

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 13th July, 2004, at 6.30 p.m.
The Straits Primary School, Lower Gornal

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs Ameson, Caunt, Davies, Evans, Fraser-Macnamara, Mrs Millward, Mottram, Mrs Ridley, Ryder, Simms, Stanley and Wright and, following his appointment as a co-opted member, Mr Round, together with Mr Freeman (Area Liaison Officer), Mr Butler (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Mr D Lowndes (Directorate of the Urban Environment), Mr Columbello (Directorate of Housing), Mr Pomford (Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning), Mr P Tart (Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services) and Mrs Holland (Directorate of Law and Property).

Approximately 85 members of the public were in attendance as well as approximately 15 young people.

1 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

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

(Councillor Mrs Ameson thereupon took the Chair)

2 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23rd March, 2004, be approved as a correct record and signed.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Davies and Stanley declared a Personal Interest in respect of questions raised at minute nos.12(c) (Land Issues – Brook Street/Bourne Street, Coseley), 12(g) (Public Forum – Planning Application No. PO4/1318) and minute 17 (BMX Track at Sedgley Hall Park Farm) in view of their membership of the Development Control Committee.

4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

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

5 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEE

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 to the report, submitted, be noted.

6 CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE 2004/2005

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of persons to serve as co-opted members of the Committee for the 2004/05 municipal year.

In presenting his report, Mr Freeman asked for the names of nominees for co-option.

RESOLVED

That Dr S Cartwright, Mr A Gray, Mr D Round and Mr C Hunt, be appointed to serve as co-opted members of the Committee for the municipal year 2004/2005.

7 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of working groups for the ensuing municipal year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the North Dudley Area Committee (Community Plan) Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year with its existing terms of reference and comprise Councillors Mrs Ameson, Davies, Evans, Ryder and Wright
- (2) That a North Dudley Area Committee (Capital Allocations) Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year with its existing terms of reference and comprise Councillors Mrs Ameson, Davies, Evans, Mrs Ridley, Simms and Stanley, together with any other Member of the Committee with an interest in a particular agenda item.
- (3) That a North Dudley Area Committee (Anti-Social Behaviour) Working Group be appointed to consider ad hoc issues, including a site for a Skatewheel Park in the North Dudley area, and that the working group comprise any member of the Committee who wishes to attend.

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APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on the appointment of representatives of the Committee to serve on outside organisations in the 2004/05 municipal year.

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the organisations below for the period indicated:

<u>Name of Organisation</u>	<u>Representatives appointed in the 2004/2005 municipal year</u>	<u>Term of Office</u>
<u>Social Inclusion</u>		
Baggeridge Miners Welfare Club	Councillors Mrs Millward and Councillor Wright	Annual
Sedgley Combined Charities	Councillor Caunt and Evans	4 years from 30.4.2002
<u>Community Associations</u>		
(a) Sedgley & District	Councillor Fraser-Macnamara	Annual

(b)	Upper Gornal Voluntary Recreational Association	Councillor Ryder	Annual
(c)	Northway	Councillor Evans	Annual
(d)	Hurst Hill	Councillor G H Davies	Annual
(e)	Rainbow (Coseley)	Councillor Mrs Ridley	Annual

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PRESENTATION

The Chairman of the Committee, presented an award to Mr Jack Brown, Secretary of the Sedgley and District Community Association, in respect of the Association's successful bid to the "Awards for All" section of the Lottery in the sum of £2,956.00.

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APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted regarding land and property within the Committee's area.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Lead Member for Leisure be recommended to refuse the sale of an area of land adjacent to 42 Rosemary Crescent, Woodsetton, for the erection of a garage, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons indicated in the report submitted.
- (2) That the Lead Member for Housing be recommended to refuse the sale of an area of land, presently leased to Sedgley and District Age Concern, Ettymore Road, Sedgley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted for the reasons indicated in the report.
- (3) That the Lead Member for Housing be recommended to approve the sale of an area of land adjacent to 25 Royston Way, Sedgley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Law and Property.

- (4) That the Lead Member for Housing be recommended to approve the sale to the applicant of an area of land adjacent to 9 Finchley Close, Lower Gornal, for the erection of a garage, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (5) That the application submitted, to declare an area of land at Turner Street, Lower Gornal, surplus to requirements, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, be deferred to allow further investigations to be made.
- (6) That the Lead Member for Housing be recommended to refuse the sale of an area of land on the corner of 16 Southall Crescent to the applicant, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, following objections received from the Committee.
- (7) That the Lead Member for Housing be recommended to approve a pedestrian access agreement to the applicant to provide for a paved pedestrian access to the Church situated in Caddick Street, Coseley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (8) That the Lead Member for Housing be recommended to approve the sale to the applicant of an area of land fronting 36 The Walk, Sedgley, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Law and Property.

(The applicant was in attendance at the meeting and circulated a letter to the Members of the Committee and spoke in support of his application).

- (9) That the Lead Member for Housing be recommended to refuse the sale of an area of land to the rear of 19 Udall Road, Coseley, attached to the report submitted, following objections raised by Members of the Committee.

Ms J Bennett, Neighbourhood Manager of The Oval, Lower Gornal, assisted a group of young people aged 4 – 11 years and 12 – 16 years in making a presentation to the Committee outlining the types of leisure provision they would like to see made available for young people in the local area. Visits to other projects had been made to observe the kind of activities available to young people in other areas.

A letter was also circulated to the Committee from Sedgley Youth Action Forum calling for support from the local community in order to buy equipment for the youth centre.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Chairman's thanks be extended to Ms Bennett and the young people for an informative presentation.
 - (2) That the presentation be noted.
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PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) The issue of the illegal parking of taxi cabs in Ettymore Road, close by the Witherspoons Public House, was raised by a member of the public.

The Chairman responded that a letter had been sent to the Taxi companies, following complaints from local residents.

Inspector Bailey commented that the taxi drivers provided a useful service, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights, by providing the means to quickly disperse people from the area thereby preventing a build up of people in the area, a known cause of incidents of anti-social behaviour. She agreed to discuss with the local authority alternative ways of policing the area.

The Chairman asked for an updated report to be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee.

- (b) The issue of the possible closure of Woodsetton School was raised by a member of the public.

In response, Mr Freeman explained about the consultation exercise that was being undertaken. He stated that if any members of the public wished to receive a copy of the consultation documents they should give their name and address to the Clerk to the Committee following the meeting.

- (c) Councillors Davies and Stanley declared a Personal Interest in the following question, as detailed in agenda item 3 above and left the room whilst the item was discussed.

The issue of land at the rear of Brooke Street/Bourne Street, Coseley, was raised by a member of the public who stated that a planning application had been received appertaining to the north western side of the site. Concerns were expressed with regard to the toxicity and methane hazards present on the site. It was also pointed out that the site was a haven for a badgers' set. The Committee were asked to reiterate their support that the area should not be built upon or that it be landscaped as "wetlands". Concern was also expressed with regard to pile driving taking place on the site and hazards that this could cause by allowing methane gas to escape.

In response the Committee unanimously reiterated their support previously given to local residents who had called for assurance that the land in question not be granted any planning permission whatsoever.

- (d) The issue of the “High Trees and Hedges” legislation was raised by a member of the public. In response Mr P Tart (Directorate of Law and Property) stated that the new legislation would not be in place until probably the end of 2004 and that as soon as confirmation of the details was to hand, he would report back to the Committee.
- (e) The issue of changes to Borough boundaries was raised by the Head Teacher of Coseley School. In response, Councillor Caunt explained the recent boundary changes implemented within the Dudley Borough and the differences between Borough boundary changes and Parliamentary boundary changes in that although a Wolverhampton MP may represent a Dudley Borough Ward in Parliament, this did not mean that the Ward in question would be moved out of Dudley to the control of Wolverhampton Council. He stated that the Commission was an independent body charged with the task of ensuring each MP had a comparable number of voters in their Constituency.

Councillor Caunt further stated that it was most likely that there would be a Public Enquiry if the proposal went ahead.

Councillor Mrs Ridley stated that a letter had already been sent on behalf of the people of Coseley East, by Ward Councillors, objecting to any incorporation of Coseley East into Wolverhampton for parliamentary purposes.

- (f) The issue of Bradley’s Lane was raised by members of the public in response to which Mr Butler (Directorate of the Urban Environment) confirmed that a site meeting had taken place on 17th May 2004 with Ross Cranston, MP, the Leader of Sandwell Council, his Head of Transport, Ward Members, Mr John Millar (Director of the Urban Environment, Dudley MBC) and local residents. The following actions had resulted
 1. The Police had been requested to monitor the Bradley’s Lane safety camera more frequently
 2. The Department of Transport had been consulted and had confirmed that it might be possible to introduce a part-time weight restriction order in Bradley’s Lane.

3. An Officer meeting had taken place with Sandwell MBC regarding the issue of a part-time weight restriction being imposed during the hours of darkness; further consultations would now be held with Wolverhampton City Council, Sandwell MBC and Walsall MBC.
 4. The Police had agreed to assist in a night-time traffic survey of HGV's (Heavy Goods Vehicles) should it be considered necessary.
- (g) Councillors Davies and Stanley declared a Personal Interest in (this question, as detailed in agenda item 3 (above) and left the room whilst the item was discussed.

The issue of Planning Application number PO4 /1318 in respect of the erection of dwellings on a former caravan storage site in Upper Ettingshall Road and a proposed alteration of buildings into storage for a "shop" (off licence), was raised by a member of the public. It was considered that the application was "faulty" in that it did not state or depict other buildings in the immediate area, namely, the existing off-licence and a public house both of which had been associated in the past with anti-social behaviour and street drinking. The objections raised were specifically in respect of a proposed extension to the off-licence that was operated more in the manner of a liquor warehouse than an off-licence.

Councillor Mrs Ridney offered her support to the objections raised by members of the public and, following discussion, the Committee agreed that a Letter of Objection would be sent by the Area Liaison Officer on behalf of the Committee, conveying the Committee's objections to the application.

- (h) The issue of a proposed site for a doctor's surgery in Sedgley was raised by a member of the public who asked whether a site had yet been identified. Councillor Caunt responded that he was in correspondence with architects regarding a possible site and was liaising with the architects at this time.
- (i) The issue of Dormston Youth Centre was raised by Mr D Round. In response, Mr Freeman (Area Liaison Officer), referred the meeting to the Capital Allocations report to be considered later in the meeting. He reported that the facility would not now be available until September as an asbestos certificate needed to be received.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on applications received for funding from the capital budget allocation of the Committee.

In presenting his report, Mr Freeman sought the Committee's agreement to the allocation of the under-spend carried over from 2003/04. He also advised the Committee of applications received since the last meeting of the Committee.

Mr Freeman also reported that a sum of £40,000 had been allocated to the Committee for 2004/2005 municipal year and that each Ward would be allocated the sum of £10,000 which would be added to the surplus carried forward from 2003/2004 for each Ward.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted on the financial position relating to capital allocation requests made to the Committee, be noted and that the outstanding applications, referred to in paragraphs 13 to 17 and 19 of the report submitted be referred to the Capital Allocations Working Group for consideration and determination.
- (2) That the proposal for the re-siting of a mobile unit to the Dormston Youth Club site, as set out in paragraph 18 of the report submitted, in the sum of £11,666, towards the total cost of £26,400, for the part-demolition of the existing building, the relocation of an existing mobile unit to the site and for the connection of services to the mobile unit be supported and, following consultation between the Area Liaison Officer and the Chairman, the Capital Allocations Working Group be requested to approve immediate payment of funding.
- (3) That, due to the Ward boundary changes that had taken place since the last municipal year, the surplus capital funding carried forward from 2003/2004, be split equally between all four Wards and that the further £40,000 awarded for the municipal year 2004/2005 also be split equally between the four North Dudley Wards.
- (4) That the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to make such payments as are recommended by the Capital Allocations Working Group and supported by the Ward Members for the relevant Wards, without reference back to the Committee.

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RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED AT PREVIOUS MEETING

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the current status of responses to questions posed at previous meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and appendix to the report, submitted on the current status of responses to questions posed at previous meetings of the Committee, be noted.

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PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO SOCIAL SERVICES ESTABLISHMENTS APRIL 2003 – APRIL 2004 AND NOMINATION OF MEMBERS FOR 2004/2005

A report of the Director of Social Services was submitted on the progress of visits to Social Services establishments undertaken by Members, the actions taken in response to those visits and comments made and identifying issues arising from the rota visits.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report and Appendix 1 to the report submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the protocol concerning Elected Member visits to Social Services Establishments, attached as Appendix 2 to the report submitted, be endorsed.
- (3) That Councillors Mrs Ameson, Mrs Ridney, Simms, Stanley, Ryder and Wright, be nominated as the North Dudley Area Committee representatives to visit Social Services establishments for the 2004/05 year.

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HIGHWAYS MINOR WORKS CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2004/2005

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the proposed programmes of work for Local Safety Schemes, Pedestrian Crossings and Safer Routes to School within the North Dudley Area for the 2004/2005 financial year.

In presenting the report, Mr Lowndes stated that the Local Safety Scheme proposed for Dibdale Street and Dibdale Road, together with the Himley Road scheme near Coopers Bank Road, would be submitted to Central Dudley Area Committee for approval, as these schemes were affected by the recent ward boundary changes.

Mr Lowndes also verbally reported a verbal report was received on the Bath Street/Beacon Street consultation with Wolverhampton City Council.

A member of the public pointed out that the Dudley Road pelican crossing referred to in Appendix B to the report submitted, as being sited in Dudley Road was actually sited in Tipton Road.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, subject to clarification as to the actual site of the Pelican crossing referred to in Appendix B to the report submitted, the proposed Local Safety Schemes and Safer Routes to School initiatives, outlined in Appendices A and C to the report submitted, be supported.
- (2) That the verbal update given on the results of the Bath Street/Beacon Street, Sedgley, consultation be noted.

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BMX TRACK, SEDGLEY HALL PARK FARM

(Councillors Davies and Stanley, having previously declared a Personal Interest in this matter, left the room whilst the matter was discussed).

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on a proposal to develop a BMX track at Sedgley Hall Park Farm.

In presenting the report, Mr D Lowndes, (Assistant Director, Directorate of the Urban Environment), updated the meeting on the current position stating that not many sites had been identified as being suitable in the North Dudley area. Councillor Mrs Millward stated that a site in Humphrey Street had earlier been the subject of a feasibility study and Mr Lowndes responded that he would investigate the outcome of the feasibility study.

Following a further short discussion, it was

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted on a site for a BMX track for the North Dudley area be noted and that this matter be further discussed at a meeting of the Working Group appointed to consider ad hoc issues, with a report back to a future meeting of this Committee.

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LIVEABILITY FUND AWARD

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the Council's two year Liveability Project to improve parks and open spaces within the Borough.

In presenting the report Mr D Lowndes explained that the Council were seeking to raise interest in local parks and that Dudley had been awarded £3.4 million by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister from the Liveability Fund to improve and regenerate parks and open spaces within the Borough. In order to access the money it had been stipulated by the government that "Friends" and "User Groups" should be established in order to administer the process.

Councillor Mrs Millward stated that there was a lack of volunteers for such initiatives that needed to be addressed.

Following a discussion, during which ideas for forming Friends and User Groups were put forward by members of the public and Committee Members, it was

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted be noted and that Members explore ways of enthusing the general public to form Friends and User Groups in order that funding from the £3.4 million Liveability Award could be accessed.

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WARD ISSUES

1. Councillor Stanley raised the issue of the Roberts Street School Environment Zone, stating that a problem had been encountered with a "Right of Way" known locally as "Blackie" by vandalism. Only part of the "right of way" was now in use and Councillor Stanley asked whether a gate could be fitted to prevent vandals from entering and damaging the Zone.

In response, Mr Freeman (Area Liaison Officer), agreed to investigate the matter and respond to Councillor Stanley direct.

2. Councillor Simms raised the issue as to why there were no road markings on the south bound High Street approach to the Bull Ring in Sedgley.
3. Councillor Simms raised the issue of Richmond Road being badly in need of resurfacing.
4. Councillor Mrs Ridney raised the issue of duplicate house numbers in respect of Brunel Court and Bradley's Lane, where mail was being delivered to the wrong addresses. She requested that the installation of appropriate signage be investigated.
5. Councillor Mrs Millward raised the issue of the Abbey Street Recreation area and, in particular, the fact that there was only one goal post. She asked when a second goalpost would be fitted.
6. Councillor Mrs Millward raised the issue of illegal parking on the footpath in the Straits close to The Alley. She called on the police to take the appropriate action to prevent parking in this area.
7. Councillor Ryder raised the issue of the provision of a patrolled crossing at the junction of Wolverhampton Road and Ridgeway.
8. Councillor Stanley raised the issue of illegal parking on the footpath in Vale Street, Duke Street, Hill Street and Holloway Street.
9. Councillor Evans raised the issue of telecommunication masts and the fact that masts over 16 metres in height required planning permission. Planning Permission was also required for any modifications to older masts.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN