

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE – 2nd OCTOBER 2008

REPORT OF THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA LIAISON OFFICER

MATTERS RAISED AT THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the Brierley Hill Area Committee on the 1st July 2008, that relate to services provided by the Council.

BACKGROUND

2. The Council provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both members and the general public, relating to a range of services. 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, a progress report is attached.

FINANCE

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

LAW

6. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders are largely governed by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
7. Provisions relating to Highways including trees thereon are contained in the Highways Act 1980.
8. Provisions relating to the Council's Housing stock are contained in the Housing Act 1985.
9. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its areas to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.

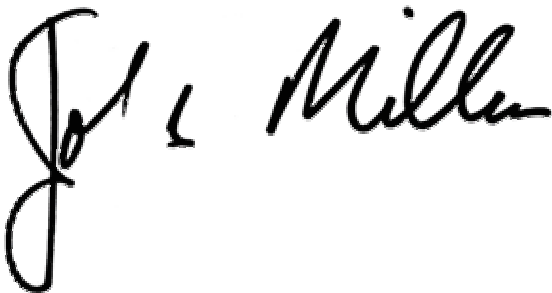
10. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
11. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.
12. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.
13. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area.

EQUALITY IMPACT

13. This report is consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity policy. There is no direct effect on children or young people.

RECOMMENDATION

14. The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.



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Brierley Hill Area Committee Liaison Officer

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List of Background Papers

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REPORT OF THE AREA LIAISON OFFICER

PETITIONS

From Councillor Ms Foster in respect of pedestrian safety measures at Station Road, Brockmoor, which had been referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for attention and reply.

Response:

Station Road is a very busy road making it difficult for traffic emerging from Gorsty Avenue and for pedestrians crossing Station Road, particularly for young children attending Brockmoor Primary School.

The Council has already approved its programmes of work for the current financial year, with a list of reserve schemes pending if additional resources become available.

Whilst the general road layout and alignment of Station Road and Gorsty Avenue is not ideal for traffic emerging from the side road, it is unlikely that any other measures at the junction itself would improve the forward visibility for approaching motorists. Traffic Engineers consider that the introduction of some advance warning signs and improved road markings could be helpful in at least raising driver awareness of the junction. Arrangements for this possibility will be looked at in more detail.

Concerning the issue of pedestrians crossing the road, Engineers feel that the same forward visibility problems along Station Road will also make it difficult to introduce a crossing facility in this area. However, the site will be added to the list of assessments that will be carried out later this year.

This process will also take into account the justification and relative priority for a crossing to be introduced at this location so that consideration can then be given as to whether this is a potentially suitable scheme to be included in a future programmes of work.

MATTERS RAISED AT THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 3RD APRIL 2008

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted updating the Committee on issues raised at its meeting held on 3rd April 2008

Particular comments were made on the following:

Issues:

Shops at Beech Road, Kingswinford – it was reported that a consultation letter had now been sent out to traders, residents and local Councillors regarding the most appropriate option for this site. In response to a query raised, the Area Housing Manager, Brierley Hill, stated that she would check whether traders in Beech Road, Kingswinford, had received a copy of the consultation letter.

Response:

The Area Housing Manager has confirmed that the two traders received the consultation letter and have responded to it with their views.

The consultation period has now closed and the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services is considering the responses. This will feed into an exercise involving officers from both DACHS and the Directorate of Law & Property who are exploring delivery options to include Registered Social Landlords and other developers. It is expected that this process will be completed by the end of the calendar year and a report will be taken to Cabinet in the New Year.

Until Cabinet approval is obtained, no decision will be made, and that in response to requests from the two traders, they will be invited to meet with Council representatives to discuss their views and options before any decision is made.

Issue:

In respect of the large pothole at Council garages at Portway Close, Councillor P Harley queried the response given. The Area Liaison Officer reported that, in liaison with officers from the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, the matter would be looked at again.

Response

A site meeting has taken place between Cllr Harley and the Area Housing Officer when it was noted that the deepest and largest pot hole has been filled.

It was agreed that the entrance to the access road was in need of resurface treatment and will be put forward for consideration under the Directorate's Capital Community Safety Programme next year.

WARD ISSUES

Issue:

Councillor Ms Foster referred to the response she had received in connection with the petition regarding pedestrian safety measures at Station Road, Brockmoor, referred to earlier in the meeting, and asked that the timescale for implementing the improvements indicated in that response be forwarded to her.

Response:

Concerning the issue of pedestrians crossing the road, this site has been added to the pedestrian crossing assessment list for formal investigation, which will take place during the final quarter of this calendar year. It is then normal practice to discuss the findings of the preliminary assessments with the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet Members for Transportation at the beginning of the New Year with a view to a provisional programme of works being submitted for consideration at the following meeting of the Cabinet in February 2009

With regard to the introduction of advanced warning signs and improved road markings to raise driver awareness of the road junction, these are currently being investigated in more detail and could be introduced, subject to the necessary funding being available, before the end of the financial year.

Issue:

Councillor Ms Harris referred to the announcement of a memorial to the Round Oak Steel Workers but expressed concerns, also raised by a number of residents, that the memorial would not actually be on the site of either the Steel Works or its workings. The Director of the Urban Environment is requested to arrange for a report on this matter to be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

Response:

As requested, a report on this issue has been submitted for consideration by Area Committee.

Issue:

In response to queries from Councillor Mrs Jordan as to why the gates to Wordsley Park were being closed at 9pm, and whether the security company engaged could not patrol the park after 9pm, it was indicated that the Director of the Urban Environment would arrange for the points raised to be investigated and a response sent to her.

Response:

The parks security company has been instructed to close the gates at 9.30pm and signage changed to reflect the appropriate time.

The Park Keepers work seasonal hours, they work longer hours in the summer and shorter hours in the winter, however their hours throughout the year are required to equate to a 37 hour week. The Keepers start at 9.30am each morning, this allows them to assist with organised physical activities on the parks and also allows them to prepare the park ready for the day ahead. Their finish time in the summer is 7.00pm, which means they currently work a 9 hour day.

The Keepers do not have any enforcement powers for anti social behaviour and they can only request the problem group of people to move off the park or behaviour in an appropriate manor. When an anti social issue develops on a park that the Park Keepers feel unsafe to approach, they are required to retreat to a safe environment and call the police for assistance.