

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday 9th September 2008, at 6.30 pm
at Saltwells Educational Development Centre,
Bowling Green Road, Netherton, Dudley

PRESENT: -

Councillor J R Davies (Chairman)
Councillor K Finch (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Ahmed, Mrs Aston, Cotteril, Mrs Coulter, J D Davies, Davis, A Finch, J Martin, Mrs Roberts and Sparks; Mrs Edwards and Ms Little

OFFICERS:

Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services (as Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management), Mr Williams (Early Years, Youth and Education Services, Directorate of Children's Services), and Mr Clark and Mr Sanders (both Directorate of Law and Property)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Inspector C Down – West Midlands Police
Mr D Hingley and Mr C Newton – West Midlands Fire Service
Ms A Grove – Early Years, Youth and Education Services, Directorate of Children's Services (for agenda item number 25)
Ms R Pickin – Dudley Council for Voluntary Services (for agenda item number 27)
6 members of the public.

22 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Ali, Waltho and Ms While-Cooper; Mrs Oakes and Mr Sadiq

23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member declared a personal or prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

24 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Committee held on 10th June 2008, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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YOUTH ISSUES

An oral report outlining changes to be made in youth provision in Dudley under a restructuring of the Youth Service was given by Dewi Williams of the Directorate of Children's Services.

The new structure, which would enable the Council to comply with government legislation and guidance on youth provision would change the manner in which the Dudley Youth Service was structured. Under the proposals, the Service would have two teams, one being the Targeted team, which would have a Borough-wide brief that would be driven by Dudley's Targeted Youth Support Plan; and the other being the Universal team, which would continue to be delivered through each of the five townships.

The proposed restructuring for Dudley had been supported by the Youth Provision Working Group of the Select Committee on Children's Services and the next step would be for the new structure to be consulted on. Consultees would include stakeholders, including the Council's partners, the Police and other bodies that wished to give feedback and consultation would include Area Committees.

The issue would be referred to the next meeting of the Committee for the purpose of consultation. Feedback from the consultation would be reported to the meeting of the Committee in January 2009. A two-year Action Plan for the Central Dudley area would also be submitted to the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the restructuring proposals for the Youth Service, together with the consultation arrangements referred to, be noted.

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PETITION

A petition from local residents requesting the provision of traffic calming measures in Dudley Wood Road, Netherton, comprising some 300 signatures, was received and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.

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DUDLEY COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE (DCVS) – "SMALL GROUPS" PROJECT

A presentation on this project was given by the Small Groups Development Officer of the DVCS, Ms Betty Pickin.

The project was a lottery-funded initiative, which aimed to provide tailored support to small and emerging local and voluntary groups. "Small Groups" were currently defined as organisations having an income of up to £15,000 per annum and were entitled to receive free support from the Small Groups Development Officer in respect of the issues indicated in paragraph 7 of the report now submitted. In addition, the project offered small groups room hire and photocopying facilities at a reduced rate.

Ms Pickin invited interested parties to contact her should they wish to take up the support offered.

RESOLVED

That the initiative be noted and that the Small Groups Development Officer be thanked for her presentation.

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PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the public in attendance spoke in support of the petition requesting the provision of traffic calming measures in Dudley Wood Road, Netherton, as reported under minute number 26. In this connection, they referred to the safety implications of speeding traffic along the road, particularly in the vicinity of the Victoria Inn Public House, where there was a sharp bend in the road; buses which regularly exceeded the speed limit; and noise pollution issues both generally and those at night, the latter being particularly acute. Reference was also made to the dangers of speeding traffic to the residents and visitors to the Nursing Home in the vicinity.

A suggestion was made that, as a measure that could be introduced with some immediacy, flashing speed warning lights could be installed at an appropriate location on the highway. The Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management) agreed to arrange for this and for other traffic control measures to be explored.

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WARD ISSUES

(Upon the issue reported under minute no. 29(f) being raised, Councillors Mrs Aston, Cotterill, Mrs Coulter and A Finch (Licensing and Safety Committee) and Mrs Roberts (Development Control Committee) declared a Prejudicial Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in view of their respective memberships of those Committees, and left the meeting room during consideration of the issue).

- (a) Councillor J Martin requested that an update to the Committee be submitted on the consolidated Traffic Regulation Order proposed for central Netherton.

- (b) Councillor J R Davies requested the convening of a meeting with relevant officers regarding the proposal for one way traffic in Union Street, Dudley.
- (c) Councillor Cotterill requested that action to be taken in respect of a tree in Queen Street, Quarry Bank, which elderly residents living nearby feared would fall on their properties. Councillor Cotterill suggested that the tree be cut down.
- (d) Councillor Cotterill asked to be informed of when the gardening project for elderly residents in the Netherton and Quarry Bank area would be operational.
- (e) Further to his request at an earlier meeting for the provision of disabled access to the Saltwells Nature Reserve on Quarry Bank Road, Councillor Cotterill suggested the metalling of the footpath running to Pedmore Road, which he considered could be utilised for this purpose.
- (f) Councillor Sparks referred to an issue he proposed to draw to the attention of the Local Government Association where the respective functions of a Metropolitan Local Authority in respect of planning consent and licensing could conflict insofar as they related to the opening hours of premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor. In this regard he instanced the possibility of a supermarket for which planning consent had been approved with specified hours of operation, only for the supermarket to apply to the Council, as Licensing Authority, for different hours for the sale of liquor. He asked the Committee to note the situation and indicated his intention to raise it within the Council in the future.
- (g) Councillor Sparks requested a report to be submitted to the Committee indicating the nature and the extent of materials and equipment re-cycled when Council houses were refurbished.
- (h) In referring to the recent marketing of Saltwells House, Councillor Sparks advocated strongly the retention of the property by the Council, in view of its importance in maintaining access by the public to Saltwells Wood.
- (i) Councillor Sparks requested the provision of dog litter bins in Saltwells Wood.
- (j) Councillor Ahmed requested that a feasibility study be made into the provision of a pedestrian crossing at Himley Road in the vicinity of Parkway Road.
- (k) In referring to a recent fatal accident at Dibdale Road, Councillor Mrs Roberts requested that an urgent assessment of the section of road concerned be made. She also reported a suggestion from local residents that flashing speed warning lights be installed.

- (l) Councillor Mrs Roberts requested that consideration be given to the extension of the guardrails situated outside Holly Hall School to give greater protection from road traffic to the pupils of the school.
- (m) Councillor Mrs Roberts expressed her thanks to the officers concerned for implementing the 20 mph at Scotts Green Close.
- (n) Councillor Davis advocated that the Council take stronger action against the tenants of Council houses who engaged in anti-social behaviour. In this regard, he recognised that similar problems were encountered in the private rented sector and questioned whether short-term tenancy agreements might be counter productive in that private properties were not always maintained adequately and that they did not encourage tenants to take pride in their properties.
- (o) Councillor Davis drew attention to a number of Public Houses in the St James' Ward, which he suspected were serving late.
- (p) Councillor Davis expressed his concerns regarding the availability of parking space for residents of the Council flats in the St James's Ward.
- (q) Councillor Davis reported concerns expressed by the Neighbourhood Watch on behalf of residents in St James's Road regarding the size of some London Plane trees located to the rear of a property in St James's Road.
- (r) In referring to what he considered a lack of facilities for young people, Councillor Davis reported that young people from Dudley were utilising the BMX track at Tipton. At this juncture, Councillor Cotterill reported that the upgrading of the BMX track at Black Horse in Saltwells was due to start in November.

MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 10TH JUNE 2008 IN RELATION TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

A report of the Director of the Environment was submitted giving an update on a number of issues raised at the meeting of the Committee held on 10th June 2008, which related to the services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

On the issue of Dibdale Road, referred to in the Minute 29(k) above, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management) confirmed that the road safety aspects, including that of speeding vehicles, would be investigated again in the light of the recent accident reported by Councillor Mrs Roberts. Regarding paragraph 6 of Appendix 1 to the report, on its being reported by Councillor Cotterill that complaints had been received from bus companies in respect of a pot hole in Gloucester Road, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management) agreed to raise the matter at an officers' meeting on the 2008/09 Highway Maintenance Programme being held the following day.

Regarding paragraph 18 of the report, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management) agreed to contact Ms Little with details in respect of the review of public conveniences currently being undertaken.

During consideration of this issue, Councillor Davis expressed his surprise that the public conveniences at Stafford Street had been closed as a result of anti-social behaviour, when the Magistrates' Court was in such close proximity.

Councillor K Finch requested that consideration be given to the adoption by the Council of Limepit Lane and Dibdale Lane for road safety reasons. In agreeing to look into the issue, and report accordingly to Ward Members, the Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Environmental Management) confirmed that, while Local Authorities had some discretion in the matter of road adoption, roads were required to be brought up to an adoptable standard and that the costs involved in relation to this aspect would fall on frontagers.

RESOLVED

That the report, together with the actions agreed, as indicated above, be noted.

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MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 10TH JUNE 2008 RELATING TO DIRECTORATES OTHER THAN THE DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted indicating progress on issues raised at the meeting held on 10th June 2008, other than those relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

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SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of forthcoming meetings of Select Committees were noted.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The dates and venues of future meetings scheduled for the Committee were noted.

The meeting ended at 7.10 p.m.

CHAIRMAN