

**Central Dudley Area Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

**Report Of The Director Of The Urban Environment**

**Urban Environment - Matters Raised At The Central Dudley Area Committee - 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

**Purpose Of Report**

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008 Central Dudley Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

**Background**

2. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities. This diverse range of technical services focus on regenerating the Borough, maintaining our environment to high standards, protecting our communities and promoting leisure and other community services for all.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both Members and the general public, relating to matters such as traffic management, leisure and recreation, regeneration and new development. Few enquiries can be answered immediately, with many prompting further investigation, feasibility studies and public consultation, prior to being reported back to Committee.
4. To keep Committee updated, progress reports are included as an appendix and the proposal resulting from the update is set out at the end of each paragraph.

**Finance**

5. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

**Law**

6. Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers the Council to provide recreational facilities in its area.
7. The Council is empowered to improve highways under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980.
8. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do anything that is likely to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough.
9. Traffic signs are provided under powers contained in Section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to regulations made by the Secretary of State for Transport.

10. Guardrails may be provided under Section 66 of the Highways Act 1990.
11. Pedestrian crossing facilities are provided under powers contained in Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to Regulations made by the Secretary of State.
12. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
13. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.
14. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its area to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.
15. Part IX of the Highways Act 1980 contains provisions relating to the planting, care and control of trees in or on land adjoining the highways.
16. In the care and maintenance of its trees, the Council will owe the normal duty of care under the common law principles of nuisance and negligence.
17. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.

### **Equality Impact**

18. The proposals take into account the Council's equal opportunities policies. The Directorate of the Urban Environment provides a diverse range of services that affect all sections of the community.

### **Recommendation**

19. That the proposals contained in Appendix 1 attached be approved.



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**John B Millar**

**Director of the Urban Environment**

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### **Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-**

1. Action Notes from 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008 Committee

**DIRECTORATE OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT - MATTERS RAISED AT THE CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE HELD 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008**

**1. BUNNS LANE - TRAFFIC CALMING**

**Background:** Councillor Ali raised concern that the traffic calming measures he requested at Bunns Lane remain unresolved. He once again reiterated his request for the traffic calming to be provided in light of the serious road traffic accident which occurred in Bunns Lane in 2007 and the potential for further major accidents along the road.

**Comments:** Regrettably, no action can be taken until the results of the legal case, currently taking place at Wolverhampton Crown Court, have been made known and analysed. However, progress is being made and any recommendations/action will be reported to a future Central Dudley Area Committee.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**2. WATSONS GREEN ROAD - ANTI-SKID MEASURES**

**Background:** Councillor Ali highlighted the need for anti-skid measures to be installed at Watsons Green Road opposite Malcolm's shop, in view of the difficulties caused by patrons parking outside the shop.

**Comments:** This location will be considered for a possible Local Safety Scheme during the 2009/10 financial year.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

**3. DUDLEY WOOD BMX TRACK UPGRADE**

**Background:** Councillor Cotterill raised concern that, whereas he had initially been advised that the upgrading of the BMX track at Dudley Wood would be completed by Easter, he has now been advised that completion will not be until September at the earliest.

**Comments:** DUE officers are working with ward councillors in the Dudley Wood area (mainly Cllr Cotterill) to extend the BMX facility that was established there a couple of years ago. This involves specialist BMX track providers and keen BMX participants and it is hoped that the improvements will be in place for the autumn.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

4. **PLAY STRATEGY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE - "BLACK HORSE" SITE, SALTWELLS**

**Background:** Councillor Cotterill raised the issue of monies the Council would receive under the Play Strategy for Young People, advocating that some of the funding be utilised to provide a multi purpose games area at the "Black Horse" site at Saltwells.

**Comments:** Play Pathfinder Projects are still being finalised, but it is proposed to implement 12 sites in Phase 1 by March 2009, then Phase 2 will be a further 16 sites by March 2010.

The fast-track sites are to be agreed by the Play Partnership in September this year.

DUE Officers are aware of the local residents' aspirations for a multi-use games area on this site and it will be submitted for consideration as part of the Phase 2 programme.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

5. **MARLOW CLOSE - OVERGROWN TREES**

**Background:** Councillor Cotterill requested that trees growing over the footpath at Marlow Close be trimmed.

**Comments:** The trees were trimmed on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

6. **GLOUCESTER ROAD RESURFACING**

**Background:** Councillor Cotterill referred to the proposed resurfacing of Gloucester Road and Bowling Green Road and noted that whilst Bowling Green Road has been attended to, Gloucester Road still needs to be dealt with.

**Comments:** Gloucester Road has been included in the 2008/09 Highway Maintenance Programme and the works will be completed before the end of the financial year.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

7. **PARK ROAD/MAUGHAN STREET, QUARRY BANK - ALLEYWAY**

**Background:** Councillor Sparks had expressed concern at a Partnership and Communities Together meeting that the alleyway between Park Road and Maughan Street, Quarry Bank, which serves no useful purpose, is providing a focus for the deposit of litter and other anti-social activities and asked for it to be stopped up.

**Comments:** The path is a Definitive Public Right of Way and thus any change to its status would require a legal order.

DUE Officers are in regular contact with the Police on such matters but this particular path has not been drawn to their attention as a problem. However, as a result of Cllr

Sparks' concern, an assessment will be carried out of the levels of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour that relates directly to this path.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 8. **LAWNSWOOD ROAD VEHICULAR PARKING**

**Background:** Councillor Sparks referred to problems reported to a meeting of Partnerships and Communities Together regarding vehicular parking in Lawnswood Road, Saltwells. Apparently, the land off Lawnswood Road is used by the community for playing sports and parking on the road by users of the land leaves little room for manoeuvre for passing vehicles. Councillor Sparks therefore advocated that the large grass verge alongside the road be authorised for vehicular parking, in order to enable the highway itself to be utilised more easily as a thoroughfare.

**Comments:** An estimate will be obtained for possible future conversion of the grass verge to vehicular hardstanding, following an initial feasibility study and consultation with DACHS.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 9. **BUFFERY PARK**

**Background:** Councillor J R Davies requested that an inspection of Buffery Park be made following the recent fair there. Cllr Davies was keen for any reinstatement to be implemented before the start of the new football season.

**Comments:** Despite heavy rain on the run up to the event very little damage was caused. The fair organisers also took care to minimise the damage caused by placing wooden boards along vehicle access routes. DUE Officers have since carried out their routine end of season reinstatement works to the football pitch and have found it to be of a satisfactory standard.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 10. **PRIORY ESTATE - TREE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME**

**Background:** Councillor Mrs Aston requested a progress report on the programme for tree maintenance agreed for the Priory Estate some 4 years previously.

**Comments:** The Arboricultural Team have surveyed the Priory Estate and highlighted trees that restrict access and create difficulties for local residents, pedestrians and motorists. In addition, a bat survey has also been commissioned to identify roosting habitat and evidence of bat movement.

Numerous trees have received attention in and around the Priory Estate over the last few years. However, there are still a number of trees that hinder access and, at the same time, enhance the estate in terms of natural beauty and provision of wildlife habitat.

Currently, we do not have a solution to this dilemma, but work is ongoing to hopefully find an amicable solution.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

11. **WORCESTER ROAD/DARBY ROAD - TRAFFIC CALMING**

**Background:** Cllr J D Davies requested that road calming measures be installed along Worcester Road and Darby Road to alleviate problems caused by boy racers.

**Comments:** Consideration can be given during the 2009/10 financial year for possible inclusion of Worcester Road and Darby End Road in a future year's annual Local safety Scheme programme.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

12. **MOUSESWEET CLOSE - LITTER BINS**

**Background:** Councillor J D Davies requested that litter bins be installed at Mousesweet Close.

**Comments:** Following some initial confusion in relation to the location, instructions have been issued to install a litter bin in Mousesweet Close as soon as possible.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

13. **SCOTTS GREEN CLOSE**

**Background:** Councillor Ahmed raised the issue of potential dangers from vehicles backing into Scotts Green Close from Holly Hall School. He asked for attention to be given to this potential road hazard.

**Comments:** There is no opportunity to undertake works in Scotts Green itself to address this issue due to the narrow carriageway width and close proximity of residential properties. Holly Hall School may be able to consider this issue when future funds become available.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

14. **WELLINGTON ROAD - ZEBRA CROSSING**

**Background:** Councillor Ahmed requested the installation of a pelican crossing along Wellington Road outside the Sikh Temple, in place of the zebra crossing located there, which he considered to be inadequate in terms of road safety.

**Comments:** Senior worshippers at the Gurudwara have expressed concern at using the zebra crossing because motorists do not always stop for them. Road Safety

Officers will therefore consider visiting the temple at a mutually convenient time to discuss crossing techniques with members of the Sikh community.

An investigation will commence during the 2009/10 financial year to determine the possibility of upgrading the zebra crossing in Wellington Road near to Swancote Road to a pelican crossing in a future annual Pedestrian Crossing Facility programme.

The question of motorists driving over the zebra crossing when pedestrians are on it will be brought to the attention of the Police.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### 15. **TOWER STREET NEW ZEBRA CROSSING**

**Background:** Councillor Ahmed stated that complaints have been received from the public regarding the safety of the new zebra crossing installed in Tower Street at its junction with Stone Street. He reported that the Police had concerns about the location of the crossing.

**Comments:** Councillor Ahmed has now met officers and police on site and as a consequence of this meeting it has been agreed to install extra warning signs and enhance the zig-zag white lining.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### 16. **MILKING BANK ESTATE PLAY FACILITIES - SIGNAGE**

**Background:** Councillor Mrs Roberts raised the need for clarification on whether or not there is an age restriction on the play facilities on the Milking Bank Estate and, if so, whether current signage is fit for purpose. Councillor Mrs Roberts understood that the Police also consider better signage would be useful.

**Comment:** The Council advocates a 14 year upper age limit on the majority of its sites throughout the Borough. This may change if a play area in question has been designed specifically for toddlers.

Officers are reviewing the need for appropriate signage and the difficult issues associated with enforcing age limits.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

#### 17. **RUSSELLS HALL HOSPITAL - PARKING**

**Background:** Councillor M Davis raised extreme concern that unauthorised vehicular parking at Russells Hall in the vicinity of the hospital is becoming worse, notwithstanding the parking restrictions in force. Cllr Davis advocated the introduction of residents only parking in the area of the hospital.

**Comment:** Residents only parking will not be considered in the immediate future as the initial phases of civil parking enforcement are currently being implemented. However, in the interim, civil parking attendants will regularly patrol the Russells Hall area.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 18. **DUDLEY PUBLIC TOILET FACILITIES**

**Background:** Councillor M Davis expressed concern at the lack of public toilet facilities in Dudley Town Centre at the top end of the town.

**Comment:** The Stafford Street toilets were closed following requests and advice from the Town Centre Manager and the local Police regarding their usage for regular acts of anti-social behaviour. As such, it is not currently the intention of the Authority to re-open them. Long-term usage of the facility will be considered as part of a Borough-wide review of public conveniences currently being undertaken. Alternative Council maintained public conveniences are available in Fisher Street and Flood Street.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 19. **DUDLEY BMX TRACK**

**Background:** Councillor M Davis raised the need for the installation of a BMX track for children in Dudley.

**Comment:** Officers are working with the BMX fraternity to extend and improve the existing BMX track at Dudley Wood which falls within the Central Dudley Committee Area. It is envisaged that this will be a high quality facility.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.

## 20. **DIBDALE ROAD - SPEEDING TRAFFIC**

**Background:** Councillor M Davis raised concern regarding cars speeding along Dibdale Road.

**Comment:** An investigation into speeding traffic along Dibdale Road will be undertaken in the 2009/10 financial year.

**Proposal:** That the Area Committee note the information contained in this paragraph.