

**Action Notes of the Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews/Quarry Bank and
Dudley Wood Community Forum**

**Monday 16th March, 2015 at 6.30pm
at The Savoy Centre, Northfield Road, Netherton**

Present:-

Councillor Q Zada (Chair)
Councillor B Cotterill (Vice-Chair)
Councillors J Cowell, W Duckworth and E Taylor

Officers:-

A Tromans - Lead Officer to the Forum (Information Systems Manager, ICT Services) and K Griffiths - Democratic Services Officer (Directorate of Resources and Transformation)

Together with 12 members of the public

28 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Following general announcements, the Councillors and Council officers introduced themselves.

29 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor D Sparks.

30 **Listening to you – Questions and Comments by Local Residents**

Subject

Action

Reference was made to conifer trees being planted on Council properties, which were being allowed to grow out of control, causing problems for new tenants, preventing sunlight to neighbouring properties and interfering with TV reception aerial signals. The resident referred to a particular property affected by overgrown conifer trees by no fault of her own and requested that the branches be trimmed or the tree taken down.

Referred for a written response.

It was noted that the matter had been report on a number of occasions by various Councillors and Council officers, however, no action had been taken.

The resident and Members also queried whether there were any policies/restrictions in tenancy agreements in relation to planting and maintenance of fast growing trees and whether surveys were carried out on trees in need of pruning as part of the void management process.

Detailed discussions/updates concerning Saltwells Nature Reserve, with particular reference to the proposals for a new Wardens base and the situation regarding the replacement of the previous warden. Reference was also made to:-

- Historic anti-social behaviour problems returning due to the lack of a warden on site.
- Comparisons made between nature reserves in the Dudley Borough and how these were financed.
- Reference made to the funding received from the lotto fund and what the funding was used for.
- Suggestion made to contact the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) to help with alternative sources of funding.
- The sum put aside for the Council (£150,000) and queries raised as to whether the funding was still earmarked for the purpose of this development once match-funding was available.

The Lead Officer noted the ongoing issues and responded to specific points. He indicated that he would be available at the end of the meeting for further discussion on the matter.

It was suggested whether organisations from the Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's Ward could offer support to help identify alternative funding opportunities.

A representative of Netherton Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) referred to options available for funding to illuminate the anchor in Netherton.

In relation to a recent incident involving the Police, a query was made as to who was responsible to be recharged in cases where front doors were destroyed by the police as a result of forced entry.

Lead Officer to confirm whether the £150,000 reserved for the development was still available.

Councillors of Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's Ward to provide support and explore the possibility of forming a 'friends of the reserve' group.

Noted. The Chair encouraged the representative of Netherton TRA to apply to the Community Forum for funding.

Referred for a written response.

Would the Council recharge the tenant or was there a route to recharge the police and would the cost be required upfront prior to repairs being carried out?

Mention was made to fly-tipping on Bath Street, off Coppice Lane with a request that the matter be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Referred for a written response.

Queries made in relation to the repair work currently being undertaken on Cinder Bank, causing queuing traffic. It was noted that maintenance work was currently being carried out to reinforce a collapsed wall.

Noted.

31 **Working with you: Topics raised by Local Councillors**

Subject

Action

Councillor W Duckworth referred to problems with queuing traffic on Crossley Street, which was causing delays on Halesowen Road and requested that a Traffic Survey be carried out. Following comments by Councillor E Taylor, it was noted that a feasibility study had been requested to be carried out in that area.

Referred for consideration and action.

Councillor B Cotterill referred to the paved area at the top of Quarry Bank High Street, which was being used for parking and causing difficulty for pedestrians. It was noted that there was adequate alternative parking nearby and suggested that either the existing railings be extended to prevent access to vehicles or arrange for bollards to be installed.

Referred for consideration and action.

Councillor B Cotterill referred the barrier at the rear of Saltwells Road and queried when the barrier would be provided.

The Lead Officer to provide the exact location of the site the barrier would be positioned and representatives of the Saltwells Tenants and Residents Association to conduct a 'door knock' exercise to consult residents.

32 **Community Forum – Love Your Local Community Funding**

Application

Wallheath Prince Albert Football Club

Recommendation

Deferred for further information to be submitted by the applicant.

33 **Dates, Time and Venues of Future Meetings**

Subject to the approval of the Council at its annual meeting in May, 2015, the provisional dates of the Community Forum for 2015/16 were as follows (all 6.30pm with venues to be confirmed):

- Tuesday 16th June, 2015
 - Wednesday 2nd September, 2015
 - Tuesday 3rd November, 2015
 - Tuesday 26th January, 2016
 - Tuesday 15th March, 2016
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The meeting ended at 7.15 pm.

Action Notes of the Gornal and Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Community Forum

Monday 16th March, 2015 at 6.30pm
at the Upper Gornal Pensioners Club, Kent Street, Dudley

Present:

Councillor K Casey (Chair)
Councillor S Turner (Vice Chair)
Councillors A Aston, D Branwood, D Perks and R Scott-Dow

Officers:

J Jennings (Lead Officer) (Head of Communications and Public Affairs) and
K Buckle (Democratic Services Officer)

Together with 23 members of the public

30 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed those present and there followed introductions.

31 **The Stroke Association**

Ms V Gill, Stroke Awareness Presenter for the Dudley Borough gave a verbal presentation to raise awareness of the Stroke Association together with the services they offered. She advised of the genetic and medical factors that increased the risk of strokes together with the preventative measures that could be taken, including maintaining a healthy diet and exercise. It was noted that Dudley Stroke Association offered support, advice and operated as a signposting service.

Ms Gill advised that the Association carried out reviews on anyone who had suffered a stroke within the Dudley Borough in order to prevent re-admissions, carrying out home visits, providing telephone support and activities such as light exercise. The six weekly course offered by the Expert Patient Programme was referred to and it was noted that the Programme was provided by the Clinical Commissioning Group and targeting those suffering from anxiety and problems with sleeping.

In concluding the presentation Ms Gill referred to the FAST message that had been extensively televised in relation to the warning signs of a stroke.

Ms Gill distributed leaflets and invited questions from those present.

Members thanked Ms Gill for the presentation on the Stroke Awareness Association and for attending the meeting.

Listening to you: Questions and Comments from Local Residents

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Action</u>
Concerns were raised in relation to illegal and inconsiderate parking outside Roberts Primary School and on the corner of Clarence Street, Upper Gornal and also the danger posed by a delivery van reversing out an alley adjacent to business premises in Clarence Street and a request that a bollard be installed to prevent access to delivery vehicles.	The Chair to liaise with appropriate Officers regarding the installation of the bollard.
Concerns relating to visibility problems for drivers crossing the junction of Inhedge Street and Badger Street, Upper Gornal caused by parked vans causing obstruction and a danger to both pedestrians and drivers.	To be dealt with by Councillor D Perks .
Concerns in relation to the cost of installing dropped kerbs contributing to inconsiderate parking problems and a query in relation to whether home owners could instruct their own contractors to install dropped kerbs following obtaining the relevant planning permission.	Councillor Scott-Dow to liaise with appropriate Officers.
Issues in relation to inconsiderate parking of commercial vehicles. The Chair advised those present to provide the Council with details of the companies involved.	Noted.
A query in relation to letters forwarded to residents in Park Road, Lower Gornal relating to a change in the system to their refuse collections should they fail to drag their bins to the grass verge for collection and problems with assisted collections in Park Road. The Vice Chair requested the questioner to provide details of those residents experiencing problems with assisted collections.	The Vice Chair to liaise with appropriate Officers.

A request that the traffic Island in Wood Avenue, Lower Gornal be removed or made smaller and if neither was possible could the island be tidied up in view of cracking and missing brickwork and could the signage be replaced. The Vice-Chair advised of the requirement to consult with local residents as the island may produce traffic calming measures.

Referred for a written response.

A request that double yellow lines that were removed from the road in Board School Gardens, Upper Gornal be replaced.

Referred for a written response.

A request that residents of Board School Gardens, Lower Gornal be informed of the type of commercial enterprise that applied for permission of change of usage from the private accommodation that was for sale in Board School Gardens which was being advertised as a commercial property. The Chair advised that local residents would be consulted once a change of usage application had been received by the Council's Planning Section.

The Chair to continue to monitor.

A suggestion that following the closure of the Lower Gornal Youth Club on Friday evenings due to staffing problems, that volunteers be approached in order that the Youth Club could re-open on Friday evenings. The Vice-Chair advised that some voluntary groups had approached the Council in relation to providing activities at the Youth Club.

The Vice-Chair to liaise with appropriate Officers.

A request that the fly tipping in Hermit Street, Upper Gornal be removed and measures be taken to prevent future fly tipping.

Referred for a written response.

Incidents of anti social behaviour were referred to. Given the sensitivity of the matter, the Vice-Chair undertook to discuss the matter with the questioner following the meeting. Councillor Branwood referred to the change in the Council's lettings Policy whereby applicants for council housing being required to satisfy requirements that

Vice-Chair to discuss with the questioner.

they had lived in the Borough for a period of two years.

The Vice-Chair provided an update in relation to the provision of further parking spaces in Gornal Village and the proposed new supermarket that would provide both additional parking and toilet facilities. Noted there were ongoing negotiations with Eggingtons Chemist regards land issues and there was a consultation taking place regarding the new parking spaces.

33 **Working with you: Topics raised by Local Councillors**

No topics were raised.

34 **Community Forum Funding**

The following application was received and an update received.

<u>Application</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Gornal Community Fun Day	Approved the sum of £2,567.29 from Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward.
Black Country Community Radio.	Application withdrawn as the organisation were unsuccessful with their submission for a community radio licence. The approved funding from each Ward be returned to the Community Forum Funds, £2,000 in total.

35 **Dates, Times and Venues of Future Meetings**

Future meetings of the Community Forum would be held on the following dates, subject to approval at Council on 21st May, 2015,

- 15th June, 2015
- 2nd September, 2015
- 2nd November, 2015
- 25th January, 2016
- 14th March, 2016

Commencing at 6.30pm at venues to be confirmed.

Action Notes of the Coseley East/Sedgley Community Forum

Tuesday 17th March 2015 at 6.30 pm
at Christ Church C of E Primary School, Church Road, Coseley

Present:-

Councillor D Caunt (Chair)
Councillor C Baugh (Vice-Chair)
Councillors B Etheridge, S Etheridge, M Evans and M Mottram

Officers:-

S Cooper (Lead Officer to the Forum) (Head of Corporate Landlord Services) and
M Johal (Democratic Services Officer)

Together with six members of the public.

27 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Coseley East/Sedgley Community Forum.

28 **Listening to you – Questions and Comments from Local Residents**

Subject

A resident referred to proposals to make the cenotaph in Roseville centre more prominent and indicated that local Councillors fully supported this action. The Local Authority, together with the Canal Trust had also given their support in planting trees and a meeting of the Canal Trust had been scheduled to be held the following week.

Action

Members approved, in principle, the granting of up to £2000 towards this project, subject to an application and appropriate documentation being received. Upon receipt Lead Officer to deal with application as a matter of urgency in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Ward Councillors.

Reference was made to the query at the last meeting relating to the position with regard to the provision of youth facilities, particularly in Coseley, given the budgetary cuts. It was stated that a response had not been received.

The Lead Officer to the Forum undertook to pursue the matter.

Councillor M Evans referred to the Sedgley Youth Centre and on the removal of the Closed Circuit Television and reported that he had received a letter on ways to safeguard the Centre.

Noted.

An Action Group for the Northway had been formed in November 2013 and a meeting would be held the following day at the Cabin at 8pm and an invitation was extended to all Members.

Noted.

Mr A Scarratt, West Midlands Fire Service informed the meeting that he was the contact person for the area with a view to engaging in partnership working.

Noted.

Complaints were being made about dog fouling and it was requested that additional bins be provided on The Walk.

The Lead Officer to the Forum to pursue the matter.

29

Working with you – Topics Raised by Local Councillors

Subject

Action

Councillor M Evans reported on the following proposals for safety measures to be implemented on the Northway:-

Noted.

- (i) A new non-slip surface would be applied to the section of the Northway at the bottom of the steep hill in the area of the junction of the Northway/ Greenfields/Longmeadow;

- (ii) A mini island would be constructed at the junction of the Northway and the northern end of Longmeadow Drive. This would include a central refuge to assist pedestrians wishing to cross the Northway safely;
- (iii) Further signage would be erected at various points along the Northway reinforcing the speed limit and potential road hazards;
- (iv) Two speed camera boxes would be installed so that West Midlands Police could install cameras when deemed necessary.

Councillor C Baugh referred to concerns raised at the last meeting over rumours about the Rollers Public House and queried whether there had been any update.

To be kept under review by Ward Councillors.

There were no further updates and rumours had not been substantiated.

Councillor M Mottram stated that he had received queries about the Rose Pub regarding extensive works that were currently underway. Planning permission had not been granted and an Enforcement Officer would be visiting the premises with a view to ascertaining the position.

Noted.

Mention was also made of the Hop and Barleycorn regarding the numerous alterations that were being made to the flats and the Painters Arms over rumours that it was to be levelled off.

Members were of the view that retrospective applications should not be supported.

Councillor B Etheridge

- (1) Referred to retrospective planning applications and was also of the view that they should not be supported. Noted.
- (2) Commented on recurring mini crimes that were taking place across the Beacon Estate and that the issue had been raised at the Police and Communities Together (PACT) meeting.
- (3) Stated that he had not been party to discussions that had been held regarding the safety proposals for the Northway, however, he was pleased that action was being taken to appease the situation.
- (4) Support to retaining the Seven Stars Pub was ongoing and reference was made to a petition that had been submitted by Ian Austin, Member of Parliament, (MP) in this regard.

Councillor S Etheridge

- (1) Stated that she was involved in a particularly distressing case whereby a male in his 60's was caring for his mother but that the Council were not offering any respite. It was requested that Members support any action that was required given the circumstances of the case. Members gave their undertaking to offer any support that may be necessary.
- (2) Referred to potholes in Daisy Street and stated that these would be temporarily repaired with a view to reconstruction and resurfacing works to take place on 25th April, 2015. Noted.

31 **Community Forum Funding**

The Forum considered a report of the Lead Officer and the following updates were received and noted:-

<u>Application</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Sedgley Scorpions Football	Endorsed - £1305.60 as agreed at the last meeting. Clarification made that the award should be allocated solely from the Coseley East Ward.
West Midlands Fire Service	Withdrawn – No further action needed as funding has been provided directly from schools concerned.
Black Country Community Radio	Withdrawn – Organisation was not successful in obtaining licence from Ofcom and therefore total funding of £2000 to be allocated back to relevant Coseley East and Sedgley budget (£1000 each) for redistribution.

32 **Dates, Times and Venues of Future Meetings**

It was reported that meetings of the Community Forum would be held on the following dates subject to Council approval on 21st May, 2015:-

Monday 15th June, 2015 (venue to be confirmed)
Monday 7th September, 2015 (venue to be confirmed)
Monday 2nd November, 2015 (venue to be confirmed)
Monday 25th January, 2016 (venue to be confirmed)
Monday 14th March, 2016 (venue to be confirmed)

33 **Members Remarks**

As this was the last scheduled meeting of the Forum in the current municipal year Forum Members expressed their thanks and appreciation to Councillor Caunt for the manner in which he had Chaired the meetings and Members wished him the best for the future, as he would not be standing for election in May.

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm

Action Notes of the Halesowen North and Halesowen South Community Forum

Tuesday 17th March, 2015 at 6.30pm
at Olive Hill Primary School, Springfield Road, Halesowen

Present:

Councillor K. Shakespeare (Chair)
Councillor A. Taylor (Vice-Chair)
Councillors H. Bills, N. Gregory and D. Vickers.

Officers:

S. Beckett (Lead Officer) (Customer Services Manager) and J.Jablonski (Assistant Principal Officer (Democratic Services)

together with 5 members of the public

28 **Apology for absence**

Apology submitted on behalf of Councillor S Henley

29 **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

30 **Listening to you: Questions and Comments from Local Residents**

Subject

Action

A progress report was requested by residents of Manor Lane in relation to the Safer Routes to School Scheme for Lapal Primary School in view of ongoing concerns.

Noted that consultation on the scheme had not yet commenced. Lead Officer to investigate and arrange for a written response indicating a start date for the consultation.

Coombeswood – ongoing issues in relation to actions by St Modwens discussed.
Councillor Vickers reported that he was a Member of the Development Control Committee and had taken no part in the discussion.

Noted.

31 **Working with you: Topics raised by Local Councillors**

Subject

Action

No issues were raised.

Noted.

32 **Community Forum Funding**

Application

Recommendation

Coombeswood Canal Trust

.Refuse,given that this was a similar application to one considered last year and that funding for that was seen as one-off funding. Applicants asked to submit an application for funding in the next municipal year for any other project that they are undertaking but not involving staffing costs.

Shell Corner Youth Company

Approve, £971.53 ,the remainder of the original funding balance, to provide youth and family support activities and trip and summer schemes.
Lead Officer to arrange for consideration of the application by Belle Vale, Hayley Green and Cradley South Community Forum.

Halesowen Carnival

The applicant was in attendance at the meeting and responded to a wide range of questioning on the application. Noted that the proposed venue was in Belle Vale ward and that the application was to be considered by the neighbouring community forum.

Deferred,and the applicant asked to submit an updated application to the first meeting of the Forum in the new municipal year in June,2015,indicating the progress made on the various aspects discussed including the funding,organisation and arrangements for the carnival .

33 **Dates, Times and Venues of Future Meeting**

Noted that dates and times of future meetings would be determined at Annual Council in May,2015.

The meeting ended at 7.40pm

**Action Notes of the Norton, Pedmore and Stourbridge East, Wollaston and
Stourbridge Town Community Forum**

**Wednesday 18th March, 2015 at 6.30pm
at Chawn Hill Church, Chawn Hill, Stourbridge**

Present:

Councillor N Barlow (Chair)
Councillors C Elcock, I Kettle and H Rogers

Officers:

R Sims (Acting Lead Officer) (Assistant Director of Housing Strategy and Private Sector), M O'Meara (Self Management Programme Manager, Public Health, Directorate of People Services) and H Shepherd (Democratic Services Officer, Directorate of Resources and Transformation)

Together with 9 members of the public

28 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed those present and Members and Officers introduced themselves.

29 Apologies for Absence

Councillors M Attwood, C Hale, L Jones and I Marrey.

30 Listening to you: Questions and Comments from Local Residents

Subject

Action

Fly-tipping issue that had been raised at the last meeting had still not been resolved. Clarification was required as to whether Council Officers, as part of their employment contract, were required to report such an offence.

The Acting Lead Officer to investigate the incident and request the remaining rubbish to be removed and respond direct to the resident.

Request for Councillors and residents to support the campaign for the local empty railway line that runs from Halesowen, through three Black Country Towns, to be reinstated as an intercity passenger line rather than solely used as a freight line service, to help reduce road congestion in the borough.

Parking issues at Mary Stevens Park.

Poor attendance at Community Forum meetings by Ward Councillors and residents.

The poor condition of the road surface and pavements at The Heathlands, Stourbridge, following its recent resurfacing. It was considered to be in a worse condition than before the works were undertaken. A comment was also made with regards to the quality of the materials that had been used.

Members supported the scheme in principle and suggested that the resident contact his local ward Councillors and MP to progress the campaign.

The Acting Lead Officer to forward comments to Highways Officers and the Leader of the Council.

The Acting Lead Officer and Chair to the Forum agreed to write to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council expressing residents continued concerns in relation to the parking issues at Mary Stevens Park.

The Acting Lead Officer to speak with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and suggest that this issue be included in the work programme for 2015/16 municipal year.

The Chair confirmed that several Councillors were unable to attend the meeting due to illness and work commitments and apologies had been submitted on their behalf.

The Chair also stated that the Community Forum meetings were advertised in press releases and on social networking sites, but would raise the issue at a future Community Forum review meeting.

The Acting Lead Officer to raise awareness of future meetings with Tenants and Residents Associations and the Participation Team.

Referred for a response/action.

31 **Public Health – Self Management Programme**

M O'Meara, Self Management Programme Manager, Public Health, gave a brief presentation on the free Self Management Programmes that were available to residents that had a long term health condition or were a carer to someone with a long term health condition. The programmes were developed to help improve residents' quality of life by giving new skills and information to help manage their condition. Leaflets on the range of programmes available were circulated at the meeting.

Residents that wished to partake in any of the courses available were requested to contact the Self Management Programme team direct.

A resident suggested that posters advertising the range of programmes available could be placed on Tenants and Residents Associations notice boards and circulated to Participation Teams and Home Affairs to encourage further take-up.

32 **Working with you: Topics raised by Local Councillors**

Subject

Action

Councillor Elcock raised a concern in relation to Badgers causing damage to properties in Roman Road and Sandy Lane but that the Council was unable to provide any help due to the animals being protected.

Affected residents should contact the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) or the Wildlife Trust who could provide some assistance in managing the situation.

33 **Community Forum Funding**

No applications were received within the required timescale to be considered at this meeting. The update report submitted was noted.

The Chair referred to a letter that had been received from UNIT3SIXTY expressing thanks for the grant of Community Forum funding and referred to their progress to date.

34 **Dates, Time and Venues of Future Meetings**

The draft dates of the Community Forum meetings for the 2015/16 municipal year, subject to Council approval in May 2015, were noted.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm

**Action Notes of the Castle and Priory, St James's and St Thomas's
Community Forum**

Wednesday 18th March, 2015 at 6.30 pm
at St. Barnabas' C of E Church, Middlepark Road, Russells Hall, Dudley.

Present:

Councillor K Finch (Chair)
Councillor A Ahmed (Vice-Chair)
Councillors M Aston, K Ahmed, S Ali, A Finch and M Roberts

Officers:

S Norman (Chief Executive), S Griffiths (Lead Officer to the Forum) (Democratic Services Manager) and M Johal (Democratic Services Officer)

Together with 15 members of the public.

28 **Apologies for Absence**

Councillors S Arshad and S Waltho.

29 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council's Chief Executive. Councillors and Officers introduced themselves.

30 **Listening to you – Questions and Comments from Local Residents**

Subject

Action

Referring to the procurement process it was queried whether the Council received a guarantee against goods that were supplied by contractors.

The Lead Officer gave a verbal response and this would be confirmed in writing.

Reference made to an article regarding the QEII Playing Fields and that around £55,000 funding had been earmarked for work to the football pitch to include installation of a pipe drainage system. It was queried whether some resources could also be allocated towards a children's play area at Russells Hall Park.

Councillor K Ahmed reported that funding for the pitch had been secured through Section 106 and the Land Tax Community Fund. With regard to other amenities and facilities he urged that a Friends of Park be formed as this group would then be able to apply for various other funding initiatives.

Councillor M Roberts, in conjunction with residents, undertook to pursue arrangements for the setting up of a Friends of Park Group.

Ongoing parking issues on Russells Hall Estate. Vehicles continued to park on pavements, particularly on Bushey Fields, Overfield and Middlepark Roads.

Referred for a response.

The pavement to the left hand side of the parade down to the High Street was uneven and trees were too close to each other which caused obstruction to people trying to pass, particularly those in wheelchairs.

The Chair acknowledged the problems caused by trees. Problems were also experienced in the Castle and Priory area. A response would be submitted on potential solutions.

Licensing conditions applied to the supermarket on Middlepark Road, Russells Hall for the provision of adequate car parking spaces. Concerns raised that a sign stating customer parking only was still not in place and that cars were parking on the pavement.

Referred for a response.

As reported at the previous meeting, a particular light on Oakham Road had been illuminated, however it was queried when remaining lights on that Road would be activated; there were still concerns regarding congestion and traffic at Oakham Road and it was queried whether National Express had been contacted regarding their vehicles travelling along the road when alternative routes were available.

Referred for a response.

It was considered that Dudley market had opened too early as both traders and members of the public were experiencing varying problems. The legal position was questioned as traders had to endure dust and dirt from ongoing works. Traders were also complaining about dust falling onto their produce; the stall roofline being too high and not level; the floor laid with inconsistent material and that there was nowhere for traders to hang their items. Health and safety issues were raised covering the surrounding area.

Clarification was also sought on the owners of the market.

Comment made that it was unacceptable that the men's toilets had been closed for twenty minutes to allow for cleaning.

Further request for public toilets in Dudley Town Centre to be open on Sundays, particularly during trading hours, to assist with the regeneration of the Town and to attract tourism.

Following discussion on the matter it was queried whether an application could be made for funding from the Community Forum grant to cover the cost of opening the toilets on Sundays.

Given the budgetary pressures it was queried whether the increase in Councillors' allowances was acceptable.

Councillor K Ahmed acknowledged the problems and stated that he would offer his assistance and support to the traders to alleviate the situation.

Councillor K Ahmed stated that the Council continued to own the market although traders would be given the opportunity to manage it.

Negotiations were taking place with regard to early evening opening and also to consider arrangements for the Christmas Market.

Councillor K Ahmed undertook to investigate the issue.

Councillor K Ahmed advised of the ongoing budget issues faced by the Council. He stated that that it would cost in the region of £11,000 per annum to open the toilets on Sundays and currently there was no budget to cover that cost.

Lead Officer to the Forum to advise on whether an application for funding from the Community Forum could be submitted in this regard.

The Chair responded. The increase was in line with the provisions of the Member's Allowances Scheme, which had been adopted on recommendations from an Independent Panel.

Complaint made that it was difficult to access Birmingham Street car park or Hall Street due to road restrictions. Vehicles still used the restricted road for access and the police were not prosecuting offenders.

Councillor K Ahmed acknowledged the issue but stated that restrictions were in place to create a pedestrianised area and reduce traffic congestion. Although the police were not taking consistent enforcement action the restrictions had reduced some traffic.

Further consideration would be given to the matter when redeveloping Cavendish House area.

Request for monitoring Brewery Fields Playing Fields on Corporation Road as the grounds beside the children's play area were being used as a rubbish tip. Also the playing fields behind the play area were being used for dog fouling.

The Chair requested that details of known offenders be noted with a view to prosecuting. Referred for a response.

31 **Working with you – Topics Raised by Local Councillors**

Councillor M Roberts referred to the Holly Hall Academy and reported that Mr Graham Lloyd, Principal would be retiring and that Mr Rob Hash had been appointed in his place. Pupil number intake had also recently increased.

32 **Community Forum – Love Your Local Community Funding**

The Forum considered a report of the Lead Officer.

The Lead Officer reported verbally on a late application that had been received from the Black Country Festival Group requesting funding of up to £3000 (£1000 from each Ward) towards costs to hold an entertainment day on 11th July 2015 in the Stone Street Square area to celebrate Black Country Day as part of the Black Country Festival.

A further application was received at the meeting from New Wrens Nest Tenants and Residents Association for funding of up to £1000 towards initial start up costs for holding regular lunch clubs.

Application

Recommendation

Black Country Community Radio

Withdrawn – Organisation was not successful in obtaining licence from Ofcom and therefore total funding of £3000 to be allocated back to the budget for all 3 Wards (£1000 each)

Dudley Al-Karim	Deferred due to insufficient funds available in St Thomas's Ward and pending further information.
Friends and Residents of Buffery Park	Approve a contribution of £2500 (£2000 to be allocated from St Thomas's Ward and £250 from each of the St James's and Castle and Priory Wards)
Black Country Festival Group	Approve a contribution of £2500 to be spent towards costs for holding an entertainment day (£1500 to be allocated from St James's and £500 from each of the St Thomas's and Castle and Priory Wards)
Arc-Aid	Approve request for the grant of £1,500 approved at the last meeting to be spent on grills to secure outside windows and replacement of a door instead of previous items requested. (NB: The allocation was from the High Street Innovation Fund shared equally between the 3 Wards).
New Wrens Nest Tenants and Residents Association	That the application be deferred. Lead Officer to deal with as a matter of urgency in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Ward Councillors.

A submission for initial start up costs towards the Crown Charity Based Coffee House, Dudley was also received at the meeting. It was suggested that the relevant application form be completed to enable consideration being given at a future meeting of the Forum.

33 **Next Meeting**

It was reported that meetings of the Community Forum would be held on the following dates subject to Council approval on 21st May, 2015:-

Wednesday 17th June, 2015 (venue to be confirmed)
 Thursday 10th September, 2015 (venue to be confirmed)
 Wednesday 4th November, 2015 (venue to be confirmed)
 Wednesday 27th January, 2016 (venue to be confirmed)
 Wednesday 16th March, 2016 (venue to be confirmed)

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Action Notes of the Brierley Hill and Brockmoor & Pensnett Community Forum

Tuesday 24th March, 2015 at 6.30pm
at the Fens Pool Community Centre, Tennyson Street, Brierley Hill

Present:

Councillor K Jordan (Chair)
Councillor Z Islam (Vice Chair)
Councillors R Harris and J Martin.

Officers:

I McGuff (Lead Officer) (Assistant Director – Quality and Partnership) and
K Buckle (Democratic Services Officer)

29 **Apology for Absence**

Councillor M Wilson

30 **Listening to you: Questions and Comments from Local Residents**

No questions were raised.

31 **Working With you: Topics raised by Local Councillors**

Councillor R Harris referred to the celebrations in relation to the 50th Anniversary of the Chapel Street estate, Brierley Hill advising that a working group had been formed comprising of the Chapel Street Tenants and Residents Association and the Church in order to celebrate the Anniversary and work was ongoing with the Baptist Church, Brierley Hill Civic Society and the Dudley Archives in order to gather memorabilia to celebrate the anniversary.

Councillor J Martin referred to a community litter pick that was to take place on 11th April, 2015 at 10.15am with those wishing to attend to meet in Vicarage Lane adjacent to St Marks Church, Pensnett and D Wesson, Team Manager, Street and Green Care supporting the litter pick.

32 **Community Forum – Love Your Local Community Funding**

Recommendations made in respect of an Application received and discussed following the meeting was as follows:-

<u>Application</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
High Oak Youth and Community Centre	Refused as there was no proven benefit to the local community.
Black Country Community Radio.	Application withdrawn, as the organisation were unsuccessful with their submission for a community radio licence. The approved funding from the Brockmoor & Pensnett Ward in the sum of £1,000 be returned to the Community Forum fund for that Ward.

33. **Closing Remarks of the Chair and Vice-Chair**

This being the last meeting of the Forum of the current municipal year, the Vice-Chair thanked the Chair for her conduct of the meetings throughout the year and the Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contributions to the meetings.

34. **Dates, Times and Venues of Future Meetings.**

Future meetings of the Community Forum would be held on the following dates, subject to approval at Council on 21st May, 2015

- 23rd June, 2015
- 9th September, 2015
- 10th November, 2015
- 2th February, 2016
- 22th March, 2016

Commencing at 6.30pm at venues to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 6.45pm

Minutes of the Health Scrutiny Committee

Monday 16th February, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

Present:-

Councillor C Hale (Chair)
Councillor N Barlow (Vice-Chair)
Councillors M Hanif, D Hemingsley, S Henley, C Perks, M Roberts, K Shakespeare,
E Taylor, K Turner and Ms P Bradbury

Officers

M Farooq ((Assistant Director – Law and Governance (Lead Officer to the Committee), D Harkins (Chief Officer, Health and Well Being), K Jackson (Interim Director of Public Health), A Sangian (Scrutiny Officer – Directorate of People Services) and M Johal (Democratic Services Officer – Directorate of Resources and Transformation).

Also in Attendance

Ms Marsha Ingram – Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust
Ms Rosie Musson – Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust
Mr Derek Eaves – Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust (DGNHSFT)
Mr Nick Henry – West Midlands Ambulance Service
Dr Rathore – Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group
Mr Daniel King – Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group

44 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors C Elcock and K Jordan.

45 **Appointment of Substitute Member**

It was reported that Councillor C Perks had been appointed to serve in place of Councillor K Jordan for the meeting of this Committee only.

46 **Declarations of Interest**

No Member declared an interest in any matter to be considered at this meeting.

47

Public Forum

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

48

National Health Service (NHS) Quality Accounts

Quality account summary reports were submitted from the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust and the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust. The quality account update report from the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust had been circulated separately to the agenda.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust

Arising from the presentation of the report Members made comments and raised questions as follows and responses were given as indicated:-

- Reference was made to surveys that were undertaken to determine scores and it was queried whether vulnerable groups were included to ascertain their opinions and the methods used to communicate with them.

In responding it was stated that the person responsible for collating information from patients for the survey did not have any input from nurses and patients were chosen randomly. It was commented that there were problems in gathering feedback from various vulnerable groups particularly where communication was a barrier and consideration was being given to addressing the matter. However, one of the methods currently used to obtain information from patients with learning disabilities was by setting up a specific Forum tailored to that individual's needs whereby the patient attended with their carer and questions were asked about their care plans and how improvements could be made.

There was also a "red tray system" which included those people that needed assistance with feeding and regular surveys were undertaken of these patients with a view to compiling information for audit purposes.

- With regard to call bells clarification was sought on what was considered to be a reasonable time to respond to the bell. It was considered that a time should be specified particularly for vulnerable patients as they needed reassurance and if they knew that they would be seen within a certain time, for example within 10 minutes, they may be less anxious and agitated.

It was stated that it was difficult to allocate a specific time that could be considered as being "reasonable", particularly as people's perceptions and definitions of a "reasonable time" varied. It had therefore been agreed that it would be better to ask patients if calls had been answered within a reasonable time.

Following on from further discussion, Mr Eaves (DGNHSFT) undertook to feedback comments made in that there should be a benchmark or mechanism in place to clarify response times. It was considered that a specific response time could be allocated and the patient then asked if they had been responded to within that time.

- A Member commended the hospital on the service he had received following his recent experience on being admitted and further commented that there were some people that did not need to use the call bells as their needs were being met and addressed.

Mr Eaves concurred with the comment made and explained about “intentional rounding” which was a process currently in place whereby nurses approached patients every hour with a view to offering assistance with care needs such as helping them to the toilet, which reduced the need to use the call button. When conducting their hourly rounds, nurses had specific questions that patients were asked and all documentation was recorded with a view to analysing data and continuous improvements being made.

- The steady decline in pressure ulcer incidents and the work undertaken to achieve this was welcomed. However, details relating to those cases that had experienced delays in equipment being provided by the relevant organisation was queried, specifically how long individuals had been waiting and whether there were any alternate providers of the service.

The meeting were informed that the Clinical Commissioning Group paid for the services of the provider of the equipment and discussions were being held with them with a view to improvements being made. There was no alternative provider for the equipment and the reasons for the delay or timeframes of the delays were not known.

Mr Eaves undertook to ascertain the reason for the delays, the length of time patients had been waiting for the delivery of equipment and also to feedback concerns on there being only one provider of that service.

In responding to a further query about specific details relating to the single stage 4 ulcer, it was reported that usually stage 4 ulcers had broken skin and a deep wound. However, in this particular case skin had grown over the wound and the stage of the ulcer was only revealed following operational investigations. Procedures had now been put into place to prevent this from happening again and Mr Eaves undertook to circulate to the Committee details of the extent of the investigations that now took place.

- With regard to targets relating to MRSA and Clostridium difficile it was stated that these were set by the Government and calculated by using a specific formula that was based on the hospital’s performance and its size.

- Reference was made to the targets measured by the Nursing Care Indicator process relating to nutrition and hydration which consisted of 10 records on every ward being audited each month and it was commented that 100% should be achieved given the small numbers being measured.

It was stated that there were 10 sets of records collated from 25 wards each month which equated to 750 records each quarter. Senior Nurses scanned these records and it was not considered that records should be inspected rigorously by these staff as they should be undertaking their other duties. However, it was acknowledged that there should be an expectancy to achieve 100%.

- Comments made about the quality of the food at the hospital were acknowledged and it was stated that this was an ongoing issue. Currently the hospital were in the midst of trialling a new menu on certain Wards which involved patients being asked their choice of food on the day which was then electronically submitted directly to the kitchen. Food scores had improved on these Wards and it was considered that this was partly due to reintroducing food, such as chips. However, for nutritional reasons, there needed to be a balance against these types of foods.
- With regard to results from the annual survey and community targets it was requested that further information be provided on the target groups, the questions asked and who was responsible for setting the targets.

Mr Eaves stated that the annual survey had not as yet concluded but he undertook to provide details contained in the final annual survey together with further information as requested above.

- The Chair referred to comments made at the previous meeting whereby the Committee had acknowledged the importance of acting swiftly to tackle overspend issues. However, concerns were expressed about proposed efficiencies involving the transfer of constituent higher care worker roles to nurses given they were already subject to staffing shortfalls. It was queried whether progress had been made relating to safeguards being put into place to ensure the safe and sustainable transition of responsibilities for patients and staff alike.

Mr Eaves indicated that he was unaware of the issue but undertook to ascertain the position and to report back. The Scrutiny Officer also undertook to write to the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust with a view to obtaining a response.

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

Arising from the presentation of the report Members made comments and raised questions as follows and responses were given as indicated:-

- In response to a query about managing training for staff given constant changes and staff turnover and how care plans were managed given the extensive workloads it was reported that it was an ongoing challenge. However, efforts were made to engage and work with carers with a view to ensuring a quality service was provided. Nurses were aware of embedded practices together with expectations and all nurses had a card with the priorities listed as a constant reminder.

In response to a query Ms Ingram undertook to provide specific details of the content of the basic skilled-based training that was provided to all inpatient nursing staff together with details of staff competency to show the gaps and strengths of individuals.

- Regarding patients that were discharged and what procedures were in place to ensure they were not discharged prematurely, it was explained that the Trust had key performance indicators in place with a view to monitoring effective discharges, which included a seven day follow up to ascertain any risks. A discharge checklist was also used. It was further pointed out that the Trust did not have a shortage of beds which alleviated the pressure of discharging patients quickly, and where possible, appropriate care and pathway arrangements were usually made prior to their discharge.

In response to a query Ms Ingram undertook to circulate to the Committee details on their bed occupancy.

- It was considered that there had been an increase in people with mental health needs, particularly in younger people. Although there were no inpatient services for young people work was ongoing with schools and the Dudley Safeguarding Board with a view to early intervention and detection.

In response to a query Ms Ingram undertook to circulate to the Committee a breakdown on the number of mental health patients to show those that were from the black minority ethnic groups.

- Reference was made to progress against Priority 2 and it was requested that background documentation and details relating to roles and responsibilities training that had been delivered to clinical staff, the joint working protocol between Adult Mental Health Services and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the Policy for dealing with Domestic Abuse be provided to the Committee.
- Given the national concerns about sexual abuse particularly those involving vulnerable people it was queried whether consideration had been given to introducing additional measures to prevent such instances and to protect patient safety.

It was explained that a safeguarding hub had been set up and considerable investments had been made in this regard. There were several policies relating to safeguarding and an annual report on the safeguarding process was available and could be circulated to Members, if required.

West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

Arising from the presentation of the report Members made comments and raised questions as follows and responses were given as indicated:-

- With regard to coping in the event of a major incident and maintaining the service for other incidents, Mr Henry reassured Members that he was very confident that the service would cope given the significant amount of investment that had been made on equipment and training. He gave examples of incidents that had occurred in the past and explained that they were able to flex and pool resources regionally so that normal service standards could be maintained.
- Reference was made to recent ambulance turnaround delays and given the number of ambulances that were queuing at the hospital it was queried how the service was maintained.

It was stated that there were protocols in place to manage the situation and the service was mainly maintained by prioritising patients and making appropriate judgements depending on the situation at the time.

In response to a further query it was stated that work was ongoing with a view to making improvements to ambulance services. An Action Plan had been drafted to improve ambulance flow and work was also ongoing in conjunction with the CCG with a view to streaming patients.

- Although percentages were given in the report, specific numbers relating to the number of patients that had called and been assessed and numbers of those patients that had been waiting to the nationally agreed target of thirty minutes was requested.

Mr Henry stated that he was not aware of the specific numbers but he assured the Committee that they had a safe process in place. This included offering a ring back service whereby if an ambulance could not immediately be deployed the patient would receive a call from a Senior Nurse or Paramedic with a view to being reassessed and categorised accordingly. However, he undertook to provide further information in respect of the various categories to include a breakdown of the calls relating to the percentages.

In response to a further query it was stated that some targets were not being achieved as priority was given to red calls and vehicles were diverted which impacted on other category targets.

- The significant difference in percentage data given for the Black Country and other data with regard to the ambulance quality indicators relating to Stroke FAST patients transported to Hyper Acute Centre within sixty minutes was queried.

Mr Henry undertook to clarify the figures as data for the Black Country had included the FAST care bundle.

- Arising from further discussion the West Midlands Ambulance representative stated that every call was assessed and resources allocated accordingly. Based on assumptions a timeframe was given for completion of the job but this was not always adhered to as the crew encountered varying obstacles which caused delays and impacted on other jobs. A major problem encountered by the crew was where it was considered patients did not require the emergency service it was difficult to access other community services as they only operated during certain hours and staff ended up having to transport the patient to the hospital instead. It was difficult to capture and present information on exact details of delays as they were not recorded. However, there were plans to choose three random days with a view to recording information for audit purposes, and when available this could be submitted to the Committee, if required.

A Member referred to a booklet on “jargon busters” and requested that the document be recirculated for the benefit of newer Members of the Committee.

Resolved

That the information contained in the reports, submitted on the Quality Accounts relating to the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, be noted.

49

Delivery Against Committee Review Action Plans : Tobacco Control Review 2013/14

A report of the Interim Director of Public Health was submitted on progress made on the action plan agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board following the Committee’s scrutiny of tobacco control.

Arising from the presentation of the report and in responding to Members’ queries and comments the Interim Director of Public Health commented that prevalence of smoking in young people had reduced. However, it was confirmed that there was an increase in children smoking when transferring to secondary education and that there had also been an increase in younger females smoking. Members were informed that Trading Standards worked together with retailers and conducted spot checks with a view to prosecuting if shops were found to be selling cigarettes to the under aged.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report and Appendix to the report submitted on progress made on the action plan following the Committee's Tobacco Control Review 2013/14, be noted.

50 **NHS England Co-Commissioning and Primary Care Intentions – Dudley Commissioning Group – Delegated Responsibility for the Commissioning of General Medical Services (General Practitioner (GP) Services)**

A report of the Head of Membership Development was submitted on the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) submission to NHS England to take on delegated responsibility for the commissioning of GP services.

Arising from the presentation of the report a Member referred to the Urgent Care Centre (UCC) and the delays in constructing the proposed extension to the Accident and Emergency section and it was queried whether the interim planned structure would operate effectively. It was considered that a high number of patients attended the Walk in Centre and it was queried whether any analysis of patients had been made, specifically, the number of patients attending from each practice; patient attendance at home practice of surgeries with high usage of the centre; the number of doctors that had registered their intention to terminate contracts at the Walk in Centre due to current and proposed amendments to practices; and an assurance was sought on the future of services.

In responding to the above queries Dr Rathore stated that GP practices held records on patient numbers and indicated that certain information was available. It was pointed out that most Doctors that worked at the Walk in Centre were not local GP's and were used from a pooled source. Malling Health had advertised with a view to recruiting high quality Doctors and all GP's would be given the opportunity to apply for these positions. Insofar as the construction of the UCC it was acknowledged that there were delays and an interim measure had to be put into place to enable the centre to be opened in April of this year.

During the ensuing debate a Member was of the view that a further detailed report should be presented to the Committee containing information on the proposals, an analysis on the improvements that would be made in comparison to the existing and new structures, the benefits and the impact on GP services. It was also queried how patients and the public were informed about the proposals, particularly as five GP practices did not have Patient Groups.

In responding to the above issues Dr Rathore stated that a key benefit for the CCG taking on delegated responsibility for the commissioning of GP services was that new arrangements would enable practices to open all day.

The Head of Membership Development undertook to circulate the strategy and further detailed information behind the submission to all Members of the Committee. The Chair requested that following receipt of the document that Members submit any further questions directly to him.

Resolved

- (1) That the Head of Membership Development be requested to submit further information and the strategy on the submission to NHS England to all Members of the Committee and that any further questions be submitted direct to the Chair.
- (2) That the information contained in the report and appendices to the report submitted on the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) submission to NHS England to take on delegated responsibility for the commissioning of GP services, be noted.
- (3) That the submission to NHS England providing full assurance that the CCG has taken action to ensure that any potential conflicts of interest have been addressed, be noted.
- (4) That the process in place to ensure a managed transition of functions from NHS England into the Clinical Commissioning Group, be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

CHAIR

**Minutes of the Adult, Community and Housing Services Scrutiny
Committee**

**Wednesday, 18th February, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

Present:

Councillor M Hanif (Chair)
Councillors R Body, I Cooper, A Goddard, Z Islam, J Martin, D Perks, K Turner,
D Tyler and D Vickers.

Officers:

M Williams Chief Officer (Corporate and Customer Services), (Lead Officer to the Committee), R Sims Interim Chief Officer (Housing), S Evans Head of Service – Housing Options, A Leigh Head of Service (Housing Strategy and Development) and H Rowley, Team Manager – Homelessness and Housing Advice – (All Directorate of Environment, Economy and Housing) and K Buckle (Democratic Services Officer) – (Directorate of Resources and Transformation).

31 **Apology for Absence**

An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor R James.

32 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors R Body and K Turner declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 7 – The Homelessness Service as a YMCA Host caring for homeless teenagers and as the Landlord of properties within the Dudley Borough respectively.

33 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

34 **Public Forum**

There were no issues raised under this agenda item heading.

Opening Remarks of the Chair

The Chair referred to an Introduction Note that had been circulated to Members of the Committee advising that at a previous meeting the Committee had considered the Borough's housing strategy, when a number of issues arose one of which was unmet housing demand/need and it had been identified that almost 750 new affordable homes were required per annum over the preceding 13 years in order to meet demand.

The Chair referred to a number of national reports and reviews that had been published during the last few months and the general view that as a nation there was a need to build more homes.

The Chair advised that the intention of the meeting was to consider two reports that had been published, the Elphicke – House Report commissioned by the Government and the Lyons Review commissioned by the Leader of the Opposition. It was noted that both called for more housing and set out a series of recommendations, for a range of organisations to adopt, including national and local government and both documents were likely to have significant implications for the Council and the development of the Council's Housing Strategy.

The Elphicke-House Report and Lyons Review

A report of the Strategic Director of Environment, Economy and Housing was submitted on the Elphicke – House and the Lyons Review concerning housing delivery.

In presenting the report submitted, the Head of Housing Strategy and Development outlined the report submitted by powerpoint presentation, with Members asking questions and making suggestions throughout the presentation.

The Head of Housing Strategy and Development referred to the background of both reviews advising of the number of new builds required nationally and the number of new builds in the Dudley Borough with details of those new builds which were affordable housing. The predicted 2 million shortage of affordable housing by 2020 was referred to. The impact this would have on affordability given rising house prices and rents and the impact on the national economy and prospects for growth were noted.

It was stated that the Elphicke-House Review was led by Natalie Elphicke and Councillor Keith House with the purpose of reviewing the role that local authorities could play in increasing the supply of housing across all tenures in their local areas and was reported back to Government in January, 2015.

It was noted that the key recommendation was that Councils should change from being statutory providers to being housing delivery enablers which

Included being responsible for making development happen in their area rather than assessing housing need and determining planning permission with Councils creating a house building culture and using their position, powers, skills and resources to benefit their communities.

The Elphicke-House review believed that Councils could drive appropriate housing delivery through differing strands and these were outlined to the Committee.

The Head of Housing Strategy and Development referred to the Lyons Housing Review which had identified a need for concentrated Government action to encourage a step change in the building of new homes and the need to provide local communities through their local councils with the power to ensure that homes are appropriate to their needs together with a need to attract new entrants into house building and supporting small/medium enterprise house builders.

It was noted that the key similarities of both reviews included, the vision of increased housing provision, the enhanced role for local authorities, support for small builders, attracting new entrants into the market, new delivery models and increasing the levels of Housing Revenue Account borrowing.

The Head of Housing Strategy and Development referred to the key differences of both reviews and advised that the Council had already used a number of the ways identified in the Elphicke-House report to improve viability for development including releasing land for development particularly garage sites and a disused care home; undertaking a review of assets to identify land for potential development, working with corporate colleagues through the Local Enterprise plan in order to identify sites for disposal; creating additional borrowing capacity, part of which was being utilised to build on the former Dudley Guest Hospital site with the exploration of a number of recommendations of the Lyons Review including the provision of Local Authority mortgages, Local Enterprise Plan funding to deal with remediation opportunities and to use small/medium enterprise builders in new housing provision.

During the presentation the Head of Housing Strategy and Development responded to Member's questions as follows:-

- That work had been conducted with a number of Developers in relation to deferred payment schemes in order to prevent work wait times on further developments and the provision of discounted land to registered providers continued to be investigated. However discussions with Officers and senior decision makers were required in relation to more radical approaches to the provision of affordable housing in order to appraise the risks associated to developments to reach conclusions regarding the provision of affordable housing;

- Engagement continued with a whole range of stakeholders and registered providers in order to establish the requirements of communities and meeting their needs.
- The Council were in the process of conducting a review of their Housing Local Investment Plan;
- That the last Housing Conference involved a range of stakeholders and resulted in Officers continuing to conduct work on a range of investment priorities;
- That a bid had been submitted in order to develop a housing zone in the Dudley Borough with a specific element being a modular build and that the outcome of the bid would become known shortly. That funding from the Government's Housing and Communities Agency would bring developments forward in timescales through cash flow in order to meet housing needs in the short term.
- That affordable housing was that which was let at a rate of 80% of market rents, rented to those in housing need and would also include shared ownership housing where the Housing Association continued to retain a share in the housing.
- In order to meet existing housing needs approximately 748 new homes would have to be built per annum;
- It was expected that the target of 220 affordable homes would be achieved during the current financial year with the completion of the development in Lime Gardens, Cradley and also the provision of housing at Saltbrook Place which would provide supported housing for homeless people;
- It was acknowledged that there were difficulties with development schemes within the Dudley Borough due to the remediation work that was required in order to ensure that schemes were viable and that funding streams were being investigated for remediation work on brown field sites. That, discussions were ongoing with the Homes and Communities Agency with a view to making business premises available for homes within communities due to the legacy of the land within the Dudley Borough. It was recognised that developers were developing outside the Dudley Borough, in areas where there were more greenfield sites.
- That there were concerns regarding remediation work impacting on the affordable housing element of developments;
- That Land Availability Assessments assisted in identifying a number of sites for development both in public and private ownership;

For clarification purposes the Interim Chief Officer (Housing) advised that the provision of 220 affordable homes referred to above had in the main been delivered through Housing Associations and built with a range of partners. It was stated that for a number of years the Council had been restricted in relation to new builds, however it had now been recognised that Local Authorities could make a real contribution to affordable housing and this would positively impact upon the future provision of council housing.

In relation to the provision of affordable housing Members made suggestions as follows:-

- That time was of the essence in relation to new builds;
- There was a need to engage with companies who provided building materials for housing together with the need to commission recycling building materials for new builds and the requirement for a system that was fit for purpose in order to encourage developers to build in the Dudley Borough;
- The exploration of the possibility of developers providing the affordable housing allocation within one community rather than across several developments in order to alleviate issues of remedial costs on industrial land.

Following further discussions it was

Resolved

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report submitted, on the Elphicke – House and Lyons Review concerning housing delivery together with Members comments, be noted.
- (2) That a further report on Housing Delivery within the Dudley Borough be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee in the next municipal year.

37. **The Homelessness Service**

A report of the Strategic Director of Environment, Economy and Housing was submitted on the operational delivery of the Council's Homelessness Service.

The Chair introduced the report referring to the Committee's initial consideration of the Borough's Housing Strategy when one of the key issues for Members was how the needs of young people were being met and the report on the Homelessness Service in part dealt with service response to the needs of young people who found themselves homeless. In addition the report also detailed information as to how the Council responded to all citizens of the Dudley Borough who were threatened with homelessness or were homeless.

It was noted that the report highlighted some of the positive messages in the Dudley Borough, however it also outlined challenges during the critical period whilst the Dudley Borough responded to the increasing pressures of austerity.

In presenting the report submitted, the Head of Service – Housing Options referred to the powerpoint presentation slides together with the predicted figures for the year 2014/15 for homelessness decisions and outcomes that had been circulated to Members at the meeting.

The Head of Service – Housing Options advised that operational performance exceeded targets, families and young people were well provided for and that early help was of paramount importance. It was noted that there had been an increase in rough sleeping and those who were ineligible to receive help through the homelessness service.

Forecasted figures were provided in relation to those who were entitled to a limited service, those who were entitled to a full duty however there was no local connection, those who were entitled to a full duty and the number of cases where homelessness had been prevented.

In relation to preventing homelessness it was noted that this included keeping someone in their home or finding them another before they became homeless and that should the customer approach the service as soon as their home was at risk and their requirements were reasonable, the service could almost always prevent homelessness.

The Head of Service – Housing Options referred to the full duty acceptances which included relationship breakdown both violent and non violent, termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies, parental exclusion, the end of asylum seeker accommodation and mortgage arrears. It was stated that priority need would be given to those with dependent children, those who were vulnerable and those who were victims of flood, fire and violence.

Percentages of those accessing the service in relation to ethnicity were noted together with details of the reasons for priority need and the ages of those who were entitled to a full duty.

The Head of Service – Housing Options referred to the temporary accommodation that was available and when it may be allocated.

It was reported that approximately 55% of people approaching the service were not statutorily homeless and that approximately 15% were homeless but not in priority need and of those the majority were male. That over half were attributed to family exclusion or relationship breakdown, some could be assisted via the waiting list or “No Wait” homes and that many were difficult to assist due to their previous housing history.

The Head of Service – Housing Options referred to the opening of Saltbrook Place in March, 2015 which would provide both en-suite accommodation and one bedroom flats and would greatly improve facilities for single homelessness groups.

The Head of Service – Housing Options referred to work with partners in relation to homelessness which included work with young offenders, providing outreach and personal packages to rough sleepers, mortgage arrears and debt prevention work with the Citizens Advice Bureau, hospital discharge, prison release and a probation housing scheme, private sector housing plus additional work with, for example, housing management, housing support services and substance misuse.

Details in relation to accessing the service were provided including the provision of an emergency out of hours service and hospital discharge via Housing Occupational Therapy.

Building on work going forward was outlined together with achieving new goals including entering the programme in order to achieve the Gold Standard Accreditation.

Arising from the presentation and in response to Members questions the Head of Service – Housing Option responded as follows:-

- In relation to those families that were ineligible to receive assistance from the homelessness service, it was unlawful to rent a property to, for example, a person in the UK from a country inside or outside the European Economic area who does not have recourse to public funds on entry. However if a family were homeless and a duty arose under the Childrens Act it would be possible to rent accommodation to Children's Services in order for them to accommodate the family temporarily and as economically as possible;
- The Homelessness and Housing Advice Service were part of multi agency Panels, with Officers attending the Domestic Abuse Forum and having links in place with the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, discussing high risk victims with a view to helping them receive resources and the service were also involved with the Police on a day to day basis in relation to those who were homeless and in need of support and/or a place of safety;
- Those who had served in the armed forces could qualify for housing on a priority need should they have a local connection or a previous local connection;
- In relation to those with mental health issues, the Homelessness Service worked closely with Adult, Social Care and all staff were trained in recognising mental health problems with the Service also receiving advice from the team of Occupational Therapists within Housing Services;
- Given the range of temporary accommodation there had not been an issue with non provision when a duty arose, however should this occur in the future, the risk to secure accommodation would be assessed and should the person be vulnerable or at risk, temporary accommodation outside the Borough would be an option;

- That a funding bid had been made to the Government to finance improving a range of secure units for those who had suffered domestic abuse;
- The new Midland Heart development in Saltbrook Place would provide both en-suite emergency accommodation and one bedroom flats which would improve facilities for single homeless people;
- Help in the form of rent bonds and rent advances were provided by the service in order to assist customers access private accommodation where appropriate;
- Details of the homelessness service were publicised on the Council's website. West Midlands Police and hospitals also signpost homeless people to the service.

Councillor Tyler referred to the Triage Service that was operated by the Police whereby those who were homeless with mental health issues would be taken to a place of safety.

Councillor Cooper recommended that further work be undertaken in relation to BME households and particularly those who were under 25 and this was noted by the Head of Service – Housing Options.

The Head of Service – Housing Options undertook to provide the Chair with details of the parts of the Dudley Borough where homeless BME households had been identified.

Councillor D Perks stated that he had constituents who required “no wait properties” however he had been advised that these were unavailable and he had telephoned Dudley Council Plus to express his concerns and had been advised to contact Council Housing Officers and he wished this to be noted.

The Head of Service – Housing Options undertook to provide Councillor Body with details of whether a reconnections service was being provided to a particular ineligible homeless person who he had recommended to the service.

The Chair and Members thanked Officers for the progress made with the Homelessness and Housing Advice Service and the dedication of the Officers involved with the Service.

Resolved

That the information contained in report submitted, on the Homelessness Service together with Members comments be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

CHAIR

ACHS/41

**Minutes of the Adult, Community and Housing Services Scrutiny
Committee**

**Monday, 9th March, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

Present:

Councillor M Hanif (Chair)
Councillor R James (Vice Chair)
Councillors R Body, I Cooper, A Goddard, Z Islam, J Martin, D Perks, K Turner,
D Tyler and D Vickers.

Officers:

M Williams Chief Officer (Corporate and Customer Services), (Lead Officer to the Committee), M Bowsher Chief Officer (Adult Social Care), S Lackenby (Head of Commissioning) – (Both Directorate of People Services) and K Buckle (Democratic Services Officer) – (Directorate of Resources and Transformation).

38. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor K Turner declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 6 – The Care Act and Market Shaping as Director and Chairman of Age Concern, Stourbridge and Halesowen.

39. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

40. **Public Forum**

There were no issues raised under this agenda item heading.

41. **The Care Act and Market Shaping**

M Bowsher Chief Officer (Adult Social Care) summarised the areas of the Care Act that the Committee had scrutinised on three separate occasions during the municipal year, including the legal changes arising from the Act, the financial implications of the Care Act to the Council, savings delivered to date and changes to eligibility, costs and charges together with the new rights for Carers,

the range of services and support that would be required, associated costs and the views of an experienced carer, Mr P Acutt.

The Chief Officer (Adult, Social Care) advised that the questions raised to date had assisted Officers to refine Care Act implementation plans and referred to further work that had been undertaken to improve the information and advice systems. It was noted that that work had been accelerated to identify support for Carers and continual financial modelling was being undertaken.

The Chief Officer (Adult, Social Care) outlined the purpose of the presentation on The Care Act and Market Shaping, advising this would be a key area that would influence the range of care services on offer to people in the Borough and also the quality and sustainability of those services

There followed a powerpoint presentation on The Care Act and Market Shaping by the Head of Commissioning, Adult, Social Care, with Members asking questions, making suggestions and comments throughout the presentation.

The concept of commissioning services in relation to Care Act requirements was outlined including the need to consider the Borough's communities, examine the services currently available and addressing the need for current and future services.

In relation to market shaping it was indicated that the key parts included the need to shape local provision to ensure local people choose and control the support they require which would involve the requirement to continue consistent dialogue with local people and encouraging relationships with providers.

It was noted that an oversight of all services was required in order to provide more timely responses to crisis and deal with provider failure in order to mitigate against financial or organisational failure, with a new statutory duty to drive the quality of care and support services for the better.

The three specific strands to commissioning were outlined which included access and prevention for those requiring adult, social care services, that would involve working with public and voluntary organisations to assist people to remain in their own homes and providing a single point of contact; the need for assessment and independence in relation to those who were elderly and required adult, social care services, with linkages required with extra care housing and the hospital discharge services and the need for services to deal with those who had complex needs, such as learning and physical disabilities.

The Head of Commissioning referred to the Dudley Quality Standard of adult, social care that locally had been delivered for the previous three years and rated organisations within the Borough in meeting care needs as either, bronze, gold or silver, with the standard being rolled out to all providers. It was noted that there would be continuing work in order to progress their services from bronze to gold. It was also noted that there was a Trip Advisor type

ratings scheme whereby service provision could be rated from one to five, and the implementation of the Gateway electronic system that would record all interventions with providers with the requirement for organisations to provide self assessments in order for the Council to recognise what capacity organisations had, and being notified of vacancies as and when they arose in order to continue partnership working in relation to the delivery of adult, social care.

In responding to a Member's question relating to that part of the presentation in respect of the Dudley Quality standard, the Head of Commissioning advised that given the vast number of adult social care contracts expiring and renewing at differing times continual support would be provided to those organisations in order to achieve a gold standard and in view of this, access to systems of identifying standards and rates of providers would not take place until the process had been embedded with organisations across the Borough.

It was noted that work had been undertaken in relation to assisting people requiring adult social care services to remain in their own homes and ensure more timely hospital discharges, with the Council's housing services in order to fast track tenancies, providing adaptations and that further work would be conducted in order to increase the amount of capacity to provide specific residential care beds.

The Head of Commissioning also referred to the need for organisations to collaborate to provide services and the prospect of organisations sharing human resources and back office functions in order to plug the gaps in areas of service provision and produce good practice.

In responding to Members' questions regarding organisations operating from co-locations and problems that may occur with organisations charging differing amounts for adult social care services, the Chief Officer (Adult, Social Care), referred to statutory duties of the Council under the Localism Act to provide a list of their building assets that could be utilised to provide adult social care services. He referred to a Council owned building situated in Stafford Street, Dudley that was now a day care centre and available to provide a whole range of services.

The Head of Commissioning referred to the range and quality of choice of preventative services and referred to discussions that had taken place with organisations in relation to providing access to those services to those who struggled with transport, indicating that discussions had taken place with those organisations who had fleet vehicles available in order to both provide care and accessibility to care. He also advised of the need for a level of engagement with local people and co-production with organisations.

In responding to a question from a Member, the Head of Commissioning advised of the training available in relation to dementia and undertook to provide Members with further details of dementia training.

In relation to a query in relation to the Gateway and Partnership working aspect of adult social care commissioning, the Head of Commissioning referred to two extra care schemes at Broadmeadow and Willowfields advising that to date twelve people had expressed an interest in extra care facility. He advised that advertising the facility at Lime Gardens had taken place both at general practitioners surgeries and hospitals and the lack of take up of the extra care provision may be due to the continuing adaptation of older people's properties. He also advised that given the number of staff that had to be in place at Lime Gardens the Council had to purchase a certain amount of hours of care for an initial three month period, however following that initial period it had been made clear that purchasing hours of care would be upon an individual basis.

The Head of Commissioning undertook to provide the Vice-Chair with details of the twelve people who had expressed an interest in the facility at Lime Gardens.

The Chief Officer (Adult, Social Care) advised that there was a Panel process with the Panel meeting twice weekly in relation to those wishing to receive extra care at the Lime Gardens facility and that the allocation of places would occur on a phased basis given the need to assess needs and prioritise the scheme upon the basis of appropriateness to individual needs.

There followed suggestions by Members in relation to integrating communities, the need to address integration urgently and the difficulties in achieving such integration. The possibility of all needs being catered for and an example of a couple was provided, one being the carer and being active and the other not so active and requiring care.

The Head of Commissioning outlined the current Adult, Social Care Services provided, including those promoting living independently by providing short term support, advice and services, the provision of care and support, prevention services and universal services where non social care support or universal services could assist.

Details of the services provided, including the three Dementia Gateways, twenty five home care providers, four extra care housing schemes and 1700 residential and nursing beds in the Borough were noted.

It was further noted that every service available would be exhausted to prevent a person entering the residential care system.

Details of further support, services, community connections and partnership working were outlined including investigating respite services and how to innovatively provide transport for those experiencing difficulties accessing services due to transport issues.

In responding to a Member's question in relation to how the needs of people were met who were in minority groups, the Head of Commissioning referred to the need to be reflective for demographic communities, when restructuring services as the notion of community commissioning progresses.

The Head of Commissioning advised that it was intended for all front line workers to be aware of the adult social care services available in all areas of the Borough, in order to signpost the Borough's residents accordingly.

The Head of Commissioning referred to the move towards a Community Council and the need to work together with local people in shaping the adult social care services being offered which would require opportunities to join up services and promote awareness in relation to community services and activities.

Members made suggestions in relation to bringing local people together in order to shape the services in their communities as follows:-

- Publicise via the Clinical Commissioning Group, Community Forums, Health Watch, Dudley Council for Voluntary Services and Council meetings in order to form links with the community;
- Publicise on notice boards, for example at supermarkets or in shop windows;
- That closer integration was required with General Practitioners and pharmacies in order to engage with the public;
- The possibility of engaging the public at sporting events such as football matches;
- The Council should go out to the public in order to engage them in more private environments, given the sensitivity surrounding the need for adult social care;
- The requirement to investigate the area of engagement thoroughly in order to devise a workable model for this purpose;
- That all Members of the Council should be requested to make suggestions and recommendations in order to shape services;
- That consultation should take place with the Council's Marketing Department in order to engage with the public;
- The use of facebook and twitter;

In responding to a Member's question in relation to the community commissioning their own services, the Head of Commissioning advised that although that was an option the community required the ability to shape the services they received and further investigation would be required in relation to how beneficial it would be to place commissioning into the hands of the Community.

Members confirmed that they would welcome the opportunity to become involved in the roll out of the Dudley Quality Standard.

Resolved

That the information contained in the presentation and comments made arising from the presentation, as indicated above on The Care Act and Market Shaping, be noted.

42. **Closing Remarks of the Chair and Vice-Chair**

This being the last meeting of the Committee of the current municipal year, the Chair thanked the Vice-Chair for his support and Officers and Members of the Committee for their contributions during the year.

The Vice-Chair thanked the Chair for his contributions to the work of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.

CHAIR

Minutes of the Corporate Performance Management, Efficiency and Effectiveness Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 5th March, 2015 at 6 p.m.
In Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

Present:

Councillor D Blood (Chair)
Councillor B Cotterill (Vice-Chair)
Councillors C Baugh, D Caunt, J. Cowell, Elcock, A Finch, P Harley, S Henley, M Mottram and D Russell.

Officers:

G Thomas (Assistant Director – Policy and Improvement) – Lead Officer to the Committee, M Wooldridge (Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer), M.Baines (Principal Officer, Project Management) and J.Jablonski (Assistant Principal Officer, Democratic Services)

Also in attendance – for agenda item no.5 – Update on Crime and Community Safety

Councillor J.Foster – an Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner; Chief Superintendent Johnson; Detective Chief Inspector J.Skyrme and S Haywood, Head of Community Safety.

23 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Marrey.

24 **Declaration of Interest**

No Member made a declaration of Interest in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting..

25 **Appointment of substitute Member**

It was reported that Councillor J Cowell was serving in place of Councillor Marrey for this meeting of the Committee only.

Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

Update on Crime and Community Safety

In introducing this item the Chair reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), David Jamieson, had unfortunately now been unable to attend the meeting. Councillor Foster was in attendance in her capacity as an Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner and commented on her role, which included being the Lead for the PCC for Dudley and other Black Country boroughs, and to respond to questions asked.

Prior to responding to certain questions, of which she had been given prior notice, she then commented on the PCC's priorities for 2015/16 and how they contributed to making Dudley a safer place. In this connection she referred to the Strategic Policing Care Plan and the role of local Police and Crime Boards; the priorities of Dudley's board reflected those of other boards.

Following consultation events in Dudley the priorities were domestic abuse and vulnerable people, drug misuse and hate crime. Other concerns were also commented upon including home burglary, dog fouling and inconsiderate parking. It would be up to the Safe and Sound Partnership to see how these were addressed. Dudley's priorities were therefore those of the PCC and consultations highlighted a number of other issues including troubled families, business crime and inappropriate use of vehicles.

It was also noted that within the Dudley area Dudley North would continue to be a priority area.

Questions were then asked and responded to relating to –

- the impact of abolishing the office of PCC. This was responded to in relation as to what any replacement would look like and that it was difficult to say whether the replacement would be better or worse than the PCC.
- Business crime in that this included theft of petrol from supermarket petrol stations; theft from displays at large stores and metal theft. Such crime involving shop theft was the largest crime type in Dudley. These crimes were not victimless and were often linked to other types of crime.

- Regarding numbers of police constables, it was noted that when comparing 2011/12 with the end of 2015/16 there would be 2,000 fewer officers. However, given the pledge made to recruit 450 posts which had been achieved, overall in twelve months time it was hoped that the force would be in the same position as it is currently, given the 450 posts recruited.
- In response to questions asked, Councillor Foster undertook to inform the Lead Officer of the budget underspend in 2013/14 and 2014/15 so that this information could be forwarded to members of the committee.
- Given the precept of 1.99% resulting in the freeze grant not being paid, it was queried as to the amount the precept would raise and how much would be lost by putting the precept up compared with receiving the freeze grant. Councillor Foster undertook to provide the Lead Officer with the information required so that it could be forwarded to Members.
- Given the reduction in budget and the impact especially on recruitment this would have on the level of service provided it was noted that the requirement for officers with 30 years service to leave the force had now been lifted.
- The near doubling of reserves to £150m was commented on and the non-use of such reserves queried. In response reference was made to the workings of the grant formula and the significant funding gap requiring the need for reserves.

Following the asking of questions, Detective Chief Inspector Jenny Skyrme then gave a presentation entitled Service Transformation – Public Protection Services in Dudley. A copy of the presentation would be placed on the Council's Committee Information Management System. The comprehensive presentation given detailed the changes introduced to tackle child abuse and domestic abuse within the overall context of the force area and specifically in Dudley. The positive outcomes achieved were noted, together with the partnership working undertaken and the need for further work to be done.

In concluding the presentation DCI Skyrme outlined challenges ahead and in addition to the three issues raised commented on a fourth challenge that of hidden crime involving crimes such as female genital mutilation and honour crimes which were complicated by cultural considerations. There was a need to further gain the trust and confidence of communities in relation to such crimes.

A number of questions were then asked and responded to, including -

- The relationship of mental health issues, drugs and alcohol to domestic violence and the need to try and break the relationship with one or all of these factors. A view was expressed that there was a need to change the current licensing laws.
- Joint working with social workers when it is known that child abuse is occurring.
- That the work undertaken was scrutinized and there was confidence that it was done so transparently as regarded officers of the council and the Police.

- That as regards sex offenders Dudley did not have a high number of such offenders.
- Regarding female genital mutilation, it was noted that this was dealt with at the local police level and that Health were the lead on this. Currently there were no successful prosecutions for this crime.
- It was noted that there were three rape suites serving the west midlands area at Walsall, Castle Vale and Nuneaton which serves Coventry and Solihull.
- It was noted that a new custody facility serving Dudley but based in Sandwell would open in June,2015.
- Arising from comments made about referrals from council officers to the police it was considered that further work did need to be done by all agencies in the making of referrals so that referrals were made early and to the right place, Also that work needed to be done on reviewing those referrals. A joint approach on referrals was required.
- That the sub-group of the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board, chaired by DCI Skyrme did challenge officers in relation to child sexual exploitation with a view to achieving a joined up approach. However there was a need to do more in developing intelligence.
- It was considered that schools had an important role to play in relation to safeguarding children. A view was expressed that sex education at primary school could help with this so that as children grew older they would be more aware of the dangers.

Following closing remarks from Councillor Foster and Chief Superintendent Johnson, the Chair thanked them for attending and to DCI Skyrme for her comprehensive presentation.

Resolved

That the information given at the meeting and in the presentation given, together with the responses set out above, be noted and that the Lead Officer be requested to forward the information requested to Members following receipt from Councillor Foster.

28

Corporate Quarterly Performance Management Report

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the third Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for 2014/15 relating to performance for the period 3rd October to December,2014.

In considering the content of the report particular reference was made to PI 120 - % of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).The Lead Officer undertook to review the target with the officers concerned.

Resolved

That the information contained in the Quarterly Performance Management Report in respect of performance for the period from 3rd October to December, 2014 be noted.

29

Update on Corporate Services Utilisation

A presentation was given by Martin Baines on the current position regarding the review of Corporate Services Utilisation in respect of printing, training, graphics and communication and catering. Details of the approximate spend on outside sources for these services, £4,350,000 were given over a twenty-one month period – April, 2013 to December, 2014 together with the methodology used. A note of caution regarding the figures was also given together with aspects of the spend in each of the areas.

Interim conclusions reached were that there was reassurance about external commissioning; appropriate use made of in house resources and that the restructure proposals provided further opportunities for savings.

Resolved

That a further report on the Review of Corporate Services utilisation be submitted to a future meeting incorporating the following recommendations contained in the presentation –

Further analysis of Graphics and Communications due to significant spend, volume of transactions and use of generic coding; and Re-state standing orders ie the obligation to use in-house services which will be done as part of the restructuring proposals.

30

Comments of the Chair

As this was the last scheduled meeting of the committee in the current municipal year the Chair expressed his thanks to Geoff Thomas, Lead Officer to the Committee, for his contribution to the work of the committee over recent years, as this was his last meeting of the committee in that capacity. The Chair also referred to Councillor Caunt, who was not standing for election in May and expressed his appreciation to him for his work on the committee and best wishes to those Members standing for election in May.

The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.

CHAIR

Minutes of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 12th March, 2015 at 6 p.m.
In the Council Chamber, The Council House, Dudley

Present:

Councillor I Cooper (Vice-Chair) in the Chair.
Councillors M Attwood, P Bradley, Z Islam, L Jones, I Marrey, M Mottram, C Perks and K Shakespeare; Mr A Qadus and Mr D Tinsley.

Invitees:

Mrs L Coulter and Ms J Sinden.

Officers:

R Sims (Assistant Director of Housing Strategy and Private Sector, Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services) – Interim Lead Officer, P Sharratt (Interim Director of Children's Services), T Brittain and H Powell (Acting Assistant Directors, Education Services), C Ballinger (Divisional Lead-Social Work) and J Prashar (Divisional Lead-Looked After Children) - all Directorate of Children's Services and R Sanders (Assistant Principal Officer (Democratic Services))

30 **Chairmanship**

The Chair, Councillor Mottram indicated that the Vice Chair, Councillor Cooper, would chair this meeting of the Committee. Councillor Cooper thereupon took the chair.

31 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors N Barlow, C Billingham, R Scott-Dow and from Reverend A Wickens. Apologies for absence were also received from the invitees, Mr Lynch, Mr Nesbitt and Mr Ridney.

32 **Substitution**

It was reported that Councillor K Shakespeare was serving in place of Councillor N Barlow for this meeting of the Committee only.

33 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

34 **Minutes**

Resolved

That subject to the inclusion of the name of Councillor Mottram in the list of apologies for absence, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st January, 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.

35 **Home to School Transport**

At this juncture, Councillor Cooper reported that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services had requested the establishment of a Working Group of Members and Officers to consider the issue of Home to School Transport and that the Interim Director of Children's Services was making the arrangements.

36. **Dudley Schools' OfSTED Outcomes**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services on the performance of Dudley schools and settings in OfSTED inspections during the calendar year 2014.

The report set out the outcomes for all Dudley schools inspected during the period. It was noted that the report did not include short thematic or subject inspections and nor did it include the outcomes of HM Inspectorate monitoring reports for schools which had been judged to "Require Improvement"; or "Serious Weakness" or "Special Measures" unless the visit was converted to full inspection to bring them out of category.

The report indicated the outcomes for schools in respect of the numbers of those schools judged as outstanding, good, requiring improvement or inadequate and compared Dudley's performance in respect of Good or Outstanding outcomes against national outcomes. Academies were included in the Dudley figures.

Further to the presentation of the information by the Acting Assistant Directors for Education Services responsible respectively for Secondary and Primary schools, Mr Powell and Ms Brittain, Members asked questions to which responses were given as indicated.

In response to a question on details of an inspection concerning a secondary Academy, Mr Powell indicated that, while the Council generally had a good and improving relationship with Academies, those establishments operated outside the local authority umbrella and the authority was not entitled to receive detailed information regarding the support they arranged. Academies were able to purchase local authority support, however, should they wish to do so.

A Member expressed concern about the quality of OfSTED inspections in so far as he considered that they placed disproportionate impetus on results in comparison with the quality of teaching. In response, Ms Brittain, reported that there had been some challenges to the way OfSTED inspections had been conducted and one complaint from Dudley had been made. Ms Brittain commented that changes to overall judgements rarely resulted from representations but that HM Inspectorate did take note for future reference. Meetings were held with HM Inspectorate three times a year and particular issues and views on particular inspectors were reported on. It was noted that OfSTED's arrangements would change in September, 2015 in that from then they would oversee all inspections in house.

A question was asked on the measures and services provided by the Council to assist schools in making improvements, in response to which a summary of the traded services available from the local authority was given by Ms Brittain. Ms Brittain also indicated that some support was provided free of charge if a school was in category, in order for it to improve more quickly. The point was made that lesser direct support was available to Secondary schools since specialist expertise was often employed.

A question was asked on the notice given by HM Inspectorate before an inspection was made. In response, it was indicated that, at most, half a day's notice was given and that sometimes there was no notice at all.

Upon allegations being made about practices employed by schools aimed at bringing only the more able staff and pupils to the attention of the Inspectorate when inspections were carried out, the Interim Director of Children's Services responded that this would be extremely difficult to achieve given the very short notice made regarding inspections. She stated, however, that should any evidence be produced, the school in question would be thoroughly investigated. On being advised by Members and an attendee of strong rumours that the sort of practices alluded to had in fact happened, a lengthy discussion ensued and it was agreed that the issue of protection for whistle blowers of this type of manipulation should be considered in the next municipal year.

The point was made that, in instances where manipulation was suspected, evidence was able to be supplied. The need to protect whistle blowers was emphasised. It was recognised that policies were in place to deal with the matter but that strong governing bodies were necessary to ensure that the policies were applied.

On the issue of safeguarding, Ms Brittain outlined the far more proactive approach by OfSTED to individual children whom were not in school and had appeared to have gone missing, and the actions of the Council in response.

Resolved

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted and the questions asked and responses given, as indicated above, be noted.
 - (2) That the Committee support the inclusion of the protection of whistle blowers in relation to the school inspection issues described above in its work programme for 2015/16.
-

37

Standards Report – Performance Data

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services presenting an analysis of the performance of children and young people in Dudley schools and settings during the 2013/14 academic year..

The report indicated the expectations of OfSTED regarding pupil achievement at the end of each Key Stage and showed the proportion of children in Dudley schools whom had reached the Department for Education's (DfE) expected level and the average point score which reflected how well the cohort as a whole had achieved.

The report indicated current position with regard to Reading, Writing and Mathematics in each of Key Stages 1 to 4 in 2014 in comparison to the two preceding academic years. Regarding the Foundation Stage, the DfE's measure was stated as "a good level of development." The Acting Assistant Directors of Children's Services, Ms Brittain and Mr Powell, presented the information and gave details in respect of the Primary and Secondary sectors respectively.

In relation to the different Key Stages, the report noted the following:

- It was anticipated that Dudley would be below the national average in relation to "a good level of development" and the average point score in the Foundation Stage.
- Dudley was in line with the national average in Key Stage 1.
- In relation to Key Stage 2, Dudley was in line with the national average in achieving Level 4 in Mathematics, Reading and Writing. Whereas, with regard to progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, Writing was above the national average and Mathematics in line, Reading was below the national average.
- In relation to Key Stage 4, Dudley was below the national average in all comparitors.

The report indicated that in 2014 Dudley was below the DfE floor standards in Level 4+ in all of Reading, Writing and Mathematics and two levels progress in those subjects.

The report stated the current position with regard to pupils receiving Pupil Premium in comparison with the picture nationally, in all Key Stages.

Following the presentation of the report, Ms Brittain, clarified the distinction between teacher accounts and tests, indicating that Writing was a teacher account, with pupils being assessed over a period, while Reading was a test with pupils examined with immediacy.

On being questioned on whether the performance in the Foundation Stage and in the later Key Stages represented a cause for concern, the Acting Assistant Director, Mr Powell, explained the changes in procedure where there was now a requirement for all courses to have a terminal examination; that early entry to examinations had ceased; and that vocational courses were not scored for GCSE, thus disadvantaging pupils who undertook vocational courses in terms of qualifications. The Acting Assistant Director, Ms Brittain asked the Committee to note that with level 4, Dudley had achieved national levels for the first time in 14 years and that with Mathematics, which had been problematical for some years, results were improving, albeit that this was not the case in Key stage 4.

The point was made by Mr Powell that the local authority could not make a direct impact on schools as it no longer had the necessary resources.

A question was asked on how Pupil Premium was being used, what happened in cases of poor use and whether best practice was shared, to which Ms Brittain responded, referring to meetings held between schools where information was shared and where Pupil Premium was a routine item.

Ms Brittain also indicated that, since the number of Pupil Premium children differed school by school, the finance allocated to each varied correspondingly. She pointed out that what worked for one school did not necessarily work for another. She confirmed that a review of Pupil Premium use was conducted as part of HM Inspections in which a look was taken at how the allocation was being spent and what lessons could be learned. Mr Powell then reported on the attainment levels of Pupil Premium pupils against other pupils in Secondary schools, stating that although the gap had narrowed, it had remained high in schools with high attainment levels.

On being asked about the action being taken by the local authority to narrow the gap in attainment between Pupil Premium and other pupils, Mr Powell indicated that this was a subject raised routinely at the respective Primary and Secondary Heads' training days and referred to bonding and monitoring letters sent to schools in this regard in which anticipated outcomes for Pupil Premium children was requested. Ms Brittain also indicated that the data regarding Pupil Premium children was looked at carefully and monitored.

Further information was requested by a Member on the floor standards pertaining to the two schools referred to in page 10 of the agenda papers. Mr Powell responded that one was an Academy that had declined support offered by the local authority and where the authority was empowered only to alert the DfE, which it had done. The other school was a maintained school which had only recently come out of category, for which the local authority was currently providing consultant support and was brokering support with other authorities.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the impact of the Key Stage 4 results on progress of pupils into 6th Forms, Mr Powell confirmed that the current position was not good since the benchmark for pupils to attend 6th form or College education for level 2 courses was 5 A*-C GCSE grades, therefore Dudley pupils were being disadvantaged. The point was made that some secondary pupils who started from a high level were only achieving a grade C in GCSE and thus the conclusion to be reached was that Dudley schools were not always pushing pupils capable of higher attainment. On being so requested, Mr Powell agreed to provide quantitative information indicating the number of Dudley children who proceeded to University education.

On being asked on whether Dudley received and compared statistical information on attainment by Colleges, Mr Powell indicated that there was no obligation for Colleges to share data, although all three Dudley Colleges did provide it. It was more difficult to share information involving Colleges from outside Dudley. Mr Powell made the point that the Connexions Service continued to operate and consequently was able to provide support for any young person requiring it in their transition to Post 16, particularly from Year 9 onwards, and that the number of young persons not in education, employment or training was declining.

In response to a question on whether schools worked in clusters to share expertise and ideas, Mr Powell indicated that Primary Schools were generally willing to work in this manner but that maintained Secondary schools were less inclined to do so. Academies, however, were joining together in this regard and Ellowes Hall and Crestwood schools were working together as were King Edward VI 6th Form College and Ridgewood High School. The trend nationally was for schools to work together and the DfE was encouraging this practice. Mr Powell indicated further that the relationship between the local authority and Academies was improving, in particular, the local authority kept in contact with Academies and Academies attended local authority meetings.

Resolved

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and the comments and responses recorded above, be noted.
- (2) That the information requested on how many Key Stage 4 children from Dudley proceed to University be obtained and reported to the Committee.

38

Child Neglect

An oral report on the issue of Child Neglect was given.

Following a brief introduction by the Interim Director of Children's Services, in which she made the point that a significant number of children with additional needs and whom were in social care, were in this position through Child Neglect, a presentation was given on the different issues which resulted in children being neglected. As part of the presentation, audio training interviews with children the subject of Child Protection Orders because of Child Neglect were shown.

In providing statistical information, the Divisional Lead – Social Work stated that, over the year 12630 contacts had been made to the local authority for children requiring a service from the Council during 2013/14. This was a rising number. Just over a third of the enquiries progressed to the need for Children's Social Care to provide a service. However, there is still a need to consider what support might be needed by the remaining two thirds of the cohort. An average of 80% of cases needing a service from Children's Social care were deemed to need an assessment.

On the issue of Domestic Violence, 2658 cases had been reported to the Police, an increase of over 40% over the year. The role of the local authority and its partners was to consider the support that needed to be provided for the children in the families.

Dudley's position was that there were now 314 children subject to Child Protection Plans, of whom 83% were subject to Plans for reasons of neglect and emotional harm.

On a comment being made that the statistical information represented an average of 35 contacts and one Child Protection Plan per day, in response to a question on whether sufficient resources were available, the Interim Director referred to the screening required in each case and the work being undertaken to secure earlier intervention through signposting. The challenge was to obtain improved partnership working. She did not consider the service sufficiently resourced.

In relation to Adolescent Neglect, the Divisional Lead – Looked After Children reported that this was more widespread than previously thought and referred to the impact this type of neglect could have on their adolescence. She referred particularly to the emotional effect of children who lived in accommodation far from home or who had run away from home, a feature of which being that they did not feel cared for. The Divisional Lead – Social Care indicated that, nationally, Child Neglect had been a factor in some 60% of Serious Case reviews and was a prominent feature in suicides among 11-15 year olds. There were concerns regarding the negative impact children suffering from neglect could have on their own future parenting skills.

A Member expressed disappointment that joint agency working was not currently effective in providing early intervention and it was agreed that partnership working in this regard was an area that should be scrutinised in the coming year.

On being asked about prosecutions on domestic violence and associated information, the Interim Director agreed to provide the invitee who raised the matter with the computer link.

In response to questions, the Divisional Lead-Social Care then explained the ways in which domestic abuse were reported and notified and confirmed that both verbal and physical abuse was included as domestic violence. The most serious cases were considered at a Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which was chaired by the Police.

On the issue of case loads on Child Neglect matters, the Divisional Lead-Social Work indicated that this was 20-25 cases per Social Worker, allocation having regard to the complexity of the case. The Divisional Lead – Social Care then explained how cases were dealt with, including the impact on children when parents were not able to meet their needs. In reply to another question, the Divisional Lead – Social Care stated that figures relating to child abuse resulting from foetal alcohol consumption were not available as it was a complex syndrome with a range of symptoms and effects. She described that babies may need special care to deal with the effects of alcohol. She also described how parental problems could make a parent 'emotionally unavailable' to their children, and the impact of this at different stages of child development.

Regarding the Troubled Families Programme, a comment was made that the national initiatives such as this tended to be prescriptive at the outset but more flexible later. It was explained that our programme in Dudley had been positively evaluated, and that as an early adopter for the next stage we had the opportunity to develop some additional flexibility in service criteria. Alongside this work is being undertaken to mainstream the approach, linking with other services.

Reference was made to a particular case of child neglect and to the role of the school governor, in response to which the Interim Director asked the Member concerned to contact her.

In indicating that the purpose of the presentation at this stage was to alert the Committee to the issue of Child Neglect, The Interim Director offered Members the facility to visit the Council's Troubled Families Team.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be received and the comments made, as referred to above, be noted.
- (2) That the consideration by the Committee of Child Neglect, including partnership working in this respect, in the next municipal year be supported.

39 **Thanks to Committee**

This being the last meeting of the Committee in the current municipal year, the Vice- Chair thanked all Members for their work over the year.

40 **Pauline Sharratt**

This being the last meeting Ms Sharratt would be attending in her professional capacity pending her retirement from the Council's service, the Vice-Chair thanked Ms Sharratt for her outstanding contribution to children's services and child safety issues in Dudley over the years.

The meeting ended at 8.35 p.m.

CHAIR

Minutes of the Appointments Committee

Thursday 12th February, 2015 at 9.30 am
in Committee Room 3, Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

Present:

Councillors P Brothwood, T Crumpton, M Evans, J Foster, P Harley, R Harris, L Jones, G Partridge and S Turner

Officers:

T Reilly (Assistant Director of Corporate Resources - Human Resources and Organisational Development) and J Millar, Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing)

63 **Appointment of Chair**

Resolved

That Councillor S Turner be appointed as Chair for this meeting of the Committee.

64 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors P Lowe, D Sparks and D Vickers.

65 **Appointment of Substitute Members**

Councillors T Crumpton, L Jones and G Partridge were serving in place of Councillors D Sparks, D Vickers and P Lowe respectively, for this meeting of the Committee.

66 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were received in respect of any matters to be considered at this meeting.

67 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th December, 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

68 **Exclusion of the Public**

Resolved

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to any individual(s) as defined under Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

69 **Chief Officer Appointment – Children’s Services**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development on the recruitment process in connection with the appointment of the Chief Officer Children’s Services, and to seek approval for external interim arrangements whilst the post is re advertised.

Resolved

- (1) That the appointment of an external interim for a period of six months, whilst further efforts are undertaken to recruit, be approved. This appointment will be made by Tony Oakman, Designate Strategic Director (People) and Councillor T Crumpton, Cabinet Member for Children’s services in consultation with Councillor L Jones as opposition Spokesperson for Children’s Services and Councillor P Brothwood as UKIP Group leader
 - (2) That the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and Children’s Services and Councillors L Jones and P Brothwood, be authorised to review the external interim arrangements, based on the recruitment process, if necessary.
-

70 **Chief Officer Appointment – Housing**

The Committee interviewed candidates for the post of Chief Officer (Housing).

Resolved

That Mark Rodgers, currently the Director of Housing and Property Services at Waverley Housing, be appointed to the post of Chief Officer (Housing), with effect from 5th May, 2015 in accordance with the salary and terms and conditions of employment applicable to the post.

The meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.

CHAIR

APP/23

Minutes of Audit and Standards Committee

Tuesday 10th February, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 3, The Council House, Dudley

Present:-

Councillor J Cowell (Chair)
Councillor M Roberts (Vice-Chair)
Councillors C Billingham, P Brothwood, M Evans, C Perks, D Russell
(from Minute No. 47), A Taylor and D Tyler

Officers:-

I Newman (Chief Officer – Finance and Legal Services); M Bowsher
(Chief Officer – Adult Social Care); L Bradshaw (Head of Audit Services);
G Harrison (Audit Manager - Central Services); P Sharratt (Interim
Director for Children’s Services); J Szczechowski (Head of Accountancy);
A Taylor (Principal Auditor), and K Taylor (Democratic Services Officer).

Also in Attendance:-

S. Joberns (Grant Thornton)

41. **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of
Councillor A Aston.

42. **Appointment of Substitute Member**

It was reported that Councillor C Perks had been appointed as substitute
member for Councillor A Aston for this meeting of the Committee only.

43. **Declarations of Interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with Members’
Code of Conduct in respect of any matter to be considered at this
meeting.

44. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th December, 2014, be
approved as a correct record and signed.

45. **Change in Order of Business**

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c) it was:-

Resolved

That the remaining items of business be considered in the following order :-

Agenda Item Nos. 11, 12, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

46. **Exclusion of the Public**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following two items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to any individual(s) as defined under Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

47. **Annual Audit Report in relation to the Directorate of Children's Services**

A report of the Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services was submitted on the audit work undertaken in the Directorate of Children's Services for the financial year 2013/14 and incorporating details of the more important findings as indicated in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report submitted.

Arising from consideration of the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted reference was made to the improvement of the number of post audit questionnaires completed and returned and the percentage of final reports issued within six weeks of the draft report.

Following concerns raised regarding the number of unimplemented recommendations for the Directorate and Schools, the Head of Audit Services informed the Committee that almost half of the recommendations and unimplemented specifically related to two audits.

Members asked a number of questions and made comments which were responded too, in particular in respect of the management responses highlighted in the report.

Following further discussion it was

Resolved

That the findings of the 2013/14 audit work be accepted.

48.

Employees not taking lunch breaks or compensatory breaks

A report of the Chief Officer Adult Social Care was submitted on the policy and current practice within the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services in respect of care staff taking lunch breaks within a care setting, following a request made at the previous meeting of the Committee.

Arising from consideration of the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted the Chief Officer Adult Social Care referred specifically to section 7.2 of the Working Time Directive policy, attached as Appendix 2 of the report submitted, in particular that there was scope for staff not to take lunch breaks in residential care type settings, however there was an opportunity for a compensatory break. He further reported that the breaks were an entitlement and not enforceable and gave thanks to staff at the Day Centres for prioritising the needs of the clients.

Members asked a number of questions and made comments which were responded to.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the policy and current practice within the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services in respect of care staff taking lunch breaks within a care setting, be noted.

49.

Grant Thornton Audit Committee Update

A report of the Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services was submitted on a report published by Grant Thornton updating members on progress in delivering their responsibilities as Dudley's external auditors. A copy of the full report was appended to the report submitted.

Ms Joberns then presented the report and Appendix to the report submitted and referred in particular to the national report "2020 Vision", which was available to download, and provided a thorough analysis of the current political and economic context and highlighted that English local authorities continued to face unprecedented challenges.

In responding to a question by the Chair in relation to the potential implications for Dudley in Accounting for Schools, Ms Joberns reported that it would be complicated due to the constant changes in Schools in particular in locating various records associated to a School.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on an Audit Committee Update published by Grant Thornton, be noted.

50. **Grant Thornton Report: Certification Work 2013/14**

A report of the Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services was submitted on the external auditor's Annual Report on Certification of Claims and Returns for 2013/14. A copy of the Annual Report was attached as an Appendix to the report submitted.

Ms Joburns was in attendance at the meeting and commented in particular that the auditors had certified two claims, namely, housing benefits subsidy claim and pooling of housing capital receipts with no concerns. She further reported that the errors found in the calculation and classification of benefit payments on the form were predominately administrative errors, which were expected due to the complexity of the paperwork.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the Annual Report on Certification of Claims and Returns for 2013/14 be noted.

51. **Treasury Management**

A report of the Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services was submitted on treasury activity during the financial year 2014/15, up to December, 2014, and also seeking approval of the Treasury Strategy Statement 2015/16.

Arising from consideration of the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted, Members asked a number of questions and made comments which were responded too in relation to the process should HSBC, the bank used currently that meets the minimum credit criteria and had the highest credit rating, fall below the Council's minimum criteria; and the gap between authorised limit for external debt and operational boundary.

Resolved

That, subject to the approval of Council:-

- (1) Treasury Management activities in 2014/15, as outlined in the report submitted be noted.
- (2) The Treasury Strategy 2015/16, attached as Appendix 2 to the report submitted, be approved.

- (3) The Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services be authorised to effect such borrowings, repayments and investments as were appropriate and consistent with the approved Treasury Strategy and relevant guidance.
-

52. **Exclusion of the Public**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to any individual(s) as defined under Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

53. **Audit Services Interim Performance Report**

A report of the Chief Officer Finance and Legal Services was submitted on an update on Audit Services performance and other related information.

The Head of Audit Services stated that Audit Services had completed 59% of the audit plan against a target of 66%, however the time taken from the start of an audit to the issue of the draft audit reports had decreased resulting in 84% of draft reports being issued within seven weeks of the audit starting, against a performance of 97% the previous year. The performance was due to the work pressures experienced due to staff leaving.

It was noted that the progress on Value for Money had been impacted by the Principal Auditor (Special Projects) leaving the authority. However the position had been replaced by a Principal auditor who would concentrate on planned audit work.

It was reported that the bid submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government in respect of a Counter Fraud Fund to help strengthen resources to combat corporate fraud was unsuccessful; however funds had been identified to employ a Corporate Fraud Manager.

Reference was made to the findings of the external review of Audit Services in 2014/15, attached as Appendix B of the report submitted; in particular that Audit Services had been assessed as meeting the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The Head of Audit Services reported on the management responses to the recommendations presented in the report, which were in the process of being implemented.

In responding to a Member, the Head of Audit Services undertook to circulate a copy of the Suppliers Code of Good Practice to Councillor Brothwood.

Members asked a number of questions and made comments which were responded too in particular in relation to the number of frauds investigated, and the circumstances surrounding cancelled audits.

Following further discussion it was

Resolved

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the Head of Audit Services be requested to provide Councillor Brothwood with a copy of the Suppliers Code of Good Practice.

The meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.

CHAIR

Minutes of the Development Control Committee
Tuesday 24th February, 2015 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

Present:-

Councillor Q Zada (Chair)
Councillors A Ahmed, D Caunt, A Goddard, J Martin, C Perks, R Scott-Dow and D Vickers

Officers:-

F Agha (Senior Development Control Officer) J Butler (Group Engineer), J Dunn ((Tree Protection Officer), H Martin (Head of Planning), J Pilkington (Senior Conservation Officer), N Powell, (Head of Environmental Health) and P Reed (Principal Development Control Officer) (All Directorate of Environment, Economy and Housing); G Breakwell (Senior Solicitor) and M Johal (Democratic Services Officer) (Directorate of Resources and Transformation).

73 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor K Casey.

74 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Zada declared a non pecuniary interest in Planning Application No P14/1831 (60 Hill Street, Netherton, Dudley) in view of reference made to Hillcrest School as his child attended that school.

Councillor Zada also referred to Planning Application No P15/0005 (Hingley Anchor, Netherton, Dudley) and indicated that he had, in the past, supported the retention of the Anchor in Netherton and it was stated that he would consider the application on its merits and previous views would not prejudice his judgement.

75 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the Committee held on 2nd February, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

76 **Site Visit**

Consideration was given to the following planning application in respect of which Members of the Committee had undertaken a site visit earlier that day.

Some Members that had attended the site visit were of the opinion that the pitched roof was impinging and oppressive and it was considered that a flat roof would be better.

<u>Application No</u>	<u>Location/Proposal</u>	<u>Decision</u>
P14/1788	61 Birch Coppice, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill – Replace flat roof with pitched roof (Retrospective).	(1) That the application be refused for the reason that the pitched gable roof is detrimental to the residential amenities of the occupiers of the adjacent dwelling by reason of the significant impact upon outlook, contrary to saved Policy DD4 of the 2005 Unitary Development Plan. (2) That the Director of Environment, Economy and Housing be authorised to take enforcement action for the removal of the unauthorised pitched roof structure to remedy the harm arising upon the affected neighbour.

77 **Plans and Applications to Develop**

A report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) was submitted on the following plans and applications to develop. Where appropriate, details of the plans and applications were displayed by electronic means at the meeting. In addition to the report submitted notes known as Pre-Committee notes had also been circulated updating certain information given in the report submitted. The content of the notes were taken into account in respect of the applications to which they referred.

The following persons were in attendance at the meeting and spoke on the planning applications as indicated:-

<u>Application No</u>	<u>Objectors/supporters who wishes to speak</u>	<u>Agent/Applicant who wishes to speak</u>
P14/1095	Mr B Zglinski	

P14/1768	Councillor Richard Body (Ward Councillor)	Mrs Brown
P14/1831	Councillor Elaine Taylor (Ward Councillor)	Mr David Vaughan

<u>Application No</u>	<u>Location/Proposal</u>	<u>Decision</u>
P14/1095	King Edward VI Sports Ground, Swinford Road, Oldswinford – Fell 1 Oak Tree	Approved. (No conditions required)

In considering the above application Members noted comments made by the objector and the Tree Protection Officer. In reaching their decision Members concurred with comments made by the objector in that the tree was dangerous given the extent of its leaning. Members were particularly concerned as the playing field was used by a large number of people, including young people that played football beneath the tree and should the tree fall, someone could be injured. The Tree Protection Officer informed the Committee that there were no signs of physiology problems or symptoms and although the tree looked precarious, leaning trees were not considered to be dangerous.

P14/1345	Land Adjacent to 23 Lister Road, Dudley – Erection of 1 No Dwelling	Approved, subject to conditions, numbered 1 to 9, (inclusive) as set out in the report submitted.
P14/1768	4 Masons Close, Cradley, Halesowen – Part A: Rear Garden Boundary Wall (Retrospective) Part B: Single Storey Side/Rear Extension	<p>(i) That Part A of the application be approved subject to the following conditions:-</p> <p>The wall as indicated on approved plan number 14:79:02 shall be completed with a painted render finish within 3 months of the date of this permission unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The finish shall remain as agreed for the lifetime of the development.</p> <p>(ii) That Part B of the application be approved subject to conditions, numbered 1 to 4 (inclusive), as set out in the report submitted.</p>

In reaching their decision on the above application Members considered comments made by the Ward Councillor and the applicant in that the wall had been erected for protection due to the extent of anti social behaviour and burglaries that residents were experiencing. Members were of the view that residents' security was paramount.

P14/1831	60 Hill Street, Netherton, Dudley – Removal of Existing Flue and Installation of Extraction Flue for a Paint Spray Booth (Resubmission of Withdrawn Application P14/1421)	Approved, subject to conditions, numbered 1 to 6 (inclusive), as set out in the report submitted.
P14/1773	41 Summercourt Square, Kingswinford – Fell 1 No Sycamore	Approved, subject to the condition, numbered 1, as set out in the report submitted.
P14/1775	39 Manor Abbey Road, Halesowen – New Front Porch and Canopy Roof. Erection of 1.8M Boundary Wall to Side Elevation. (Part Retrospective)	Approved, subject to conditions, numbered 1 to 3 (inclusive), as set out in the report submitted.
P14/1826	153 High Street, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill – Change of use from Licensed Private Members Club to Public House (A4)	Approved, subject to conditions numbered 1 to 4, 6 and 8 as set out in the report submitted, together with the replacement of condition, numbered 5, an amended condition, numbered 7 and additional condition, numbered 9, as follows:- 5. The rating level of sound emitted from any fixed plant and/or machinery associated with the development shall not exceed background sound levels by more than 5dB(A) between the hours of 0700-2300 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest sound sensitive premises) and shall not exceed the background sound level between 2300-0700

(taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest sound sensitive premises). All measurements shall be made in accordance with the methodology of BS4142(2014) (Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound) and/or its subsequent amendments.

Where access to the nearest sound sensitive property is not possible, measurements shall be undertaken at an appropriate location and corrected to establish the noise levels at the nearest sound sensitive property.

Any deviations from the LA90 time interval stipulated above shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

7. No deliveries shall be made to, and no delivery vehicles shall enter or leave the site before the hours of 0800 nor after 1800 Monday to Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays.
9. The premises shall not be open to the public before the hours of 1000 nor after 0030 Monday to Saturday and before 1000 hours nor after 0030 hours on Sundays and Public Holidays.

P15/0005

Hingley Anchor,
Netherton, Dudley –
Installation of 2 No
Interpretation
Panels/Public Art
Features

Approved, subject to conditions, numbered 1 to 3 (inclusive), as set out in the report submitted.

P15/0031	Amenity Open Space Off, Lutley Mill Road, Halesowen – Prior Approval Under Part 24 of the Town and Country Planning (GPDO) for a Telecommunications Development Comprising of the Removal of 11.7M Phase 3 Monopole and Replace with 11.7M Phase 4 Monopole with Shrouded Headframe and 1 No Additional Cabinet	Prior Approval Not Required.
P15/0059	Unit 2, 100 Dock Lane, Dudley – Change of use from B8 to Social Club with Photographic Studio and New Smoking Shelter (Sui Generis) (Resubmission of Refused Application P14/1592)	Deferred pending outcome of further consultation.

78 **Confirmation of Tree Preservation Orders**

A report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) was submitted requesting consideration as to whether the following Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) should be confirmed with or without modification in light of the objections that had been received.

The following persons were in attendance at the meeting and spoke on the Tree Preservation Orders as indicated:-

<u>Application No</u>	<u>Objectors/supporters who wishes to speak</u>	<u>Agent/Applicant who wishes to speak</u>
TPO/0122/SED	Ms Andrew Smith (On behalf of Mr Goodwin) Mr Peplow Mr Alec Johnson	
TPO/0126/SED	Mr John Parry	

<u>TPO No.</u>	<u>Location/Proposal</u>	<u>Decision</u>
TPO/0122/SED	Greenslade Road, Long Meadow Drive, Sedgley	Trees 1 to 4 confirmed subject to administrative corrections as highlighted in the report submitted and following modifications:- Trees 5 and 6 deleted from Order.
TPO/0126/SED	Sunningdale Road/Gower Road, Sedgley	Deferred for a Site Visit specific to Trees 9, 10, 16 and 17
TPO/0121/SED	Melford Close, Penns Wood Close, Long Meadow Drive, Sedgley	Confirmed without modification.
TPO/0128/SED	Horton Close/St Brides Close/Langland Drive/Eastleigh, Sedgley	Confirmed subject to administrative corrections as highlighted in the report submitted.

79 **Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) 2013/14**

A report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) was submitted on the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) for 1st April, 2013 to 31st March, 2014.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted, be noted.

80 **Phased Review of Conservation Area Character Appraisals Across the Borough**

A report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) was submitted on a phased review of Conservation Area Character Appraisals across the Borough in accordance with the programme, as set out in the Appendix to the report submitted.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted, be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.

CHAIR
DC/90

Minutes of the Development Control Committee
Thursday 19th March, 2015 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

Present:-

Councillor Q Zada (Chair)
Councillors A Ahmed, D Caunt, A Goddard, J Martin, C Perks, R Scott-Dow and D Vickers

Officers:-

J Butler – Group Engineer, T Glews – Environmental Protection Manager, H Martin - Head of Planning, C Mellor – Principal Planning Officer, P Reed – Principal Planning Officer (Directorate of Environment, Economy and Housing); S Ahmed-Aziz – Solicitor and H Shepherd – Democratic Services Officer (Directorate of Resources and Transformation).

81 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor A Ahmed did not declare an interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, but for transparency purposes confirmed that he did live within close proximity to Unit 2, 100 Dock Lane, Dudley. He did not consider that this would affect his ability to consider Planning Application P15/0059 impartially and with an open mind.

82 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the Committee held on 24th February, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

83 **Site Visit**

Consideration was given to the confirmation report for the Borough of Dudley (Sunningdale Road/Gower Road, Sedgley (TPO/0126/SED)) in respect of which Members of the Committee had undertaken a site visit earlier that day.

Members that had attended the site visit were of the opinion that T9 was a considerably large tree that would continue to grow. There was evidence that the tree had already caused damage to the surrounding pavement, which would inevitably continue to worsen.

Resolved

<u>TPO No</u>	<u>Location/Proposal</u>	<u>Decision</u>
TPO/0126/SED	Sunningdale Road/Gower Road, Sedgley	Trees T10, T16 and T17 be confirmed. Tree T9 be deleted from the Order.

84 **Plans and Applications to Develop**

A report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) was submitted on the following plans and applications to develop. Where appropriate, details of the plans and applications were displayed by electronic means at the meeting. In addition to the report submitted, notes known as Pre-Committee notes had also been circulated updating certain information given in the report submitted. The content of the notes were taken into account in respect of the applications to which they referred.

The following persons were in attendance at the meeting and spoke on the planning applications as indicated:-

<u>Application No</u>	<u>Objectors/supporters who wished to speak</u>	<u>Agent/Applicant who wished to speak</u>
P15/0015	Mr Steven Nash	
P15/0104	Mrs B Hall	Mr Craig Parkes
Resolved		

That the applications be determined as set out below:-

<u>Application No</u>	<u>Location/Proposal</u>	<u>Decision</u>
P15/0015	118 Oakham Road, Dudley – Fell 1 Sycamore Tree.	Approved, subject to the following condition:- 1. The tree works subject of this consent shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard BS 3998:2010 'Recommendations for Treework'.

2. A replacement tree shall be planted between the beginning of November and the end of March, within 1 year of felling (and replanted if necessary) and maintained until satisfactorily established. The replacement tree shall be located within the upper terrace of the rear garden. The species, size and location of the tree shall not be planted until formally approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

In considering the above application, Members commented on the large size of the tree and the damage that it had caused to the nearby walls. They also referred to suggestions of potential maladministration when the order was originally implemented, as neighbouring properties had not been notified of the application and would have had opportunity to appeal at that time if they had been advised.

P15/0104	28-30 Mount Street, Halesowen – Change of use from B1 to B2 (Servicing/Repairs and Storage of cars) (Retrospective).	Approved, subject to the following conditions:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The use hereby permitted shall be limited for a period of 12 months from the date of this notice. When the premises cease to be occupied or at the end of 12 months, whichever shall first occur, the use hereby permitted shall cease and all materials, buildings and equipment brought on to the premises in connection with the use shall be removed. 2. The premises shall be used for the servicing and repair of motor vehicles and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class B2 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that order).
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3. The premises shall not be open to the public before the hours of 0800 nor after 1800 Monday to Friday, before the hours of 0900 nor after 1200 on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays and Public Holidays.
4. The washing of motor vehicles shall not take place anywhere on the site unless run-off drains to on-site gullies or drainage channels which are connected to the foul system via a petrol interceptor, to separate detergents, chemicals and/or any oil petrol spillages. Make, model and specification of any proposed interceptor should be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to installation.
5. The rating level of sound emitted from any fixed plant and/or machinery associated with the development shall not exceed background sound levels by more than 5dB(A) between the hours of 0700-2300 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest sound sensitive premises) and shall not exceed the background sound level between 2300-0700 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest sound sensitive premises). All measurements shall be made in accordance with the methodology of BS4142 (2014) (Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound) and/or its subsequent amendments.

Where access to the nearest sound sensitive property is not possible, measurements shall be undertaken at an appropriate location and corrected to establish the noise levels at the nearest sound sensitive property.

Any deviations from the LA90 time interval stipulated above shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

6. All doors at the use hereby permitted shall be kept closed at all times during operational hours except for access and egress.
7. No deliveries or despatches shall be made to or from the site, and no delivery or despatch vehicles shall enter or leave the site (whether laden or unladen), before the hours of 0800 nor after 1800 Monday to Friday, before the hours of 0900 nor after 1200 on Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays.

In considering the above application, Members took into account local residents' comments in support of the business, but raised concerns of possible obstructions to residents if the business expanded in the future. It was recommended that additional environmental conditions and a temporary 12 months licence be applied to the application so that the situation could be monitored during this period. Members authorised Officers to draft a list of conditions to be applied, which would be circulated to Members of the Committee for information.

P14/1622	9 Royal Close, Brierley Hill – Part A: Retrospective Side and Rear Boundary Treatment. Part B: Retrospective Outbuilding.	Part A, refused for the reason as set out in the report submitted. Part B, Approved subject to conditions, numbered 1 and 2 (inclusive), as set out in the report submitted. Enforcement Action be taken against the erected boundary wall positioned to the side and rear of the site.
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P14/1821	<p>Site of Former Duncan Edwards Public House, Priory Road, Dudley – Hybrid Application for Part A: Erection of 3 No. Retail units with car parking and associated works. Part B: Outline Application for Erection of 12 No. Dwellings (Access and layout to be considered).</p>	<p>Approved, subject to conditions, numbered 1 to 4 (inclusive), 6 to 23 (inclusive), 25 to 45 (inclusive), as set out in the report submitted and amended conditions , numbered 5 and 24, as set out below:-</p> <p>(5) None of the development hereby approved shall be first commenced until plans showing the repositioning of the bus shelter outside the visibility splay of 2.4 x 59m of the adjacent access points have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The shelter shall thereafter be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development and be maintained for the life of the development.</p> <p>(24) No development shall commence until details for the relocation of the tactile paving due to the provision of the new vehicular access in Limes Road have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The tactile paving shall thereafter be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development and be maintained for the life of the development.</p>
P15/0059	<p>Unit 2, 100, Dock Lane, Dudley – Change of use from B8 to Social Club with photographic studio and new smoking shelter (Sui generis) (Resubmission of refused application P14/1592).</p>	<p>Refused for the following reason:-</p> <p>The proposed use (and ancillary external activity) is considered to be detrimental to the residential and associated amenities of the locality in terms of noise and disturbance, contrary to saved policies DD1, DD4 and DD5 of the Unitary Development Plan 2005.</p>

In considering the application, Members expressed their support in facilitating a private members social club in Dudley, but considered that this particular venue was in an unsuitable location. Concerns were raised with regards to the insufficient car parking spaces available at the venue, the visual amenity impact having a smoking shelter located directly at the entrance of the property and in close proximity to the Leisure Centre and the impact that the licensed operating times would have on the surrounding residential community.

A Member suggested that the letter of support submitted on behalf of Dudley Leisure Centre should not be taken into consideration as this was a Council operated service.

P15/0060	72 Queens Road, Dudley – Single Storey Rear/Side Extension.	Approved, subject to conditions 1 to 3 (inclusive), as set out in the report submitted.
P15/0079	32 High Street, Pensnett, Brierley Hill – Fell 1 Sycamore Tree	Refused, for the reason, as set out in the report submitted.
P15/0137	The Old Apleyard, 26B, Gladstone Road, Wollaston, Stourbridge – Fell 1 Sycamore Tree	Approved, subject to the condition, as set out in the report submitted.

85 **Planning Services Fees – 2015/2016**

A report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) was submitted on the setting of the Council's Building Regulation Fee Scales to take effect from 1st April 2015 and non-statutory Development Control Charges, and the intention to continue to use the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Planning Obligations in accordance with Council Policy.

Resolved

- (1) That the inflationary increase of 2% of the existing Building Control Fee Schedule, as outlined in Appendix B to the report submitted, be endorsed.
- (2) That the continued use of Consumer Price Index in Planning Obligations costings, as outlined in Appendix C to the report submitted, and in accordance with the adopted Supplementary Planned Document "Planning Obligations", be noted.
- (3) That the use for CIL charges following adoption of the national All-In Tender Price Index of construction costs published by the Building Cost Information (BCIS) of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, be noted.

- (4) That the fee schedule for Development Control Non Statutory Fee Charges, as outlined in Appendix D to the report submitted, be endorsed.

The meeting ended at 7.40pm.

CHAIR

Minutes of Licensing and Safety Committee

Monday, 23rd February, 2015 at 5.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor D Russell (Chair)
Councillor K.Finch (Vice Chair)
Councillors D.Blood, J.Cowell, D.Hemingsley,
R.James, C.Perks, M.Roberts, A.Taylor, E.Taylor and H.Turner

Officers:-

Mr. R.Clark (Principal Solicitor), Mrs.L.Rouse(Licensing Clerk) and Mr. J. Jablonski (Democratic Services) (All Directorate of Resources and Transformation).

8 Apology for absence

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor S Etheridge .

9 Declarations of Interest

No member made a declaration of interest in accordance with Members' Code of Conduct.

10 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12th June, 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed.

11 Revision of Licence Fees

A report of the Strategic Director, Resources and Transformation was submitted on the proposed revision of fees for licences and consents, other than those where the fees are imposed by statute in respect of liquor licensing, gambling machine permits and lotteries and amusements.

Arising from a presentation of the content of the report, and its Appendix, Members raised concerns about the low level of fees charged when compared with other Authorities and with particular reference to the fees for a street trading consent. The adverse impact on shop traders of such low fees was also raised.

Suggestions were then made as to revised arrangements for charging for street trading consents including the use of daily and differentiated day and weekly rates. The inclusion of items not currently charged for, for example cost of cleaning up after a market and use of electricity, was also suggested. It was also considered that the use of daily and weekly rates would free up spaces enabling others to trade and overall would increase revenue.

In addition to considering fees to be charged therefore it was considered that a review should be carried out of the fees charged for, and terms and conditions of, street trading consents.

Consideration was then given to the level of fees to be charged in 2015/16 and, following votes during which a proposal to increase fees by 5% across the board was lost, a 2% increase was agreed upon together with the review in relation to street trading consents referred to.

It was noted that the licensing function would in due course be transferring from the Directorate of Resources and Transformation to the Directorate of Environment, Economy and Housing.

RESOLVED

1. That approval be given to an increase of 2%, with effect from 1st April, 2015, in respect of fees for licences and consents, other than those where the fees are imposed by statute in respect of liquor licensing, gambling machine permits and lotteries and amusements, as set out in column (2) of Table A of the report submitted.
 2. That Officers be requested to submit to the first meeting of this Committee in the new municipal year, in May, 2015, a brief presentation on proposals to review the way fees are charged for street trading consents, in the light of the discussion held at this meeting, with a view to reporting to a further meeting in October/November with proposals and having consulted amongst other current holders of street trading consents.
-

The meeting ended at 5.38 p.m.

Minutes of Licensing Sub-Committee 2

Tuesday 10th February, 2015 at 10.05 am
in Committee Room 4, The Council House, Dudley

Present:-

Councillor K Finch (Chair)
Councillors S Etheridge and R James

Officers: -

R Clark (Legal Advisor), L Rouse (Licensing Clerk) and K Taylor –
All Directorate of Resources and Transformation.

12 **Declarations of Interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the
Members' Code of Conduct.

13 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held
on 23rd September, 2014, be approved as a correct record
and signed.

14 **Application for a Premises Licence – Brierley Hill Service
Station, Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation)
was submitted on an application for a premises licence in respect
of Brierley Hill Service Station, Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill.

The applicant, Mr S Sangha (Director of Select Real Estate
Limited) and proposed Designated Premises Supervisor, was in
attendance at the meeting together with Ms A Choudhry
(Manager), Mr C Lockett (Lockett and Co Licensing Consultants)
and Mr R Light (Barrister).

Also in attendance and objecting to the application was Mr B
Hughes, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Directorate of Resources
and Transformation.

Following introductions by the Chair, the Licensing Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Council.

Mr Hughes then presented the representations of the Licensing Authority and in doing so made particular reference to Section 176 of the Licensing Act 2003 section 2b, and that there was insufficient evidence submitted by the applicant to demonstrate that the premises were used other than as a garage.

He further reported that the premises were used by the local community, in particular, customers that attended the premises on foot and therefore objected to the application submitted.

Mr Light then presented his case, on behalf of the applicant, and in doing so stated that the premises were owned by Mr Sangha and that he owned a further fourteen premises, nine of which were licensed with four being licensed for twenty-four hours. He further reported that Ms Choudhry had worked at the premises since 1992 and had previously worked in licensed premises.

Mr Light made particular reference that there had been no objections received from responsible authorities, and outlined the operating schedule, submitted together with the application, referring to the steps intended to promote the four licensing objectives, including, CCTV; Challenge 25 policy and extensive training, which would be provided by Lockett and Co Licensing Consultants.

Following comments made in relation to Section 176 of the Licensing Act, Mr Light referred to the evidence that had been submitted to all parties prior to the hearing, in particular, figures that had identified that the premises was not primarily used as a garage only, and that a large number of customers purchased groceries only and withdrew cash from the ATM machines.

Following comments made in relation to customers attending the premises on footfall, it was agreed by all parties that this did not reflect all customers, as some would drive their vehicles.

In responding to a question by the Chair, Mr Light referred to the significant reduction of forecourts nationally, and that the introduction of groceries and alcohol were vital to operate a successful business. Mr Sangha also reported that he would adjust the number of staff employed at the premises in accordance with the operation of the business and that all members of staff would be required to complete their training record.

Clarification was sought as to the reasons why the applicant had requested a licence for twenty-four hours, when the doors to the premises would be closed between 10 pm and 6 am. In responding, Mr Light stated that the application mirrored the premises operating licence and that sales would continue to be made during the hours of 10 pm and 6 am through the existing night payment hatch for security purposes.

In responding to a question by the Chair, all parties confirmed that they had a fair hearing.

Following comments made, Mr Hughes stated that should the Sub-Committee be minded to grant the application submitted, he would be agreeable with the conditions outlined in the operating schedule attached to the application.

The parties then withdrew from the meeting in order to enable the Sub-Committee to determine the application.

The Sub-Committee having made their decision invited the parties to return and the Chair outlined the decision.

Resolved

That the grant of a premises licence in respect of Brierley Hill Service Station, Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, be approved, in the following terms:

Sale of Alcohol

Monday to Sunday inc 00.00 until 24.00

Late Night Refreshments

Monday to Sunday inc 23.00 until 05.00

Reasons for Decision

This is an application for a premises licence, for the sale of alcohol over 24 hours. The Licensing Authority has made a representation on the ground that it was not satisfied that the primary use of the premises was as a store, rather than as a garage, whose primary use was to sell petrol. They put the issue to the Sub-Committee for a decision on the primary use of the premises.

The Sub-Committee heard evidence, and was presented with figures, to support the assertion that the majority of persons using the premises were for the purchase of items other than petrol. The figures were measured in terms of those buying petrol only, those buying other goods only and those buying both.

The Sub-Committee was satisfied from the figures that the primary use of the premises was for the purchase of items other than petrol, and therefore grants the application.

The Sub-Committee was satisfied with the operating schedule in terms if the proposals for the sale of alcohol.

15

Notice of Temporary Event – The Bell, 20 Market Street, Stourbridge

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on the objections received to the Notice of Temporary Event served on the Council by Mr T P Jones in respect of The Bell, 20 Market Street, Stourbridge.

In attendance at the meeting and representing The Bell were Mr T Jones, Mr R McGillicuddy and Miss M Ruston.

Also in attendance and objecting to the application were Sergeant N Hobster, WPC Cheema and J Willers, West Midlands Police. Mr B Hughes, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Directorate of Resources and Transformation was also in attendance as an observer.

Following introductions by the Chair, the Licensing Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Council.

WPC Cheema then presented the representations of West Midlands Police and in doing so produced evidence of a number of incidents throughout 2014 into early 2015, associated to the premises which were predominately violent and required the presence of Police and/or an ambulance.

It was noted that the majority of the incidents occurred after midnight, with some being after the permitted licensable hours of 02:00 hrs, therefore an objection was submitted to the temporary event notice requesting the premises to operate until 04:00 hrs, as it was anticipated that an incident could occur.

WPC Cheema reported that the main concerns were of the health and safety of staff and members of the public and that the Police had identified a crime trend and believed that this had resulted from an extension of hours that had previously been granted for a temporary event.

Following comments made by Mr Jones in relation to the circumstances surrounding the incidents as described by WPC Cheema, Sergeant Hobster acknowledged that in some instances situations could be unmanageable, however the objection had not been submitted following an isolated incident and it was believed that the number of incidents associated to the premises resulted in a cumulative impact in the area.

It was reported that a number of the incidents had occurred during busy periods such as Christmas and Bank Holidays; however Mr Jones informed the Sub-Committee that there were no incidents during July and September, 2014.

Reference was made to a number of the incidents outlined by WPC Cheema, and Mr Jones stated that he regularly attended Pub watch meetings and it would have been beneficial if the concerns and incidents had been brought to his attention at that time in order to address the concerns raised and work together with the Police. In responding, Sergeant Hobster reported that she was disappointed that Mr Jones had not been made aware and that the Police had a pro-active approach and were not wishing to overturn the work already accomplished; however there were concerns of the number of incidents since November, 2014. She also confirmed that the Police had a positive working relationship with The Bell.

It was noted that the premises had twelve temporary events over a period of five years.

It was further reported that the police did not object to the last temporary events notice sought for 31st January, 2015.

Mr McGillicuddy then stated that it was important to ensure that there was a safe environment at the premises and suggested that new customers that may be intoxicated would not be admitted to the premises after 1.00am, and the number of door staff on duty on the night of 15th February, 2015 would be increased from five to seven, to address the concerns raised.

In responding to a question by a member, Miss Ruston, who was responsible for security at the premises, reported that she completed an incident report on customers who had been ejected from the premises on a weekly basis.

Following the comments made by Mr McGillicuddy, WPC Cheema stated that she was agreeable to the suggestions made, and in addition requested that the CCTV for the night should be recording correctly and produced good quality pictures which would be immediately available to the police upon request, and that alcohol or glasses should not be taken outside the premises.

In responding to a question by a member, it was confirmed that a record of people who were barred from the premises was displayed at the front entrance, and staff were informed of the people and incidents on a monthly basis.

In responding to a question by a member in relation to the number of incidents that occurred outside the premises, Mr Jones reported that the main issue was that customers who were leaving the premises would congregate outside as there were food outlets directly opposite the premises that were open at 2.00 am.

Reference was made to the security of the building, and Miss Ruston reported that there were five security staff employed at the premises and were positioned in a number of areas. She further reported that all staff signed in and received a radio and headphone set.

In responding to a question by a member, WPC Cheema reported that the Police did not wish to submit an application to review the premises licence, as the concerns raised predominately related to incidents that had occurred when a temporary event had taken place.

In responding to a question by a member, WPC Cheema confirmed that the Police had not received any temporary events notice for Valentines weekend from other venues in the area, and that some venues were licensed until 2.30 am and 3 am, therefore The Bell would be the only venue open in the immediate area.

At this juncture, and following the suggestions made by The Bell and the Police, all parties withdrew from the meeting to allow the Police to give consideration as to whether they wished to withdraw their objection. Having returned to the meeting, WPC Cheema confirmed that the objection to the temporary events notice remained and requested that the Sub-Committee give consideration to the representations made.

Mr McGillicuddy reported that the feedback from the Police was that the management of the premises was successful and that he considered that the number of incidents over a twelve month period were a good record considering that The Bell was a popular venue.

In responding to a question by the Chair, all parties confirmed that they had a fair hearing.

The parties then withdrew from the meeting in order to enable the Sub-Committee to determine the application.

The Sub-Committee having made their decision invited the parties to return and the Chair then outlined the decision.

Resolved

That the application received for the Notice of Temporary Event served on the Council by Mr T P Jones in respect of The Bell, 20 Market Street, Stourbridge, be approved, in the following terms:

Sale of Alcohol/Regulated Entertainment/Late Night Refreshment

02.00 am until 04.00 am (Sunday 15th February, 2015)
Valentines Weekend

Reasons for Decision

This hearing is to consider the objections of the West Midlands Police, on the grounds of crime and disorder, to the application for a temporary events notice for the 15th February, 2015 at The Bell.

The Police gave evidence of a number of incidents throughout 2014 into early 2015, when they received reports of violent incidents, when they and/or the ambulance service had been called out. The evidence from the Manager and door manager at the Bell was that a number of these incidents were outside the Bell, and one incident relating to 25 persons fighting was unknown to them, and was an anonymous call to the police. There have undoubtedly been some incidents within the premises.

The Management of the Bell has stated that it wishes to cooperate with the police, and that it relies upon its reputation of being a safe environment to do its business. It also pointed out that the police did not object to the last temporary events notice sought for 31st January, 2015. The Sub-Committee is clear that it cannot attach new conditions to the temporary events notice but it accepts the restrictions put forward by the management of the Bell as follows:-

1. That no new customers will be admitted to the premises after 1.00am.
2. That the number of door staff on duty on the night of 15th February, 2015 will be increased from 5 to 7.
3. That CCTV for the night will be recording properly and produce good quality pictures in good light which will be immediately available to the police upon request.
4. That no alcohol or glasses can be taken outside the premises.

On the basis of these concessions, and on the basis of the evidence heard today, the Sub-Committee grants the application for the temporary event notice but expects the Bell to manage the event as it has agreed today. The Police do have the option of making an application to review the premises licence if it believes that the agreement in relation to this event, or other incidents, represent a breach of the licensing objectives.

The meeting ended at 12.15 pm

CHAIR

Minutes of Licensing Sub-Committee 3

**Tuesday 17th February, 2015 at 10.05 am
in the Council Chamber, The Council House, Dudley**

Present:-

Councillors C Perks, A Taylor and E Taylor

Officers:-

N Bangar (Legal Advisor), L Rouse (Licensing Clerk) and K Taylor (Democratic Services Officer) – All Directorate of Resources and Transformation.

30 **Election of Chair**

In the absence of the Chair (Councillor J Cowell) it was

Resolved

That Councillor E Taylor be elected Chair for this meeting of the Sub-Committee only.

(Councillor E Taylor in the Chair)

31 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor J Cowell.

32 **Appointment of Substitute Member**

It was reported that Councillor C Perks had been appointed as a substitute Member for Councillor J Cowell for this meeting of the Sub-Committee only.

33 **Declarations of Interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

34 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 13th January, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

35 **Application for a Premises Licence – Quarry Bank Liberal Club, 153 High Street, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on an application for a premises licence in respect of Quarry Bank Liberal Club, 153 High Street, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill.

The Applicant Mr S Owen was in attendance at the meeting.

Also in attendance and objecting to the application was Councillor B Cotterill, Ward Member, on behalf of his constituents.

Following introductions by the Chair, the Licensing Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Council.

Councillor Cotterill then presented representations on behalf of residents and in doing so stated that the objections had been submitted in relation to the hours requested for regulated entertainment seven days a week and the close proximity of residential accommodation, in particular, of a property adjoining the premises and elderly accommodation in Queens Street which was situated to the rear of the premises.

Councillor Cotterill referred to a similar establishment directly next to the establishment, namely, Quarry bank Labour Club, and anticipated that potential problems could arise should the application be granted, in particular in relation to noise nuisance from customers leaving the premises after midnight. It was also noted that there were insufficient car parking spaces available.

Mr Owen then presented his case and in doing so stated that the premises had been judged prior to its opening, and referred in particular to a representation submitted by a local resident in relation to a website highlighting Mr Owens's details as a Director. In responding to the representation, Mr Owen circulated information from the website to Members of the Sub-Committee and stated that he had worked in the trade for a number of years.

Mr Owen confirmed that the theme of the premises would be to sell cask ales, and drinks promotions and cans of alcohol would not be sold at the premises. He further reported on a number of premises that he had managed and refurbished successfully in the Dudley borough, making particular reference to an establishment that had been awarded "Pub of the Year 2013" by CAMRA.

It was noted that signs and posters would be displayed at the premises requesting customers to leave the premises quietly and with due consideration for local neighbours, and that the regulated entertainment would predominately be background music only.

Mr Owen further reported that a room located to the rear of the premises could be hired for various events including birthday parties, and that all rubbish would be cleaned in the immediate vicinity of the premises. It was further reported that there was provision to expand the car park located to the rear of the premises to allow parking for an additional twenty spaces.

In responding to a question by a Member, Mr Owen confirmed that light refreshments, including sandwiches, would be prepared in the small kitchen in the premises and that although the licensable hours requested was 24:00 hrs, it was unlikely that the premises would remain open to that time every day, unless there were private functions. It was further reported that the capacity in the function room was eighty people.

Reference was made to the operating schedule which was included in the application submitted, and Mr Owen confirmed that cigarettes or cigarette machines would not be available or installed at the premises.

In responding to a question by a Member, Mr Owen confirmed that he would be willing to install a noise limiter and that although the windows were double glazed it was his intention to replace them. It was also noted that the premises would be refurbished in to a pub, and would not continue to be a liberal club.

In summing up, Councillor Cotterill reiterated his comments made previously and stated that he was in attendance as a representative for the residents in the area.

In summing up, Mr Owen stated that the premises was not the establishment that had been perceived, and that he would refurbish the premises in to a real ale pub.

Following a question by the Legal Advisor, all parties confirmed that they had represented their case.

The parties then withdrew from the meeting in order to enable the Sub-Committee to determine the application.

The Sub-Committee having made their decision invited the parties to return and the Chair then outlined the decision.

Resolved

That, subject to the following conditions being applied, the grant of a premises licence in respect of Quarry Bank Liberal Club, 153 High Street, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill, be approved, in the following terms:-

Sale of Alcohol/Regulated Entertainment (Live Music/Recorded Music/Dance)

Monday – Sunday (inclusive) 10.00 – 24.00

Late Night Refreshment

Monday – Sunday (inclusive) 23.00 – 24.00

Conditions

- (1) To install double glazing to all external doors and windows.
- (2) To install a noise limiter.

The Sub-Committee feel that these conditions will help limit any noise from the premises disturbing local residents.

Reasons for decision

Following careful consideration of the report and representations made at the meeting the Sub-Committee grants the application for a premises licence today.

The operating schedule and the evidence heard today has satisfied the Sub-Committee that the premises will be run in such a way to alleviate the concerns raised by residents, namely; we understand the following:

- In relation to paragraph M(e) all reference to cigarettes has been removed for the Sub-Committee's consideration.
- The rear will be cleared to maintain car park spaces for future use.
- Consideration will be given to the fact that the premises are attached to a residential property.

The meeting ended at 11.15 am.

CHAIR

Minutes of Licensing Sub-Committee 3

Tuesday 24th March, 2015 at 10.00 am
in the Council Chamber, The Council House, Dudley

Present:-

Councillors J Cowell (Chair)
Councillors A Taylor and E Taylor

Officers:-

R Clark (Legal Advisor), L Rouse (Licensing Clerk) and K Griffiths (Democratic Services Officer) – All Directorate of Resources and Transformation

36 **Declarations of Interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

37 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 17th February, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

38 **Application for a Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit – Halesowen Sports Club, Birmingham Street, Halesowen**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on an application for a Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit for three Category C machines, in respect of the premises known as The Halesowen Sports Club, Birmingham Street, Halesowen.

The, applicant, Ms L Moule, representative of FMS Ltd was in attendance at the meeting.

Following introductions, the Licensing Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Council. It was noted that a letter had been received indicating that the Premises Licence Holder was unable to attend the meeting.

Ms Moule indicated that the proposed third machine would be visible from the bar area allowing staff to monitor customers using the machine at all times. Following a brief discussion in relation to the positioning of the three machines, Ms Moule confirmed that the third machine would be sited next to the two existing machines, as shown on the map circulated.

Resolved

That the application for a Licensed Premise Gaming Machine Permit for three Category C machines in respect of Halesowen Sports Club, Birmingham Road, Halesowen, be approved.

39 **Application for Consent to Engage in Street Trading – Mr A J Carney – South Road, Stourbridge, outside Crematorium**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on an application made by Mr A J Carney for the grant of a consent to engage in street trading at a site in South Road, Stourbridge, outside Stourbridge Crematorium.

The applicant, Mr Carney was in attendance at the meeting.

Following introductions, the Licensing Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Council. It was reported that representations had been received from the Traffic Manager in support of the application, provided that there was no obstruction to the public footway.

Mr Carney indicated that his wife was heavily involved in the florist business and currently sold plants and flowers on Bilston Market. He stated that it was a good business opportunity and considered that the business would do particularly well in that locality.

In response to a question from a Member, Mr Carney confirmed the location he intended to trade from and that one table would be used to display flowers on.

Resolved

That the application made by Mr A J Carney for the grant of consent to engage in street trading at a site in South Road, Stourbridge, outside Stourbridge Crematorium, be approved for a period of twelve months with effect from 24th March, 2015, provided that there was no obstruction to the public footway.

Application for Consent to Engage in Street Trading – Mr A Wahid – Ryemarket, Stourbridge

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on an application made by Mr A Wahid for the grant of a consent to engage in street trading at a site in Ryemarket, Stourbridge.

It was reported that the applicant had contacted the Licensing Office to indicate that he was unable to attend the meeting.

Following consideration of the information submitted, the Sub-Committee agreed to proceed with the meeting, in the absence of the applicant.

The Licensing Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Council. It was noted that representations had been received objecting to the application.

Following a brief discussion, it was

Resolved

That the application made by Mr A Wahid for the grant of a consent to engage in street trading at a site in Ryemarket, Stourbridge, be refused on the grounds that it would impede the flow of pedestrian traffic in the area and events currently licensed to use that area.

The meeting ended at 10.30am.

CHAIR

Minutes of the Meeting of the Taxis Committee

Monday 9th February, 2015 at 5.30 p.m.
in Committee Room 3 at the Council House, Dudley

Present:-

Councillor R Body (Chair)
Councillor A Ahmed (Vice-Chair)
Councillors C Billingham, P Bradley, J Cowell, C Elcock, J Martin and G Simms

Officers:-

T Holder, Solicitor , M Hanson, Licensing Enforcement Officer and K Griffiths, Democratic Services Officer (all Directorate of Resources and Transformation)

Also in attendance:-

Ms R Cooper, Group Accountant and Representatives of the Taxi Drivers Focus Group and a member of the press in respect of Agenda Item No. 5 - Revision of Licence Fees.
Ms J Jennings, Safeguarding Development Manager, Directorate of Peoples Services in respect of Agenda Item No. 6 - Safeguarding

87. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Aston and D Vickers.

88. **Appointment of Substitute Member**

It was reported that Councillor C Billingham had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor A Aston for this meeting of the Committee only.

89. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests from Members, in accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct.

90.

Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14th January, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

91.

Revision of Fees

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on the revision of fees for private hire and hackney carriage licences administered by the Committee.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted by the Licensing Enforcement Officer, Mr A Mahmood, Mr M Ali, and Mr Saleem, representatives of the Taxi Driver's Focus Group welcomed the proposal of a 0% increase in taxi fees for private hire and hackney carriage licences.

Arising from the presentation of the report, the representatives of the Taxi Driver's Focus Group raised the following concerns in relation to the level of service and general waiting times:-

- That there had been no consultation process for the last 2 years, despite being assured that the taxi trade would be consulted.
- Delays in issuing licence badges and despite being told that there was a back log in the administration process, this was considered to be unacceptable.
- Delays in arranging taxi vehicle inspections/examinations and re-tests. It was reported that the testing station at Narrowboat Way had capacity to test 2 taxi vehicles at one time, however only one vehicle was being examined per booking, causing unnecessary delays.
- Concerns raised in relation to cancellation fees and the cost of re-tests, compared to neighboring Authorities. Representatives of the Taxi Driver's Focus Group queried why cancellation fees were applicable in genuine cases. The Licensing Enforcement Officer explained the reason cancellation fees were required and indicated that not all cases were legitimate. He stated that in genuine cases, letters informing the Authority of an accident and/or legitimate reasons for the cancellation of an inspection from doctors, GP and/or garages on behalf of taxi driver should be submitted to the Licensing Office.

- Concerns in relation to the charges payable for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. It was noted that Sandwell Council included CRB checks in with licence fees and queried whether Dudley Council could do something similar.

Mr Saleem referred to a recent case involving one of his taxi drivers where, following an inspection of the vehicle at Narrowboat Way, the officer undertaking the examination failed the vehicle on 3 different areas. Having taken the vehicle to a reputable garage for an assessment and to rectify any faults, it was established that there had been no repair work needed to the vehicle. Following a re-inspection of the vehicle at Narrowboat Way, with no work undertaken, the vehicle passed the inspection. Mr Saleem expressed serious concern with the issue as the cost of a re-test was £49.65.

Mr Saleem also referred to a further recent incident whereby a taxi driver attended the Licensing Office for an appointment. The driver had been told that he did not have an appointment and having gone home and returned with his receipt, the officer admitted that they had double booked.

The Licensing Enforcement Officer responded to general representations, concerns and questions, however, specific concerns would be forwarded to an appropriate Officer for consideration.

In responding to a number of queries from representatives of the Taxi Driver's Focus Group, the Licensing Enforcement Officer suggested that investigations be carried out to ascertain a breakdown of functions carried out which was included in the total cost of various licenses, training and general administration fees administered by Wolverhampton City Council.

Members then made comments in relation to the rate at which the Council subsidised the taxi licensing function.

Resolved

- (1) That approval be given to a 0% increase, as shown in column (1) of Table A of the report, in respect of the fees for private hire and hackney carriage licences administered by this Committee.
- (2) That the Licensing Enforcement Officer be requested to ascertain a breakdown of functions carried out by Wolverhampton City Council which are included in the total cost of various Licenses, training and general administration fees.

92.

Safeguarding

A presentation was made by the Safeguarding Development Manager on Child Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking. Documentation was circulated at the meeting pertinent to taxi licence holders, particularly when transporting venerable children. It was reported that a link to the full document in relation

to the Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council would be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

During the course of the presentation the Safeguarding Development Manager referred to the report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and made the following points:-

- Child sexual exploitation was a massive problem and Dudley was no different to other Local Authorities.
- Gave scenarios on how perpetrators operated and strategies used and indicated that the primary goal of an offender was not to get caught.
- A plea was made to schools for early intervention by identifying certain problems. Raising awareness in schools, with GPs and educating children of the long terms consequences mentally and physically, with particular mention to unwanted pregnancies and STDs.
- Perpetrators sometimes booked rooms at quality/expensive hotels which could potentially indicate the possibility of filming abuse for internet profit. Work was being undertaken with hotels with a view to help them to identify any suspicious activity such as people asking for rooms near a fire exit and where there is a young child with an adult etc.
- Currently working with the Police on various Initiatives with positive outcomes.

Arising from the presentation, the following comments were made by Members:-

- Awareness needed to be raised to inform people of the extent of the issue of child exploitation and trafficking and appropriate action taken by responsible authorities to identify potential perpetrators and bring them to justice.
- Awareness to identify when a child becomes a victim of child exploitation and trafficking.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the Criminal Justice System, which had discouraged victims from reporting incidents and binging perpetrators to justice.

In responding to comments made, the Safeguarding Development Manager stated that the Police were proactive and passionate and were working with the Local Authority to combat problems.

A general discussion then ensued on personal experiences and it was established that child exploitation and trafficking people was an increasing problem and that individuals organising trafficking were the ones that should be targeted as they were the source of the problem.

A Member stated that the issue was a national problem and although it was acknowledged that there were budgetary restrictions it was suggested that more resources should be made nationally available by the Government to target the problem as child's lives were at risk.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, commended and thanked the Safeguarding Development Manager on the quality of the presentation and information given.

Resolved

- (1) That the information given in the presentation on Child Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking be noted.
 - (2) That the Democratic Services Officer be requested to forward a link to the full Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to all Members of the Committee.
-

The meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.

CHAIR

Minutes of the Meeting of the Taxis Committee

Tuesday 10th March, 2015 at 5.35 p.m.
in Committee Room 3 at the Council House, Dudley

Present:-

Councillor R Body (Chair)
Councillor A Ahmed (Vice-Chair) (From Minute No. 97)
Councillors A Aston, P Bradley, J Cowell, C Elcock, J Martin, G Simms and D Vickers

Officers:-

M Farooq, Assistant Director (Law and Governance) , M Hanson, Licensing Enforcement Officer and K Taylor, Democratic Services Officer (all Directorate of Resources and Transformation)

93. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests from Members, in accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct.

94. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9th February, 2015, be approved as a correct record and signed.

95. **Exclusion of the Public**

Resolved

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to any individual(s) as defined under Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

96. **Grant of Private Hire Vehicle Licence – Mr AJW**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on an application for the grant of a private hire vehicle licence

made on behalf of Mr AJW, in the light of the information contained in the report submitted.

Mr AJW was in attendance at the meeting, together with a supporter, and commented particularly that the business offered an Executive Chauffeur Hire Service aimed at corporate clients, VIP's and professionals, therefore the dispensation requested to allow Privacy Glass to the rear windows of the vehicle would be beneficial for the clients.

Arising from questions asked by the Committee, Mr AJW confirmed that he would be agreeable to attach a Dudley plate to the rear of the vehicle.

Resolved

- (1) That, following consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, approval be given to the grant of a private hire vehicle licence to Mr AJW.
- (2) That a special dispensation, in that the vehicle be exempt from having to display a Roof Sign and Door Signage, and a dispensation in respect of the vehicle having Privacy Glass, be approved.

97. **Grant of Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence – Mr TA**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on an application made on behalf of Mr TA for the grant of a hackney carriage driver's licence

Mr TA was not in attendance and a letter had been received from Mr TA indicating that he would be unable to attend due to him being out of the country.

In light of this information, it was

Resolved

That consideration of the application made for the grant of a hackney carriage driver's licence in respect of Mr TA be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

98. **Change in Order of Business**

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c) it was:-

Resolved

That the remaining items of business be considered in the following order:-

99. **Grant of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers' Licences – Mr SA**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on an application made on behalf of Mr SA for the grant of private hire and hackney carriage drivers' licences in the light of his failure to pass, on three separate occasions, his test for local knowledge and the law pertaining to private hire and hackney carriage.

Mr SA was in attendance at the meeting together with his representative, Mr Saleem, and responded to questions asked by the Committee.

Resolved

That, following consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, Mr SA be given a further opportunity to take his test for local knowledge and law pertaining to private hire and hackney carriage upon payment of the appropriate fee.

100. **Grant of Private Hire Driver's Licence – Mr KK**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on an application made on behalf of Mr KK for the grant of a private hire driver's licence.

Mr KK was in attendance at the meeting together with his representative, Mr Saleem and made particular reference to the circumstances surrounding the offences and caution received outlined in the report submitted.

In responding to questions asked by the Committee Mr KK reported that he had changed and now had responsibilities in his life, he also reported that there were no matters pending that they needed to be made aware of.

Resolved

That, following consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, Mr KK be requested to undertake a drugs and alcohol test by the Council's Doctor and that the grant of a private hire driver's licence to Mr KK for a period of three months be approved by officers under delegated powers, provided that the drugs and alcohol test was satisfactory.

101. **Review of Private Hire Driver's Licence – Mr KA**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was

submitted on a review of the private hire driver's licence issued to Mr KA in the light of the offences committed as indicated in paragraph 3 of the report submitted. It was noted that Mr KA currently had 11 penalty points endorsed on his DVLA driver's licence following speeding offences on three separate occasions.

Mr KA was in attendance at the meeting and referred to the circumstances surrounding the speeding offences committed and responded to questions asked by the Committee, and also reported that there were no matters pending that they needed to be made aware of.

Resolved

That, following consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, the private hire driver's licence issued to Mr KA be suspended for a period of one month in the light of the speeding offences committed.

Mr KA was informed of his right to appeal the decision of the Committee.

102. **Review of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers' Licences – Mr ZA**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on a review of the private hire and hackney carriage drivers' licences issued to Mr ZA in light of the offence committed as indicated in paragraph 3 of the report submitted.

Mr ZA was in attendance at the meeting, together with his representative, Mr Saleem and referred to the circumstances surrounding the offence committed, and in responding to questions asked by the Committee Mr ZA confirmed that there were no matters pending that they needed to be made aware of.

Resolved

That, following consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, Mr ZA receive a strong warning as to his future conduct in the light of the speeding offence committed.

103. **Review of Private Hire Driver's Licence – Mr MRD**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on a review of the private hire driver's licence issued to Mr MRD, in the light of the offences outlined in paragraph 3 of the report submitted.

Mr MRD was in attendance at the meeting, together with his representative, Mr Shafiq.

Mr Shafiq made representations on behalf of Mr MRD, commenting particularly on the circumstances surrounding Mr MRD's conviction for plying for hire and no insurance in January, 2015, and that Mr MRD had been known to him for a long period of time with no complaints or issues and that he was stressed during the time of the offence.

Mr Shafiq responded to questions asked by the Committee, and Mr MRD informed the Committee that there were no matters pending that they needed to be made aware of.

Resolved

That, following consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, the private hire driver's licence issued to Mr MRD be suspended for a period of three months, in light of the offences for which he had been convicted.

Mr MRD was informed of his right to the appeal the decision of the Committee.

104. **Review of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers' Licences – Mr MM**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on a review of the private hire and hackney carriage driver's licences issued to Mr MM, in the light of the offences committed as indicated in paragraph 3 of the report submitted.

It was noted that Mr MM was not in attendance at the meeting in view of him being out of the country, however Mr Saleem was in attendance with a letter authorising Mr Saleem to represent and attend in the absence of Mr MM.

In light of the information submitted, it was

Resolved

That consideration of the review of the private hire and hackney carriage drivers' licences issued to Mr MM be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

105. **Review of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers' Licences – Mr AH**

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on a review of the private hire and hackney carriage drivers' licences issued to Mr AH in the light of the vehicle identified faults as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

Mr AH was in attendance at the meeting together with his representative; Mr Saleem and referred to the circumstances surrounding the failure of a mechanical test on three separate occasions by Mr AH's vehicle. It was noted that the vehicle had passed the vehicle examination test in December, 2014.

Mr Saleem responded to questions asked by the Committee on behalf of Mr AH and informed them there were no matters pending that they needed to be made aware of.

Resolved

That, following consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, the private hire and hackney carriage drivers' licences issued to Mr AH be suspended for a period of one month in the light of the vehicle identified faults during the mechanical tests.

Mr AH was informed of his right to appeal the decision of the Committee.

107

Review of Private Hire Driver's Licence – Mr FA

A report of the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) was submitted on a review of the private hire driver's licence issued to Mr FA in the light of the offence committed as indicated in paragraph 21 of the report submitted. It was noted that Mr FA currently had nine penalty points endorsed on his DVLA driver's licence following driving without due care and attention on two separate occasions.

Mr FA was in attendance at the meeting, together with his Solicitor, Mr Schiller.

Mr Schiller made representations on behalf of his client in particular commenting on the circumstances surrounding the offence, and that Mr FA had been a driver in the Borough for thirty-three years.

During consideration of this matter, it was noted that Mr FA had attended the Committee in January, 2013, following an offence committed of driving without due care and attention, in which the private hire driver's licence issued to Mr FA was suspended for a period of three months. Mr Schiller reported that the decision of the Committee was appealed and the Dudley Magistrates Court reduced the suspension to fourteen days.

Mr FA informed the Committee that there were no matters pending that they needed to be made aware of.

Resolved

That, following consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, the private hire driver's licence issued to Mr FA be suspended for a period of one month, in the light of the offence for which he had been convicted.

Mr FA was informed of his right to appeal the decision of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.58 p.m.

CHAIR

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet

Wednesday 11th February, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

Present:

Councillor S Turner (Deputy Leader - in the Chair)
Councillors K Ahmed, H Bills, D Branwood, T Crumpton, J Foster,
R Harris, G Partridge and D Sparks.

Opposition Group Members nominated to attend meetings of the Cabinet:-

Councillors P Harley, R James, L Jones, I Kettle and P Miller, (Conservative Group); Councillors P Bradley and P Brothwood (UKIP Group)

Officers:

S Norman (Chief Executive), J Millar (Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing)), P Tart (Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation)), P Sharratt (Interim Director of Children's Services), D Harkins (Chief Officer (Health and Wellbeing)), I Newman (Chief Officer (Finance and Legal Services)), R Sims (Assistant Director of Housing Strategy and Private Sector) and S Griffiths (Democratic Services Manager).

Observers:

Councillors N Barlow, J Martin and N Neale.

Also in Attendance:-

S Joberns (Representing the External Auditors, Grant Thornton in relation to Minute No. 55 below)

51

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors S Etheridge, P Lowe, D Vickers and M Wood.

52

Changes in representation of Opposition Group Members

Councillors P Bradley, L Jones and I Kettle were serving in place of Councillors S Etheridge, M Wood and D Vickers for this meeting of the Cabinet.

53 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

54 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4th December, 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

55 **Annual Audit Letter 2013/14**

A joint report of the Chief Executive and the Chief Officer (Finance and Legal Services) was submitted on the External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter for 2013/14.

Resolved

That the External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter for 2013/14 together with the views of the Auditor, be noted.

56 **Deployment of Resources: Housing Revenue Account and Public Sector Housing Capital**

A joint report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) and the Chief Officer (Finance and Legal Services) was submitted on the proposals for the deployment of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and associated matters for 2015/16.

Resolved

- (1) That rents for Housing Revenue Account dwellings be maintained at current levels from 6th April 2015, as outlined in paragraph 3 of the reported submitted.
- (2) That an increase of 1.2% in service charges, as outlined in paragraphs 5 and 7 of the report submitted, be approved.
- (3) That an increase of 1.2% in heating and lighting charges for sheltered housing from an average weekly charge of £14.43 to an average weekly charge of £14.60, as outlined in paragraph 6 of the report submitted, be approved.

- (4) That an increase from £2.20 to £2.30 for laundry tokens, as outlined in paragraph 8 of the report submitted, be approved.
- (5) That the current charge for pitch licences at Oak Lane be maintained, as outlined in paragraph 9 of the report submitted.
- (6) That an increase of 1.2% in water charges at Oak Lane to £6.25 per week, as outlined in paragraph 9 of the report submitted, be approved.
- (7) That the leaseholder's administration fee and the charge for the leasehold information pack be maintained at current levels, as outlined in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the report submitted.
- (8) That an increase of 1.2% (10p per month) for private Telecare clients, as outlined in paragraph 12 of the report submitted, be approved.
- (9) That the Council be recommended:-
 - (a) To approve the revised Housing Revenue Account budget for 2014/15 and the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2015/16, as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.
 - (b) To approve the public sector housing revised capital budget for 2014/15 and the capital budget for 2015/16 to 2019/20 attached as Appendix 2 to the report.
 - (c) To authorise the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) and the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) to bid for and enter into funding arrangements for additional resources to supplement investment in the public sector housing stock, as outlined in paragraphs 23 and 24 of the report submitted, and that expenditure funded from such resources be added to the Capital Programme.
 - (d) To authorise the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety, to manage and allocate resources to the Capital Programme, as outlined in paragraph 25 of the report submitted.
 - (e) To confirm that all capital receipts arising from the sale of Housing Revenue Account assets, other than those specifically committed to support private sector housing, should continue to be used for the improvement of council homes.

- (f) To authorise the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) to procure and enter into contracts for the delivery of the capital programme, as outlined in paragraph 26 of the report submitted.
 - (g) To receive the Housing Revenue Account medium term financial strategy and thirty year business plan, attached as Appendix 4 to the report submitted.
-

57 **Capital Programme Monitoring**

A joint report of the Chief Executive and the Chief Officer (Finance and Legal Services) was submitted on the progress of the Capital Programme and a number of proposed amendments. The report also set out the proposed 'Prudential Indicators' as required to be determined by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Local Government Act 2003 and to sought approval of the proposed Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2015/16.

During the discussion and questions on this report, it was agreed that written responses would be provided to Councillor P Harley concerning funding allocations for highway maintenance and to Councillor I Kettle concerning the number and location of bore holes referred to in relation to the Energy Efficiency item in the report.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture responded to a question concerning the cost of the new paths at Homer Hill Park. She also noted comments made by Councillor P Miller regarding safety concerns associated with the item on Wordsley Park Garage.

Resolved

- (1) That the result of the Post Completion Review of relevant capital projects, as outlined in Appendix C of the report submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the Council be recommended:-
 - (a) To note the current progress with the 2014/15 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A to the report, and that budgets be amended to reflect the reported variances.
 - (b) To note the grant funding for a toucan crossing in Colley Gate, Halesowen and that the project be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 7 of the report submitted.

- (c) To approve the Wordsley Park Garage project and include it in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 8 of the report submitted.
- (d) To approve the CCTV project at Blowers Green and Lister Road depots and include it in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 9 of the report submitted.
- (e) That the Highways Maintenance Block allocations 2015/16 – 2017/18 be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 10 of the report submitted.
- (f) To note the funding to install a new kitchen at Netherton Church of England Primary School and that the project be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 11 of the report submitted.
- (g) To approve the initial Energy Efficiency projects and their inclusion in the Capital Programme and that the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) be authorised to include further projects subject to establishing value for money and the availability of funding, as set out in paragraph 12 of the report submitted.
- (h) To note the urgent amendments to the Capital Programme, as set out paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report submitted.
- (i) To agree the Prudential Indicators as required to be determined by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Local Government Act 2003, as set out in Appendix D of the report submitted.
- (j) To approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy as set out in paragraph 19 of the report submitted.

58

Question under Council Procedure Rule 11.8

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 11.8 a question was asked by Councillor P Brothwood and responded to as follows:-

Question

Following the recent press coverage about Brierley Hill Civic centre being handed over to a voluntary group, can the Council confirm how much income the Council will expect to lose over the next five years as a result of this handover? In addition has a full cost analysis been conducted and if so can the public see the results?

Response

The first point to make is that Brierley Hill Civic Hall has not been 'handed over' to a voluntary group. The Council has entered into a partnership arrangement with Dudley Council for Voluntary Services (DCVS) who will for a trial period of 18 months act as interim managers of the site with the main target being to increase both usage and income at the site.

This arrangement is in keeping with the Council's 'Asset Transfer Policy' and the Council's wider ambition to be a 'Community Council', and the 'trial' nature of this arrangement will be used to inform other asset transfer projects that may come along in the future.

The nature of the agreement with DCVS is that no income will be lost to the Council given that DCVS will act as the Council's 'proxy managers' for the venue and the budget remains the Council's, the same as would be the case if the Council continued to directly manage the venue itself, even to the extent of the existing staff remaining as Council employees.

The 18 month trial is seen as a possible pre-cursor to a more formal asset transfer opportunity in the future but that will be dependent on how successful DCVS are in terms of developing usage and income streams at the hall.

Given that this is an interim trial and the timescale is relatively short ie. 18 months, it was considered that there was no need for a full cost analysis to be produced, in lieu of the fact that the venue's budget remains intact during this period.

Some initial feasibility work was previously undertaken utilising consultants jointly engaged by the Council and DCVS, to assess the merits of a possible Asset Transfer of the venue. One of the main recommendations emanating from that study being that a trial project of the type proposed should be undertaken to test the theory and inform future decisions.

Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committees

The Cabinet was informed of the decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on 10th December, 2014 concerning the ongoing parking and transport issues concerning Russells Hall Hospital and surrounding areas.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had recommended the Cabinet support proposals being developed by the Dudley Group of Hospitals Trust to develop additional staff car parking facilities on land adjacent to Russells Hall Hospital to benefit all users of the hospital and the wider community.

The Cabinet noted the recommendation for onward reference to the relevant Cabinet Members. Whilst the terms of the resolution were accepted in principle, it was noted that any future proposals would be the subject of appropriate environmental impact assessments and all necessary planning application procedures.

The meeting ended at 6.25 p.m.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet

**Wednesday 25th February, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

Present:

Councillor P Lowe (Leader – Chair)
Councillor S Turner (Deputy Leader)
Councillors K Ahmed, H Bills, D Branwood, T Crumpton, J Foster,
R Harris and G Partridge.

Opposition Group Members nominated to attend meetings of the Cabinet:-

Councillors P Harley, R James, L Jones, P Miller and M Wood (Conservative Group); Councillors P Brothwood and S Etheridge (UKIP Group)

Officers:

S Norman (Chief Executive), J Millar (Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing)), P Tart (Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation)), D Harkins (Chief Officer (Health and Wellbeing)), I Newman (Chief Officer (Finance and Legal Services)), M Bowsher (Chief Officer (Adult Social Care)) and S Griffiths (Democratic Services Manager) together with other officers.

Observers:

Councillors N Barlow, A Goddard, I Kettle, N Neale, K Turner and D Vickers

60 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor D Sparks.

61 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

Revenue Budget Strategy and Setting the Council Tax 2015/16

A joint report of the Chief Executive and the Chief Officer (Finance and Legal Services) was submitted on the deployment of General Fund revenue resources, a number of statutory calculations that had to be made by the Council and the Council Tax to be levied for the period from 1st April, 2015 to 31st March, 2016.

During the discussion on this item, Cabinet Members responded to specific questions and issues raised by Opposition Spokespersons concerning the budget proposals. The points made were noted and requests for further information would be dealt with as necessary. The report and recommendations would be submitted to the Council on 2nd March, 2015.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council be recommended to approve:-
- (a) The budget for 2015/16, and service allocations (including the Public Health budget) as set out in the report.
 - (b) That the statutory amounts required to be calculated for the Council's spending, contingencies and contributions to reserves; income and use of reserves; transfers to and from its collection fund; and council tax requirement, as referred to in Section 67(2)(b) be now calculated by the Council for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as shown in Appendix 10 of the report.
 - (c) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts in Appendix 10, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, agrees the following levels of Council Tax for Dudley Council services for 2015/16:

Valuation Bands

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>
£857.89	£1000.88	£1143.85	£1286.84
<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>
£1572.80	£1858.77	£2144.73	£2573.68

- (d) The revision of 2014/15 budgets to reflect the variances set out in paragraphs 9 and 11 of the report.

- (e) The Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in the report.
- (2) That the Council be recommended to determine that a referendum relating to Council Tax increases is not required in accordance with Chapter 4ZA of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (3) That Cabinet Members, the Chief Executive and Directors be authorised to take all necessary steps to implement the proposals contained in the report, in accordance with the Council's Financial Management Regime.
- (4) That the Chief Executive and Directors be reminded to exercise strict budgetary control in accordance with the Financial Management Regime and care and caution in managing the 2015/16 budget, particularly in the context of commitments into later years and the impact that any overspending in 2015/16 will have on the availability of resources to meet future budgetary demands.
- (5) That the Chief Officer (Finance and Legal Services) be authorised to approve the realignment of budgets in due course to reflect the new Directorate structure, including the allocation of the £1m savings from the review of senior management.
- (6) That consultation on proposals to remove local authority transport provision for children attending specialist nurseries be extended and that further work be undertaken with parents to identify ways to deliver the planned saving whilst mitigating the impact on children and their families.
- (7) That the creation of Budget Challenge Teams be approved, as set out in paragraph 55 of the report.
- (8) That the Council be recommended to approve the Pay Policy Statement 2015 as set out in Appendix 12 to the report.

(This was a Key Decision with the Council and Cabinet being named as Decision Takers).

The meeting ended at 6.45p.m.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet

Wednesday 11th March, 2015 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

Present:

Councillor P Lowe (Leader – Chair)
Councillor S Turner (Deputy Leader)
Councillors K Ahmed, H Bills, D Branwood, T Crumpton, J Foster,
R Harris, G Partridge and D Sparks.

Opposition Group Members nominated to attend meetings of the Cabinet:-

Councillors R James, L Jones, I Kettle, D Vickers and M Wood (Conservative Group); Councillors P Brothwood and S Etheridge (UKIP Group)

Officers:

S Norman (Chief Executive), J Millar (Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing)), P Tart (Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation)), P Sharratt (Interim Director of Children's Services), D Harkins (Chief Officer (Health and Wellbeing)), I Newman (Chief Officer (Finance and Legal Services)), and R Sanders (Assistant Principal Officer (Democratic Services)).

63 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors P Harley and P Miller.

64 **Changes in representation of Opposition Group Members**

Councillors I Kettle and D Vickers were serving in place of Councillors P Harley and P Miller for this meeting of the Cabinet.

65 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

66 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 11th and 25th February, 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.

67 **Pauline Sharratt – Interim Director of Children's Services**

This being the last meeting of the Cabinet that Ms Sharratt would be attending prior to her impending retirement from the Council's service, the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning paid tribute to Ms Sharratt's outstanding service in the fields of Children's Services and Social Care work.

Resolved

That the Cabinet place on record its appreciation of Ms Sharratt's outstanding contribution in the fields of Children's Services and Social Care work.

68 **Capital Programme Monitoring**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and the Chief Officer (Finance and Legal Services) on the progress of the Capital Programme and a number of proposed amendments.

During the discussion and questions on this report, it was agreed that the proposed allocations of the Basic Need funding for schools, as referred to in paragraph 9 of the report would be sent to all Cabinet Members and Opposition spokespersons.

Resolved

That the Council be recommended:-

- (1) That current progress with the 2014/15 Capital Programme be noted.
- (2) That the Integrated Transport funding allocation be noted, and the associated expenditure included in the Capital Programme.
- (3) That the project to reline the cremators at Stourbridge Crematorium be approved and included in the Capital Programme.

- (4) That the School Condition allocation for 2015/16 be noted and the associated expenditure included in the Capital Programme.
- (5) That the Schools Devolved Capital allocation for 2015/16 be noted and the associated expenditure included in the Capital Programme.
- (6) That the Schools Basic Need allocations for 2015/16 to 2017/18 be noted and the associated expenditure included in the Capital Programme.
- (7) That the Priority Schools Building Programme Phase 2 funding be noted, and subject to confirmation of detailed allocations, the relevant associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme.

(This was a Key Decision with the Cabinet and Council named as Decision Takers)

69

Organisational Restructure

As part of the ongoing organisational restructure, the Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive requesting approval to formal consultation being carried out on the proposed organisational structure, to include 3rd, 4th and 5th tier posts.

The report also contained an update on the current position regarding the appointment of Strategic Directors and Chief Officers. A correction was made to paragraph 9 of the report to indicate the position regarding the number of Chief Officers.

A Member asked to be supplied with the forecast of anticipated savings, as referred to in paragraph 8. A written reply would be sent to him.

Resolved

- (1) That the Cabinet agree the proposed structure to commence formal consultation with the staff affected.
- (2) That redundancies for the interim/temporary posts, where no redeployment is achieved, be approved.
- (3) That the introduction of two new grades for Heads of Service where externally evaluated using the LGE Job evaluation schemes, be approved.
- (4) That the update on Strategic Director and Chief Officer appointments, be noted.

(This was a Key Decision with the Cabinet named as Decision Taker)

70 **Corporate Quarterly Performance Management Report**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive on the third Corporate Quarterly Performance Management Report for 2014/15, relating to performance for the period 1st October to 31st December, 2014.

Resolved

That the Corporate Quarterly Performance Management Report for the third quarter of 2014/15, for the period from 1st October to 31st December, 2014, be noted.

71 **Formal Adoption of the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy and Cost Recovery Policy for Dudley Borough following Public Consultation**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) seeking approval for the adoption of the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy and the associated Cost Recovery Policy documentation following a public consultation exercise held between 12th December 2014 and 16th January, 2015.

Resolved

That the adoption of the revised Contaminated Land Strategy and Cost Recovery Policy for the Borough of Dudley, be approved.

(This was a Key Decision with the Cabinet named as Decision Taker)

72 **Approval for consultation of the draft revised Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) seeking approval for the draft review of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document to be used as a basis for public consultation commencing on 13th March, 2015 for a period of six weeks.

Resolved

That the use of the draft review of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document as a basis for public consultation commencing on 13th March, 2015 for a period of six weeks, be approved.

(This was a Key Decision with the Cabinet named as Decision Taker)

73 **Draft Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document – Approval to Consult**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) seeking approval to undertake a period of six weeks' statutory consultation on the draft Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document commencing on 13th March, 2015.

Resolved

That the use of the draft Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document as the basis for public consultation commencing on 13th March, 2015 for a period of six weeks, be approved.

(This was a Key Decision with the Cabinet named as Decision Taker)

74 **Dudley Market**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing) seeking approval for a pilot project to enable Dudley Market to be operated by a company established by Dudley Market Traders.

Resolved

- (1) That the Strategic Director (Resources and Transformation) and the Strategic Director (Environment, Economy and Housing), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, be authorised to enter into an agreement on appropriate terms and conditions with a Traders Management Company for a pilot project for the management of Dudley Market.
 - (2) That a further report on the management of Dudley Market by the Market Traders be considered by the Cabinet after the first six monthly review and before the end of the twelve month pilot.
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75 **Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committees**

No issues were reported under this item.

The meeting ended at 6.25 p.m.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

DELEGATED DECISION SUMMARIES

(Copies of Decision Sheets on the new decisions database can be accessed by logging on to

<http://online.dudley.gov.uk/dudco/decision/decisions.asp>)

