The Community Renewal Officer in his opening remarks reported that a meeting of the Working Group would be re-arranged arising from the cancellation of the meeting arranged for 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2010. He then introduced Chanai Bonner and Robert Franklin, Dudley Young Advisors, both of Black Country Connexions who then gave a presentation in relation to youth provision in and around the Woodside area.

During the presentation, Members were informed that Dudley Young Advisors had been approached by Community Renewal Officers and Neighbourhood Volunteers to undertake a piece of consultation work that would assess the needs of young people in Woodside and its surrounding areas.

The main aims of the consultation were outlined to the Committee and specific mention was made of the funding which had become available for a six week trial programme to test the feasibility of setting up permanent youth provision in the area. Numbers attending the programme would then give a clear indication about what participation rates would be like in the future.

In respect of questions from the Committee in relation to ideas to prevent major problems such as litter and anti-social behaviour from happening, the young advisors stated that young people basically wanted shelter, however, with such provision not being available, young people were not always positive in their actions.

The Committee then thanked the young advisors for their presentation.

### RESOLVED

That the presentation be received and noted.

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## POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Chris Downen of West Midlands Police attended the meeting to discuss current police issues in the area of the Committee.

During the presentation, reference was made to Programme Paragon, which would put the public and communities and their interests at the very heart of the service. Programme Paragon comprised a new programme of organisational change for the West Midlands Police Force, which would come into force at the beginning of April and indicated that Chief Superintendent K Baldwin would have the responsibility for the whole of the Dudley borough, supported by two Superintendents and two Chief Inspectors. Partnership teams would also be developed and there would also be four Sector Inspectors covering the four parliamentary constituencies in the Borough. Details of the names of all the police officers would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Inspector Downen also reported that there would be Neighbourhood Teams at ward level comprising a sergeant and a number of other officers. On this, reference was made to Operation Staysafe, which would be considered further in the meeting.

Mention was also made of the Joint Activities Group – Active Kids, supported by local authorities, which was a funded programme offering young people the opportunity to utilise leisure and recreational facilities in the borough.

The Members of the Committee welcomed the new initiatives for working closely with the Police to try to reduce anti-social behaviour.

#### RESOLVED

That the information given by Inspector Downen be received and noted and that details of the police officers referred to above be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

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#### FIRE SERVICE ISSUES

Mr M Lawton, Station Commander, West Midlands Fire Service reported on the number and nature of incidents in the Central Dudley Area, by Ward, for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009 to date.

In relation to the overall incidents, arson figures appeared to be lower, due to fire officer intervention and members of the public reporting derelict places and abandoned vehicles.

Further to minute 49 of the meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009, Councillor M Davis again requested information in relation to whether incidents were peculiar to a particular area and whether burnt vehicles ended up at a particular location. In response, Mr Lawton confirmed that surveillance work was carried out with the Police regularly and assured the Member that he would ascertain the information and respond directly to him.

#### RESOLVED

That the presentation be received and noted.

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PETITIONS

A petition was received from Councillor Cotterill in relation to problems of speeding traffic along Cradley Road, Netherton from the junction of Saltwells Road to Newtown Lane and the potential increase in the speed of traffic to a more dangerous level arising from the decision of Sandwell MBC to close the junction of Bannister Street with Newtown Lane.

In presenting the petition, Councillor Cotterill referred to numerous incidents occurring on Cradley Road due to speeding vehicles and suggested that speed cameras or speed humps be introduced to reduce the number of speeding vehicles along Cradley Road.

RESOLVED

That the petition be referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration and attention.

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PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) A member of the public expressed concern in relation to Tesco shopping trollies being dumped on public streets and private land around the Burntree Island Store as he had recently been advised by the staff at Tesco that unlike previously they now considered that collecting trollies was no longer financially viable. In response, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management) acknowledged the problem raised and agreed to investigate.
- (b) A member of the public referred to the Decent Home Standards and asked to be advised in relation to what would be considered "decent" in 2011. In responding, the Head of Housing Management – North agreed to respond to the questioner in writing.
- (c) In relation to the question asked in (b) above, a further member of the public asked for clarification on the letter sent following a visit to her property by the Area Liaison Officer and Housing Officers on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2009. She also indicated that the Tenants and Residents Association had written to the Cabinet Member for Housing inviting him to visit the properties in the Woodside area, however, no response had been received. In response, the Area Liaison Officer agreed to contact the Cabinet Member for Housing regarding a response to the letter sent by the Tenants and Residents Association and arrange for a copy of the Cabinet Member's initial letter and further letter to be sent to the three Ward Members.

- (d) A member of the public asked to be advised on the progress made following a question asked at the Central Dudley Area Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2009 in relation to the re-installment of the pillar-box in Dudley Town Centre. In responding, the Democratic Services Officer undertook to ascertain the current position and take the appropriate action.
- (e) A member of the public referred to a newsletter circulated by the West Midlands Police in December 2009 referring to Partners and Communities Together meetings, which had taken place in September and October and queried the late circulation of leaflets. In responding, Inspector Downen agreed to respond in writing to the member regarding the distribution of the newsletter referred to.
- (f) A member of the public asked to be advised on the progress made in relation to the provision of pelican crossings along Stourbridge Road. In responding, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management) confirmed that the consultation exercise had now been completed and indicated that a meeting had been arranged in early February with the Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member for Transportation to discuss this matter further with a view to determining a date for completion. He also undertook to write to the questioner updating him on the outcome of that meeting.
- (g) The Chairman of a local Partners and Communities Together meeting and Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator raised concerns in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour and the communication difficulties they had experienced with the Police since the Police Community Support Officers had had their mobile phones removed. In responding, Inspector Downen reported that the new initiative, Operation Paragon, would have as one of its prime aims the tackling of anti-social behaviour and undertook to refer back the comments made with particular regard to the communication issues.
- (h) Further to questions (b) and (c) above, a further member of the public raised concern in relation to the state of the properties on the Woodside Estate. In response, the Head of Housing Management – North agreed to meet with the questioner following the meeting in order that a written response could be given.

- (a) In referring to the volume and speed of traffic along Oakham Road, Councillor Ali asked that road traffic calming measures at that location be considered.

- (b) Councillor Ali referred to the removal of the school crossing patrol at St John's Road and requested that the speed visor previously requested be provided as soon as possible.
- (c) Councillor Ali drew attention to problems on Blackacre Road in relation to flooding and potholes and requested that these matters be looked at. He also requested that gully cleaning in Bean Road be considered.
- (d) Also in relation to Blackacre Road, Councillor Waltho referred to concerns raised by residents in relation to using the road as a short-cut and suggested that a meeting be arranged with residents, Ward Members and the Police to discuss this issue with a view to resolving the problem.
- (e) Councillor Waltho raised concerns at the response given on the issue raised at the Area Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009, as outlined at agenda item 16 in relation to Bunns Lane and requested that appropriate Officers contact Ward Councillors for a meeting to discuss this issue as soon as possible.
- (f) Councillor J Martin drew attention to parking problems in Walker Street, Netherton and requested that a site visit with appropriate traffic Officers be arranged to discuss what action should be taken.
- (g) Councillor J Martin referred to Champions Church, Cinder Bank and asked to be advised as to when the full carriageway improvements would be completed. The Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management) was asked to investigate.
- (h) Councillor Mrs Aston reported that her request at the previous Area Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009, for the storm drains in Summer Road to be cleansed had not been done and requested that this action be taken.
- (i) In relation to Safer Routes to School, Councillor A Finch requested that a survey in respect of Bluebell Road be carried out.
- (j) Councillor A Finch referred to a request made at the Area Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009 to which a response had not been given and again requested that traffic calming measures along the Broadway be considered.
- (k) Councillor Cotterill drew attention to the large hole in the bridge at the bottom of Cradley Road and requested that action be taken to repair the hole.
- (l) Councillor Cotterill drew attention to the railing at the top of Bowling Green Road and requested that further consideration be given in relation to the railing provided.

- (m) Councillor Cotterill drew attention to the concerns raised by residents in relation to the behaviour of people using the playing fields at the Black Horse on a Sunday and requested that appropriate action be taken.
- (n) Councillor Ahmed requested that the railings outside Holly Hall School be extended.
- (o) Councillor Ahmed drew attention to the potholes in Steppingstone Street, King Street and High Street and requested that these be looked at.
- (p) Councillor Ahmed drew attention to the problem in relation to flooding at Milking Bank and requested that the drains be unblocked.
- (q) Councillor M Davis requested that gully cleansing be undertaken on Milking Bank and Russells Hall.
- (r) Councillor M Davis drew attention to the lack of grit bins on Milking Bank with particular reference to the Cowley Drive area and requested that this issue be looked at.
- (s) Councillor M Davis drew attention to the lack of free parking in Dudley Town Centre and the adverse effect this had on businesses and requested that this issue to looked at.
- (t) Mrs Oakes asked to be advised on whether regular meetings between the Local Authority, Police and Holly Hall School took place to discuss common issues such as pupils causing anti-social behaviour. The Area Liaison Officer would formulate a response.

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DUDLEY BOROUGH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the work of the Dudley Borough Local Access Forum and invited applications from members of the public to join the Forum.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that members of the public be requested to apply for membership of the Local Access Forum by the closing date of 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2010.

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72

OPERATION STAYS SAFE IN DUDLEY

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the development and implementation of Operation Staysafe within Dudley since July 2009.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

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SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL 2009/10 CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL, DUDLEY – PROPOSED RESTRICTION OF WAITING ORDER IN PRIORY ROAD, DUDLEY

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on proposals for the introduction of a Restriction of Waiting Order in Priory Road, Dudley.

RESOLVED

That the proposed restriction of waiting order in Priory Road, Dudley, with the implications referred to in paragraph 10 of the report submitted, be supported and the Cabinet Member for Transportation recommend accordingly.

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74

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN NETHERTON WORKING GROUP

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on feedback of the finding of the Netherton Traffic Management Working Group.

Regarding the Northfield Road junction improvement scheme, a Member asked to be advised as to whether a flashing sign on the A459 Halesowen Road approach from Dudley heading towards Northfield Road would be incorporated in the 2010-11 Minor Improvements Programme. The Assistant Director of Urban Environment (Environmental Management) undertook to investigate this matter and respond to the Member direct.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the inclusion of the junction improvement at Northfield Road and Halesowen Road in the Minor Improvements Programme for the next financial year be supported and that Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended accordingly.
- (2) That the proposals in the report regarding the locations list below be progressed, subject to the approval of the Cabinet Member for Transportation regarding the making of Traffic Regulation Orders as appropriate;

- Arch Hill Street Junction with Halesowen Road
- Cradley Road Junction with Marriott Road
- Cradley Road Junction with Halesowen Road
- Cradley Road Junction with Griffin Street
- Northfield Road Junction with Recreation Street
- St John Street/Castleton Street Junction with Halesowen Road
- Halesowen Road

(3) That the closure of Castleton Street not be progressed.

75

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS WORKING GROUP

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on recommendations made by the Capital Allocations Working Group of the Committee with regard to applications for grant from the Delegated Capital Budget of the Committee for 2009/10.

RESOLVED

- (1) That grants to the organisations indicated below for the purposes, and in the sums, indicated be approved:
- (a) Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood Ward
    - (i) The award of a grant of £2,550 to the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarry Bank Scouts for the installation of a new concrete path and gravel soak away at the premises.
    - (ii) The award of a grant of £2,089.65 to the St Andrew's Resident's Trust for the purchase of furniture including tables, chairs, cupboards and a computer station.
  - (b) St James's Ward
    - (i) The award of a grant of £1,997.92 to Vision Musical Rhythm Studio (VRMS) for the purchase of a pair of speakers and an Apple Mac laptop.
    - (ii) The award of a grant of £300 to JR Dance Club for the purchase of musical equipment.
- (2) That the application for the Cyber Bus Project be deferred to enable more information to be obtained from other Local Authorities in relation to their programme of activities and financial help.

- (3) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to carry out the recommended actions within the agreed control procedures.
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76 MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2009 RELATING TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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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 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009, that related to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

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77 MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2009 OTHER THAN THOSE RELATING TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on progress on issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

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78 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of meetings of Select Committees for the remainder of the current municipal year were noted.

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79 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THIS COMMITTEE

The date and venue of the last meeting scheduled for the Committee for 2009/10 municipal year was noted.

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The meeting ended at 8.27pm.

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CHAIRMAN

CDAC/58