

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Thursday 2nd April, 2009, at 7.00 p.m.
at the Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford

PRESENT:-

Councillor D Blood (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs E Blood, Ms Boleyn, Foster, Mrs Greenaway, Mrs D Harley, Ms Harris, Islam, Mrs Jordan, Miller, Nottingham, Southall and Tyler.

Officers

The Director of the Urban Environment (as Area Liaison Officer), Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety), Manager of Executive Support Team – (all Directorate of the Urban Environment), The Assistant Director of Children's Specialist Services, The Area Team Leader, (Early Years, Youth and Education Services/Youth and Community Team), (Both Directorate of Children's Services), The Assistant Director of Housing, and The Area Community Renewal Officer (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Senior Account Manager, Marketing and Communications (Chief Executive's Directorate), Senior Solicitor, and Miss K Fellows (Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources).

Also in attendance

Inspector S Bradbury – West Midlands Police.

together with 41 members of the public.

71

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Harley and Mrs Wilson and Mr D Horrocks the co-opted Member.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors D Blood, Mrs E Blood, Nottingham and Southall declared personal and prejudicial interests in relation to Agenda Item No 11 – Application in respect of Land and Property owned by the Council – as they were members of the Kingswinford Conservative Club.

Councillor Mrs Harris declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 13 – Ward Issues to be raised by Members of the Committee – as she had been appointed by the Council as a member of the Nine Locks

Community Association.

Councillor Southall declared personal interests in relation to the following:-

Agenda Item No. 8 – Memorial to Round Oak Steel Workers – as a member of the Development Control Committee, in that the matter might be referred to that Committee.

Agenda Item No. 10 – Capital Allocations – Applications by Stourbridge Radio Limited – as a member of the Development Control Committee, the matter being the subject of a planning application. Himley Hawks Football Club as a member of the council of the Birmingham County Football Association, to which this club would be affiliated. The Skate Park – as a member of the Development Control Committee – as an application may be made by them for planning permission.

Agenda Item No. 11 – Application in respect of Land and Property owned by the Council – as a member of the Development Control Committee, and took no part in the consideration of these matters.

Councillor Tyler declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 10 – Capital Allocations – 1st Wall Heath Scout Group – as a committee member of the Wall Heath Cyber Centre.

73. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29th January, 2009, be approved as a correct record and signed.

74. PETITIONS

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- (a) A petition from The Friends of Broadfield House Glass Museum on behalf of The Glass Association was submitted by Councillor Tyler, regarding Broadfield House Glass Museum, Kingswinford. The petition was received and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.
- (b) A petition from residents of Kingswinford was submitted protesting about the possible closure of the access to and from Wartell Bank and Dawley Brook Road, Kingswinford. The petition was received and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.

75.

YOUTH ISSUES

- (a) The Area Liaison Officer reported on the Joint meeting of the Community Renewal and Young People's Working Groups that had taken place on 30th March, 2009 and referred to the various matters raised and discussed at the meeting in particular:-
- The position in relation to a private company making an application for planning permission in relation to the provision of an indoor skate park facility in Little Cottage Street, Brierley Hill.
 - The position for a Detached Youth Worker for the Hawbush area of the Brierley Hill Area Committee area that had been re-advertised in view of the previous successful applicant declining the position;
 - The verbal presentation of Mr S Ashby – Project Manager for the Hawbush Project, advising on the project and the potential benefits from mentoring skills;
 - Children's Services training for fourteen to seventeen year olds, advising that Children's Services were working with employers including Dudley Zoo, The Fire Service and St Thomas Network in Dudley.
- (b) In responding to a question from Councillor Islam, Ms J Garwood, the Area Team Leader, (Early Years, Youth and Education Services/Youth and Community Team), (Directorate of Children's Services) indicated that it was hoped that the detached Youth Worker should be in post by June, 2009.
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PUBLIC FORUM

Consideration was given to the following written/oral questions raised:-

- (a) A question was raised by a member of the public relating to the regeneration of Brierley Hill High Street.

The Area Liaison Officer responded advising that the Area Action Plan had been well advanced, and following the outcome of this, Planning Policy would be put into place.

The report and presentation of the Principal Conservation Officer and Borough Archaeologist, to a previous Brierley Hill Area Committee was referred to, which had included details of the regeneration areas that would revitalise the High Street.

The Area Liaison Officer stated that should members of the public wish to discuss regeneration of the High Street further if they supplied their details he would arrange for them to be contacted at a later date.

- (b) In responding to a question from a member of the public in relation to the Brierley Hill Bypass, the Area Liaison Officer stated that this would open up opportunities for future development, advising that the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership would shortly be formed, and schools, churches, employees and members of the public would become involved. It had been noted that the High Street was less congested and that the Council were working with local traders.
- (c) Arising from a question by a member of the public relating to the need for industrial regeneration, the Area Liaison Officer responded stating that the Council's Planning Policy framework designated areas of land for potential industrial use as well as retail development and that there was cross party support for effective regeneration across the Borough.
- (d) Several questions were raised by members of the public in relation to the Broadfield House Glass Museum. The Area Liaison Officer responded by stating that a decision in relation to closure had not been made nor would it be until a feasibility study had been undertaken and a public consultation had taken place. Professional advice was being sought as to who should be instructed to carry out the feasibility study. Reference was also made that, in order to provide consistent responses in relation to Broadfield House, the Council's Marketing and Communications Department were dealing with the vast majority of the Broadfield House Glass Museum enquiries, however, Councillors were fully entitled to respond to any enquiries within their own right and had done so over the preceding two months, a member of Marketing and Communications was present at the meeting to answer questions the public may have had.

It was reported that the Feasibility Study and all associated background papers was scheduled to be reported to Cabinet in October, 2009.

Following further discussions in relation to a Special Meeting of the Area Committee in order to discuss the issue in relation to Broadfield House it was:-

RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted and that the Cabinet member for Environment and Culture be recommended to support a special meeting of the Area Committee as an integral part of the feasibility studies public consultation.

- (e) A late question from a member of the public was received as to when the Council would be introducing plastic recycling for residents and cardboard recycling facilities at the Merry Hill shopping centre for traders. The Assistant Director - Environmental Management would provide a written response to the questioner.
- (f) A late question from a member of the public was received requesting recommendations as to the action that could be taken in relation to the removal of stray horses. The Head of Museums, Greenspaces and Bereavement Services would provide a written response to the questioner.

77.

COMMUNITY RENEWAL

The area Community Renewal Officer gave a verbal update in relation to the Brierley Hill Area Committee Community Renewal Working Group, advising that there had been three meetings during the course of the Municipal year. In accordance with the contents of the Community Renewal Plan, work continued to be progressed with partners, elected members and the community to deal with issues that were detrimental to the community.

The Community Renewal Officer made particular reference to:-

- Work continuing to be targeted on getting people back into employment and on the City Strategy in relation to this;
- The initiatives to tackle crime and anti social behaviour, including a major crime operation;
- Continuing work with the Pathfinder Strategy in order that play areas could be improved including the provision of new equipment;
- An operation to remove graffiti and litter picking that had taken place;
- The Hawbush Urban Garden project, that continued to encourage people to live a more healthy lifestyle.

Members praised the area Community Renewal Officer for the work that he had undertaken within the Brierley Hill Area Committee area, particularly in relation to the Pensnett Beat Sweep Operation which had resulted in a reduction in crime within the area, and also on the Look out Project, whereby he had spoken to young people in order to engage with them.

78. MEMORIAL TO THE ROUND OAK STEEL WORKERS.

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the results of the public consultation to determine the preferred positioning of the Round Oak Steel Workers Memorial.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended to agree that the memorial be sited at Site B as indicated in the report in accordance with the consultation results.

79. ST GEORGE'S DAY PARADE

The Area Liaison Officer presented a verbal report on the arrangements for the St George's Day Parade to be held in Brierley Hill. The event would take place on Saturday 25th April, 2009 and details had been circulated to members and the public present in respect of the extensive arrangements, road closures and posters for the day.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted.

80. CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted in respect of recommendations made at a meeting of the Committees Capital Allocations Working Group held earlier that day on applications that had been received for a capital allocation.

The Area Liaison Officer, in informing the Committee of the recommendations made also referred to updated requests received from 1st Wall Heath Scouts, Himley Hawks Football Club, The Skate Park, and Age Concern.

It was reported that arrangements to deal with applications received for capital funding in the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chairman at the first meeting of the Area Committee in the new municipal year had been agreed whereby that the Area Liaison Officer, and Councillors Blood, Foster and Tyler would be authorised to consider and determine any applications received for capital funding during the above period.

RESOLVED

1. (a) That the sum of £4,572 be approved in respect of the request made by the St Mary's Church, Kingswinford in order to purchase a new stage in the church centre, subject to provision of the accounts for the year ending April, 2008.
- (b) That the application submitted on behalf of Making People Happy Limited for the sum of £3,188 to purchase various items that would support all the IT tasks relating to their Moving Library Project be deferred, pending the submission of additional information.
- (c) That the application submitted on behalf of Stourbridge Radio Limited for the sum of £5,000 representing a part contribution to purchase a Studio to Transmitter Link Unit be deferred pending the outcome of the planning application for re-siting.
- (d) That the application submitted on behalf of Waterfront Cricket Club for the sum of £2,772 to purchase a bowling machine and portable scoreboard be deferred pending the obtaining of a base within the Brierley Hill Area Committee area, when a future application should be made.
- (e) That in respect of the application received from Wall Heath Evangelical Free Church in the sum of £1,465, a maximum offer of £2,000.00 be offered subject to the Church reporting back with details on the capital items required.
- (f) That the sum of £5,000.00 be approved in respect of the request made by 1st Wall Heath Scout Group as a contribution to part fund the 'IT Resource Centre Project' subject to the provision as to how the overall project would be funded.
- (g) That the sum of £1,026 be approved in respect of the request made by Himley Hawks Football Club to purchase various items of training equipment (marker cones, hurdles, slalom poles, goal post sets, nets, corner poles, tactic board, kit bag, etc) and a secure storage to keep them in subject to legal checks being undertaken in relation to its affiliation with Birmingham County Football Association.

- (h) That the application submitted on behalf of The Skate Park for the sum of £5,000 to assist with the purchase of ramps for the proposed indoor skate park be deferred pending a decision in relation to the planning application, and further financial information.
 - (i) That the sum of £3,289 on behalf of Age Concern Dudley to purchase essential kitchen equipment be approved in principle subject to confirmation of its location.
2. That, in the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chairman at the first meeting of the Area Committee in the new municipal year, the Lead Officer, in consultation with Councillors Blood, Foster and Tyler, be authorised to consider and determine any application received for capital funding and that the decisions made, be reported to the first meeting of the Committee in the new municipal year.

81. APPLICATION IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL.

(Having previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest Councillors D Blood, Mrs E Blood, Nottingham and Southall left the meeting).

In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman it was agreed that Councillor Ms Harris be elected the Chairman for consideration of this item only.

(Councillor Ms Harris in the Chair)

A report of the Interim Director of Law and Property was submitted on an application received from the Kingswinford Conservative Club to purchase council owned land.

In presenting the report the Senior Solicitor referred to the appendices to the report, and more particularly the plan attached outlining the land requested.

Resulting from the presentation of the report there was a discussion and comments were made.

RESOLVED

That arising from the consideration given to this application the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to refuse the application received, for the reasons stated in the report submitted.

82.

MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING HELD ON 29TH JANUARY, 2009.

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at its meeting held on 29th January, 2009.

The Area Liaison Officer gave a verbal update in relation to questions raised at the previous area Committee on the possible closure of Wartell Bank from Dawley Brook. He confirmed that a meeting had been held with local businesses and residents on the 4th December, 2009 when traffic managers, officers and nine representatives from Dawley Brook/Wartell Bank were also in attendance. There were also proposals that a comprehensive report taking into account the views of those who wished the road closure and those who did not would be submitted to a future meeting of the Area Committee who could then make recommendations to the Cabinet member for Transportation for a decision.

Members of the public present who were local residents, raised concerns in relation to flooding, indicating that, when this last occurred, there were problems with access routes to Dawley Brook, and that a potential road closure would affect access by residents should flooding occur in the future. Photographs were handed to the members of the flooding.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted, on a number of issues raised at the meeting of this Committee held on 29th January, 2009, be noted.
 - (2) That the Area Liaison Officer be requested to report to a future meeting of the Area Committee on recommendations relating to Wartell Bank and Dawley Brook.
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83.

WARD ISSUES

Written responses to the Ward issues raised by Councillors Foster and Mrs Jordan, in advance of the meeting were circulated to Members and the audience prior to the start of the meeting. The questions received and responses given were as follows:-

- (a) What are the rights of residents whose drives are parked on by visitors to the hospital.

Response:

Whilst appreciating and understanding the frustration and anger that this situation would cause, this was strictly a private matter as the Highway Authority would have no jurisdiction over the land in question.

In view of the above it would be suggested that the Area Committee's legal representative be asked to advise on the legal procedures that an individual could pursue.

In responding to this question further the Senior Solicitor advised that the owner/occupier should seek legal redress either by consulting the Citizens Advice Bureau or a Solicitor.

- (b) There have been complaints received in relation to the speed and reliability of hardware in libraries. What is being done to address this?

Response:

The Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning Division of the Council have been aware for some time that the peoples' network computers need replacing in all of the libraries.

Six new computers have been installed at Wordsley Library as part of the refurbishment there and the team have installed ten new computers at Halesowen Library as part of the re-arrangements of the library.

As part of the Library Modernisation Programme the worst of the computers in all libraries would be replaced over the next few months.

- (c) What progress is being made on the possible introduction of safety measures at the junction of Station Road/Gorsty Avenue

Response:

A preliminary design to introduce a series of improved signs/road markings in this area has been submitted for an independent Road Safety Audit with a view to the proposals being implemented later this year. Thereafter, subject to the necessary resources being available, it is normal practice for Ward Members to be advised accordingly before any works commence on site.

- (d) Is there a possibility that a multi-use games area could be provided near to Brockmoor Community Centre for use by local children?

Response:

Currently, there is a MUGA at the Fens Pool Centre that is just to the left of the middle pool of the three pools at Fens. The Brockmoor Community Centre was near Pheasant Street which was approximately half a mile from the Fens Pool Centre. Even closer to the Brockmoor Community Centre would be the Dell Synthetic Turf Pitch and that would be a focus of activity for the healthy towns project. There is also a MUGA at Chapel Street in Brierley Hill which would be a similar distance from Brockmoor Community Centre to the Fens Pool Centre.

The issue of siting a multi use games area would be investigated in the context of the above.

In responding further the Area Liaison Officer stated that various reports and papers would be available in relation to the Healthy Towns bid and he would email these direct to Councillors of the Committee should they request him to do so. In addition to this it was reported that Section 106 monies would be sought in order to build multi-use games areas where new housing developments are built.

- (e) In response to a question from Councillor Ms Harris in relation to the Nine Locks Community Centre regarding finding an urgent solution in relation to the level of the pavement outside the Centre, which had been restricting access to wheelchair users, the Area Liaison Officer stated that he would investigate the matter and respond direct to Councillor Ms Harris.
- (f) Councillor Islam referred to the planning application for re-siting the Bridge Radio Station Aerial referred to earlier in the meeting, and as members of the Committee agreed to support Councillor Islam in objecting to the re-siting at Dene Court, Chapel Street, the Chairman asked Councillor Islam to convey the objections to the relevant Planning Officer for inclusion in the report to the Development Control Committee.

84. DATES OF FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

As members were aware the dates of meetings of the Committee in 2009/10 would be determined at the Annual Meeting of Council in May, 2009.

85. COMMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN

This being the last meeting of the municipal year, the Chairman thanked Officers and colleagues for their hard work and members of the public for attending Area Committee meetings throughout the municipal year.

The meeting ended at 9.05 p.m.

CHAIRMAN