

## HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2010, at 6.30 p.m.

At Howley Grange Primary School, Howley Grange Road, Halesowen

### PRESENT:-

Councillors Body, Burston, Mrs Dunn, Mrs Faulkner, Hill, James, Ms Nicholls, Ms Partridge, Mrs Shakespeare, Taylor, K Turner, Mrs H Turner, Vickers and Woodall.

### Officers

Area Liaison Officer and Treasurer (both Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement), Assistant Director of Housing Strategy and Private Sector, Quality and Complaints Manager and the Area Community Renewal Officer, (All Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Assistant Director – Quality and Partnership and the Area Youth Team Leader – Halesowen, (both Directorate of Children’s Services), Head of Executive Support, Head of Economic Regeneration Delivery, Group Engineer (Transportation), Principal Environmental Health Officer, (All Directorate of the Urban Environment), Interim Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services and Mrs M Johal (both Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources)

### Also in Attendance

Mr Chris Wood and Ms J Winpenny – West Midlands Fire Service  
Inspector Clive Steedman and Sergeant Wendy Tyler – Halesowen Police Station

Approximately 20 members of the public were in attendance.

### 1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

#### RESOLVED

That Councillor James be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Councillor James thereupon took the Chair)

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### 2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

#### RESOLVED

That Councillor Burston be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

3 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

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

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4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made by the following Members in respect of the matters indicated:

Councillor Body declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item No 21 (Delegated Capital Budget) in view of him being a Trustee of Wollescote Community Association.

Councillor Body declared a personal interest in respect of any reference made to issues regarding Homer Hill Park in view of him being the Chair of Friends of Homer Hill Park.

Councillor Burston declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item No 20 (Halesowen Town Centre Development) with regard to the Bus Services Review in view of him being employed by Centro.

Councillor Ms Partridge declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item No 21 (Delegated Capital Budget) in view of her being a Trustee of Wollescote Community Association.

Councillor Mrs Turner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item No 21 (Delegated Capital Budget) in view of her being a regular Worshipper and member on the electoral roll for St Margaret's of Antioch Church.

Councillor K Turner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda Item No 21 (Delegated Capital Budget) in view of him being a regular Worshipper and member on the electoral roll for St Margaret's of Antioch Church.

Councillor K Turner declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item No 12 (Emergency Services Issues) in view of him being a Member of the West Midlands Fire Authority.

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5 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2010, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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6            TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

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

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices attached to the report, submitted on the terms of reference and the protocol for Area Committees, be noted.

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7            APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

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

In presenting the report the Area Liaison Officer referred to the suggestion by Cabinet to reserve a co-opted member vacancy for a representative for young people and indicated that it had been agreed that a youth representative would serve on the Halesowen Youth Forum with a view to reporting back to the Committee.

The Area Liaison Officer further advised that a request had been received prior to the meeting from the Dudley Association of Governing Bodies for one of their members to serve as a co-opted member, should the Committee so wish.

RESOLVED

That co-opted members be not appointed to the Committee for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

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8            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 Halesowen Area Committee (Halesowen Town Centre Development) Working Group be appointed for the ensuing year, with the following terms of reference:-

- To receive regular progress reports from Officers detailing regeneration and transportation activity (including Halesowen in Bloom) taking place in the Town Centre
- Identify and resolve any constraints to progress on action
- Guide public relations and communication issues
- To report recommendations and findings to the Committee on a regular basis.

and that the Working Group comprise of the Chairman of the Committee and one Member from each Ward, namely:- Councillors James, Mrs Faulkner, Ms Partridge, Taylor and K Turner.

(2)(i) That the Halesowen Area Committee (Cradley/Windmill Hill Regeneration Plan Delivery) Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with the following terms of reference:-

- To receive regular progress reports from the Local Centres Officer
- To agree priorities for action
- To identify and resolve any constraints to plan progress
- Guide public relations and communications for the plan
- To report progress to the Committee on a regular basis
- To review the regeneration plan annually

and that the Working Group comprise of the Chairman of the Committee and one Ward Member from each of the following Wards: Belle Vale, Cradley and Foxcote and Hayley Green and Cradley South Wards, namely :- Councillors James, Mrs Dunn, Ms Partridge and K Turner

(ii) That the co-option to the Working Group of Mr Kevin Powis, a local resident of Cradley, as a speaking but non-voting member, be also approved.

(3) That the Halesowen Area Committee (Community Renewal) Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with the following terms of reference:-

- To regularly review the progress of the Halesowen Area Community Renewal Plan and to make changes and additions, as needed, within the broad framework of the Plan
- To report progress and changes to the Committee on a regular basis

- The Community Renewal Service will keep the Working Group informed about the work of the Community Renewal Steering Group where there is also Member representation and ensure appropriate linkage
- A final plan will be brought to the Area Committee within the course of the municipal year. The Local Community Renewal Plan will need to take into account and cohere with the overall Council Plan and the Dudley Community Plan

and that the Working Group comprise of the Chairman of the Committee and one Member from each Ward (with the exception of Wards with representatives from more than one political group where the minority party would also attend the Working Group), namely:- Councillors James, Mrs Faulkner, Ms Partridge, Ms Nicholls, K Turner and Vickers.

- (4) That the appropriate Lead Officer to the Working Groups be requested to submit written reports to this Committee on a regular basis on the work of the Groups.

9 APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIONS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

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

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the organisations shown for the 2010/11 Municipal Year:

Cradley Community Association – Councillor Crumpton  
 Lutley Community Association – Councillor Burston  
 Wollescote Community Association – The Ward Members for the Cradley and Foxcote Ward, namely Councillors Body, Crumpton and Ms Partridge

10 PETITIONS

(a) Residents of Princess Crescent

The Committee noted that a petition had been submitted to the Council from residents of two blocks in Princess Crescent, Halesowen requesting that the trees forming the perimeter of the car park be cut back. The Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services were dealing with the petition.

(b) Residents of Hayley Green

A petition was submitted by Councillor K Turner on behalf of residents of Hayley Green requesting the reinstatement of the 006 bus service or a similar circular area service. The petition was referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.

(c) Residents of Abbey Crescent

A petition was submitted on behalf of residents of Abbey Crescent requesting that the grass be cut. The petition was referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.

(d) Residents of Abbey Crescent

A petition was submitted on behalf of residents of Abbey Crescent complaining about the state of parking for residents. The petition was referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.

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11 YOUTH SERVICE AREA PLAN

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the Youth Service provision for the Halesowen and Cradley Area.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, on the Youth Service provision for the Halesowen and Cradley Area, be noted and endorsed.

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12 EMERGENCY SERVICES ISSUES

Mr Chris Wood, Station Commander, West Midlands Fire Service, was in attendance and briefly updated the Committee on various statistics. He reported that arson attacks in the form of setting fire to rubbish had risen in all Wards from 18 to 23 incidents of which 3 had risen to 11 incidents in the Cradley and Foxcote area alone. With regard to traffic collision incidents the meeting were informed that the figures were stable but it was pointed out that 2 incidents had risen to 4 in the Cradley and Foxcote area. However, Mr Wood advised that work was being undertaken with the Road Safety Partnership with a view to reducing and combating the problem.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the verbal report on the work of the West Midlands Fire Service, be noted.

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13 AREA POLICE AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER (PACT) ISSUES

A schedule of PACT meetings arranged in the area of the Committee had been included with the agenda for information.

Inspector Steedman introduced himself and briefly explained about his role and that he covered Halesowen South, Halesowen North, Belle Vale and the Hayley Green areas and that Inspector Boyle covered the Cradley and Foxcote area. He then explained about the PACT meetings, including information on surgeries, and informed the meeting on current hot topics that were relevant to individual areas. Inspector Steedman then reported on activities and events to be held during the summer holiday for children and young people to combat anti-social behaviour.

## RESOLVED

That the information given in the verbal update on policing issues be noted.

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## PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) A member of the public referred to discussions held at a previous meeting on the Halesowen Library and welcomed the decision for consideration being given to the formation of the Halesowen Library Forum. However, he commented that the formation of the Forum seemed to be particularly slow and urged that the matter be proceeded with swiftly. He also suggested that when considering the membership of the Forum all current registered library users be given the opportunity to be elected as a member of the Panel.

Reference was also made to a query raised at a previous meeting by a Member of the Committee with regard to the number of books that had been lost and it was indicated that a response to that question had not been received.

In responding the Chairman informed the meeting that he had been assured that the Panel would be in place by September, 2010 and also advised that a report on the matter would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

- (b) Reference was made to the petition submitted earlier in the meeting with regard to Abbey Crescent and the basis for the decision not to cut grass banks was queried. It was further commented that permission to enable residents to cut the grass themselves had been sought from the Council but that this had been denied on the grounds of health and safety.

In responding a Member commented that the decision not to cut grass affected the whole of Dudley and it had been made with a view to reducing costs. However, he undertook to raise the issue at a meeting to be held the following week.

The Area Liaison Officer requested that the questioner submit detailed written questions and a written response to those questions would be provided by the relevant Officer.

- (c) A resident commented on the lack of funding and facilities in the Cradley area and referred to “keep fit” equipment that had been placed in various parks in the Borough and queried as to why the equipment had not been made available in Homers Hill Park.

A Member indicated that the regeneration of Cradley should be included as an agenda item to the next meeting of the Committee, particularly as the next meeting was being held in the affected area.

In responding the Head of Economic Regeneration Delivery indicated that funding for wider regeneration of the area was reliant on developments and Section 106 funding and that discussions were being held with property developers and landowners. There was nothing further to report at this stage but he undertook to provide an update to a future meeting of the Committee including details on proposals for Foredraft Street.

The Chairman of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education informed the meeting that an update on the regeneration of local and district centres (including Cradley and Coseley) would be discussed at the Select Committee meeting in September, 2010. He suggested that Ward Members and members of the public attend that meeting to express their views. With regard to healthy hubs and keep fit equipment the Chairman of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education indicated that there was one healthy hub for each township and that Huntingtree Park had benefited in Halesowen.

The Chairman stated that when an update on the regeneration of Cradley was available it would be included on the agenda. He also gave an assurance that if there was a gap between meetings a Special Meeting of the Area Committee would be held. A Member was of the view that regeneration of Halesowen was important and that regeneration should not be singled out to a specific area.



Referred to the Unitarian Church on Park Lane, as mentioned at the previous meeting, and informed the Committee that a further two accidents had occurred causing further damage.

In responding the Group Engineer (Transportation) reported that the matter had been investigated but owing to the issue being regarded as “damage only” it was not regarded in the same light as that of an impact accident involving a collision. However, he undertook to provide a full report on the matter to the next meeting of the Committee.

(b) Councillor Body

Referred to blocked drains in the Ward and indicated that several complaints had been made for drains to be cleared but to no avail.

The Head of Executive Support undertook to investigate the matter.

(c) Councillor K Turner

Referred to the current programme for pedestrian crossings and indicated that it had been agreed that the A456 crossing would be included in this years programme and queried as to why it had not been included.

The Group Engineer (Transportation) indicated that his understanding on the matter was that it had been agreed to include the issue for investigation in the current year with a view to including on a future works programme. He also reported that the request had not been made by the due date to be included in this years work programme.

(d) Councillor Mrs Shakespeare

Made reference to current consultation that was taking place on double yellow and single yellow lines in Halesowen North and queried whether this was as a result from residents’ complaints.

The Group Engineer (Transportation) informed the meeting that a significant number of requests for Traffic Regulation Orders were received and that all enquiries were processed together and that if there were any objections they were reported to the Committee.

(e) Councillor James

Expressed disappointment that the crossing on Highfield Lane had been on the reserve list last year but had now been demoted and requested that the matter be reconsidered with a view to bringing it forward.

In responding the Group Engineer (Transportation) advised the meeting that the programme was prioritised each year and that in the current programme other projects had been considered more of a priority than Highfield Lane. In response to a comment made about traffic assessments not conforming to Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines it was reported that the methodology for prioritising crossings had been dropped by DfT and that Local Authorities had the power to justify crossings and that Dudley used a prioritisation system.

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16      RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE  
HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2010

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted informing the Committee of the written responses made to questions asked at the previous meeting.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, be noted.

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17      PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO ADULT AND CHILDREN'S  
SOCIAL CARE ESTABLISHMENTS 2009/10

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 during 2009/10, actions taken in response to Member visits and on nominations for Members to carry out visits to Social Care establishments during 2010/11.

In introducing the report the Quality and Complaints Manager thanked Members who had taken part in previous visits. He also explained that Members undertaking visits had to be Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted, be noted.
- (2) That Members wishing to undertake visits to Social Care establishments in the 2010/11 Municipal Year be requested to submit their names direct to the Quality and Complaints Manager (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services).

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## 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 which would address issues relating to areas identified as having poor air quality; an Air Quality Management Area Declaration leading to the Air Quality Action Plan; Air Quality Action Plan progress and actions designed to improve air quality within the Borough.

Arising from the presentation of the report the following comments were made:-

- Emissions from cars was a major contributing factor to air quality but people were forced to use their cars because the Local Authority were unwilling to invest in pedestrian crossings and to improve bus routes.
- The number of people and how the levels of poor air quality affected people, particularly in the Cradley and Foxcote area, was queried.
- Pollution on Windmill Hill was particularly high from bus fumes.
- A further detailed report should be provided to the Committee before support was given as the actions detailed in paragraph 10 of the report were disputed.

Arising from the comments made it was suggested that a link to the full report be emailed to Members of the Committee and that any queries or observations be reported individually to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration. The Principal Environmental Health Officer reported that it was intended to produce a summary of the Air Quality Action Plan and undertook to circulate a copy, when available, to Members of the Committee.

### RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted on the progress made with developing the Air Quality Action Plan be noted and that support be given for the proposed consultation for the Air Quality Action Plan as detailed in paragraph 9 of the report submitted.
- (2) That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to email a link to the full report, together with a summary of the Air Quality Action Plan, when available, to Members of the Committee.

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## HIGHWAYS MINOR WORKS CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2010/2011

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 Halesowen area for the 2010/2011 financial year.

### RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices attached to the report submitted, be noted and that all the Schemes set out in the Appendices, be supported.

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## HALESOWEN TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress made with regard to physical developments taking place within Halesowen Town Centre together with a verbal update on recent developments, the Halesowen Area Action Plan and Halesowen Bus Services. A briefing paper containing the pedestrian survey results on the Grange Roundabout was also circulated at the meeting.

The Head of Economic Regeneration Delivery updated Members on proposals for environmental improvements in the town centre and indicated that additional sponsorships from the business community in the town centre had been secured, which had allowed for the provision of additional planters and the reintroduction of annual bedding adjacent to St John's churchyard. Additional sponsorship for the "In Bloom" initiative continued to be sought and further external funding bids had been submitted. The replacement fingerpost in Fingerpost Gardens had been installed on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2010 and the works at Husky Dog Island had been completed, except for the planting, which has been deferred to the Autumn given the current exceptionally dry weather.

With regard to the Halesowen Area Action Plan, the Head of Executive Support reported that the Action Plan would supersede the existing approved Unitary Development for Halesowen Town Centre, and in essence, the Action Plan would provide the planning framework for all planning decisions in the Town Centre up to the year 2026. Following initial consultation, the Council had approved an Options document, which had been approved by Cabinet for public consultation. The document outlined the key issues in relation to the Town Centre over the next 15 to 16 years and a formal consultation period would take place between 30<sup>th</sup> July and 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2010. Following the consultation, an Area Action Plan would be published and it was anticipated that a report on the findings would be submitted to the Committee to be held in November, 2010.

The Group Engineer (Transportation) reported on the Halesowen bus services and indicated that a review of bus service coverage had been undertaken in response to concerns raised at a previous meeting. A number of issues had been identified to which clarification had been sought from the Passenger Transport Executive (Centro). He referred to a bus stop request at Colman Hill/Drews Holloway/Stourbridge Road and advised that Centro were looking into the possibility of installing an additional stop to improve bus access and journey times to Halesowen Town Centre. However, there could be safety issues due to the topography and alignment of the road as obstruction could be caused if a bus stop were to be installed and these needed to be considered in more detail.

The Group Engineer (Transportation) referred to the withdrawal of the bus service on Whittingham Road and indicated that Centro had confirmed that the Halesowen to Brierley Hill 210 service had been withdrawn following the Dudley Network Review in April 2008. The wider locality was now served by the 244 service from Dudley to Halesowen and Hayley Green. However, Centro had agreed that there were some properties beyond the school that exceeded 400 metres to access a bus stop. Additional bus stops could be installed on Old Hawne Lane at the Whittingham Road end, but the walking distance saved would only be minimal. Residents in the corner of Greenbush Drive and Moorfield Drive could benefit if pedestrian access were improved though to Fairmile Road to better access the 244 service. It was also reported that following prolonged negotiations with National Express, an agreement had been reached to reverse the direction of the 244 terminal loop, from 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2010 to provide a directly accessible service to the Causey Farm area that had been lost with the withdrawal of the 006 bus service.

The Group Engineer (Transportation) referred to the briefing paper on the Grange Roundabout pedestrian survey results and explained that comparison surveys had been carried out in June, 2010 to ascertain the demand and justification for signalised pedestrian crossings at the Grange Road and A456 (Kidderminster side) arms of the Grange roundabout. He explained about the two methods of appraisal and the results of the two appraisal methodologies suggested that neither location justified the investment in signalisation at this time.

Arising from the presentation of the reports the following comments and points were made:-

- Confirmation was sought on whether funds were still available to aid the Victorian Market – The Head of Economic Regeneration Delivery confirmed that funding was available from the Town Centre events budget.
- Reference was made to the completion of the works on Husky Dog Island and it was queried whether additional works had taken place and, if so, how it had been funded – The Head of Economic Regeneration Delivery confirmed that the scheme was the same scheme that had been discussed at the Town Centre Development Working Group
- It was acknowledged that a bus service was required to serve the Causey Farm area but it was pointed out that this should not be at the expense of Hasbury Farm. The reinstatement of the 006 bus service was sought and it was requested that £5000 be identified to aid a trial to take place for twelve weeks by Centro.
- It was pointed out that the pedestrian survey results had been available for over three weeks and it was queried as to why they had not been made available earlier to enable the Committee to consider the information – The Group Engineer (Transportation) indicated that the decision to circulate the results had only been made a few days ago
- The figures of the pedestrian survey were challenged, as they could not be accepted until information on how they had been calculated was made available. It was pointed out that vehicle speed would be higher on the A456 than the Grange roundabout, particularly on the approach to the roundabout – The Group Engineer (Transportation) explained that the pedestrian crossings survey had been undertaken by an accepted policy signed by the Cabinet Member for Transportation. This had followed the relaxation of DfT guidelines on Pedestrian x Vehicle<sup>2</sup> (PV<sup>2</sup>) test.

## RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report on the progress of development in Halesowen Town Centre and the verbal update given on recent developments, the Halesowen Area Action Plan, Halesowen Bus Services and the Grange roundabout pedestrian survey results, be noted.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on requests for funding from the Delegated Capital Budget.

Arising from the presentation of the report Members commented that it would be unfair to consider the applications prior to the capital allocation for 2010/11 being approved by the Council and that the applications should be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee. It was also requested that future reports include information on previous allocations that had been made to enable cross-referencing.

RESOLVED

- (1) That consideration of the applications for funding from the Delegated Capital Budget be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.
- (2) That the Area Liaison Officer be requested to include in future reports information on previous allocations that had been made.

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21 DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

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

9<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 – Colley Lane Primary School  
10<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 – Earls High School  
13<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 – Hurst Green Primary School  
9<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 – Lutley Community Centre

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22 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

As a way of giving additional publicity to meetings of the Council's Select Committees, details of Select Committee meetings had been included on the agendas of meetings of Area Committees.

The information given in respect of publicity for future meetings of Select Committees was noted.

The meeting ended at 8:50 pm

CHAIRMAN