

Directorate of Corporate Resources

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Your ref:

Our ref:
JJ/CAG

Please ask for:
Mr J Jablonski

Telephone No.
01384 815243

25th November 2013

Dear Member

Meeting of the Council – Monday 2nd December 2013

Attached for your attention, are sets of minutes which were marked to follow on the Agenda for the Council White Book.

Kingswinford North and Wall Heath,
Kingswinford South and Wordsley CF

12th November 2013

Amblecote, Cradley and Wollescote
And Lye and Stourbridge North CF

12th November 2013

Brierley Hill and Brockmoor and
Pensnett CF

12th November 2013

Adult, Community and Housing Services
Scrutiny Committee

11th November 2013

Taxis Committee

14th November 2013

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "P. Tart", written over a white background.

Director of Corporate Resources

TO: All Members of the Council

**ACTION NOTES OF THE MEETING OF KINGSWINFORD NORTH AND
WALL HEATH/KINGSWINFORD SOUTH AND WORDSLEY COMMUNITY
FORUM**

Tuesday, 12th November, 2013 at 6.30 p.m.
at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Wordsley

PRESENT: -

Councillor Blood (Chair)
Councillor Miller (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Mrs Billingham, Mrs Boleyn, and Tyler.

OFFICERS:

Mr I Newman (Lead Officer to the Forum), Treasurer and Mrs L Jury – Both Directorate of Corporate Resources, together with 36 members of the public.

7. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Harley, Hemingsley, Jones and Mrs Simms.

8. **INTRODUCTIONS BY THE CHAIR**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting of the Kingswinford North and Wall Heath/ Kingswinford South and Wordsley Community Forum.

9. **LISTENING TO YOU: QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS**

Local residents raised questions and made comments as set out below.

Nature of questions/comments

- (1) A lengthy discussion ensued relating to the Council's proposal to transfer by way of leasehold the land and buildings alongside the services currently provided at New Bradley Hall Residential Care Home, to a suitably skilled and experienced not for profit organisation. Arising from

the discussion, many concerns were raised and questions asked and responded to. A resident questioned the legal position should the not-for-profit organisation fail and it was agreed that this question be referred to the officer dealing with this issue for a written response. In response to the concerns raised by residents at the lack of consultation regarding this issue, it was agreed that Councillor Tyler would notify the relevant Cabinet Member of these concerns.

- (2) A resident complained about the poor state of the footpaths and road surface in Barton Lane. The issue was referred to the relevant Directorate for a response.
- (3) The same resident complained about the height of a line of trees in Murdoch Drive which are blocking out sunlight to many houses on Murdoch Drive and requested that this issue be addressed. The issue was referred to the relevant Directorate for a response.
- (4) A resident raised concern regarding potholes on Brettell Lane, in particular a major hole adjacent to the road prior to Harrison Road. The issue was referred to the relevant Directorate for a response.

Other issues raised and/or answered on the evening:

- Representatives of Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group gave a short presentation relating to the consultation on a new vision for urgent care in Dudley. Residents and Ward Members expressed their views and concerns in relation to the proposed re-location of the Holly Hall NHS walk-in centre to Russells Hall Hospital, particularly relating to the cost of parking at the hospital and residents were urged to get involved with the consultation process by completing the survey that was distributed at the meeting.
- Although the Police were unable to attend this evening's meeting, the crime figures for October and November were submitted. It was noted that an increase had arisen in thefts from motor vehicles across all Wards and in particular, the theft of catalytic converters. It was noted that the next PACT meeting would be held on Wednesday 11th December 2013 (Venue and time to be confirmed).

10.

WORKING WITH YOU – TOPICS RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILLORS

No issues were raised under this item.

11. AREA GRANTS

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted on applications for funding.

AGREED:

- (1) That the Director of Corporate Resources be recommended to approve an application from Fast+Aid Charity for funding of up to £1,000 from each of the ten Community Forums to enable them to purchase an additional vehicle to provide critical or life saving care to patients in the Dudley borough whilst awaiting the arrival of the West Midlands Ambulance Service, but the funding not be released until approval is given by the other Community Forums.
- (2) That the Director of Corporate Resources be recommended to approve an application from Wordsley Wasps (under 18's) Football Team for funding of up to £300 to pay for resources over and above those that can be met from the monthly running costs eg. hiring of astro turf pitches, referee fees, replacement shirts and footballs, and the club be advised that in line with the guidelines for considering funding applications, no further applications for funding be submitted by any Wordsley Wasps teams within the next three years.
- (3) That the Director of Corporate Resources be recommended to approve the application from Dudley MBC – Environmental Management Division for funding of up to £2,102.44 to enable them to purchase and erect two Christmas trees located at Wordsley (Mere Education Centre) and Wall Heath (Enville Road), and meet associated energy costs of lighting the two trees and energy costs to light an existing live tree at Townsend Place, Kingswinford, and that the Environmental Management Division be requested to explore the feasibility of planting live trees in Wordsley and Wall Heath, in agreed locations, for future years.
- (4) (i) That the Director of Corporate Resources be recommended to approve an application from Unit3sixty CIC for funding of up to £5,000 from each of the ten Community Forums to match fund capital equipment and revenue to provide membership packages to residents to attend an indoor recreation centre, to include a skate park, subject to planning permission and to the submission of further information on the overall funding of the project.

- (ii) That a further report be submitted to the Community Forum, in due course, following the receipt of the additional information referred to above and prior to any funding being released by the Director or Corporate Resources.
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12. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted that the next meeting of the Community Forum would be held on Tuesday 4th February, 2014 at 6.30pm at St Mary's Parish Church Hall, The Village, Kingswinford.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm.

ACTION NOTES OF THE MEETING OF AMBLECOTE, CRADLEY AND WOLLESCOTE, LYE AND STOURBRIDGE NORTH COMMUNITY FORUM

Held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 12th November, 2013
At Providence Methodist Church, Windmill Lane, Colley Lane.

PRESENT:-

Councillor Herbert (Chair)
Councillor Perks (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Body, Crumpton and Hanif.

OFFICERS:-

Miss J Porter (Current Lead Officer to the Forum - Director of Children's Services), Ms A Grove (Prospective Lead Officer to the Forum – Head of Service – Youth Service) and Mrs K Taylor (Directorate of Corporate Resources)

Together with 22 members of the public.

15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillors Lowe, Mrs Martin, Partridge, and Mrs Walker.

16 **INTRODUCTIONS BY THE CHAIR**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Forum. Following the making of other general announcements the local councillors and members of the public introduced themselves.

17 **LISTENING TO YOU - QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS**

Local residents raised questions and made comments as set out below. These issues would be referred to the relevant Directorate or appropriate body for a response:-

Nature of questions/comments

- (1) A resident referred to the traffic lights at Colley Gate, in particular that due to the design of the junction, traffic would be flowing towards Windmill Hill from Lye after the lights had changed to red and traffic would then move across the junction towards Windmill Hill.

Councillor Body reported that he had attended a meeting regarding Air Quality and that the area was one of the worst in the Dudley Borough, and it had been suggested that moving the lay-bys for buses and traffic lights it could alleviate the problems. It was noted that the issue would be reported back to the Highways Division.

- (2) A resident referred to the misleading and incorrect road sign on entering the Borough from Cradley Heath along Cradley Road, which states 'Welcome to Halesowen'. This had been previously raised at a Forum meeting, and a response was given stating that the Marketing and Communications Team would contact the resident for further guidance, however this had not been done.
- (3) A request was made for the possibility of lights on the car parks in Lye, including the area behind the Church and Lye Medical Practice. Councillor Hanif undertook to investigate further.
- (4) A resident referred to the junction of Collis Street and King William Street, Stourbridge, in particular that Collis Street was no entry but a number of drivers ignored the no entry signs, putting pedestrians and other drivers at risk. It would be helpful if the pavements were extended to discourage this.

Councillor Perks reported that she had contacted the Highways Division, however the issue was witnessing the vehicles. Councillor Perks undertook to contact the local Neighbourhood Team to investigate further.

- (5) A resident referred to a large Conifer tree to the rear of his neighbouring property, which was close to the house and blocking sunlight, and raised concerns about sewers, foundations, the garden wall and cracking patio. Letters had been sent to the neighbours but there had been no response.

Other issues raised :-

- Concerns were raised regarding vehicles speeding through Oldnall Road, Wollescote.

Councillor Crumpton stated that a meeting had taken place and a report had been circulated to those present, including local residents, of the outcomes. He reported that the road had been deep cleaned due to the problems caused by oil spillages, and that it was anticipated that speed cameras and a rumbling strip would be introduced to reduce vehicles speeding. Councillor Crumpton undertook to contact the Highways Division to discuss timelines for completion.

- Concerns were raised in relation to the problems caused by parking by the Convenience Stores in Toys Lane. Councillor Body undertook to raise the issue again.
- Concerns were raised regarding the lack of speed limit signs when turning from Thorns Road onto Caledonia. Councillor Hanif undertook to investigate further.
- Reference was made to the intended opening of a Medical Practice in Lye. The Chair undertook to investigate further and report back to the resident.
- Concerns were raised in regard to the traffic congestion on Maple Tree Lane, and that it had been agreed that there was sufficient space to introduce a filter lane, however this was not introduced due to lack of finance. It was further noted that a sale notice had been erected on the car park.

Councillor Crumpton reported that development opportunities were being looked at for the land and that any development could resolve the issues of parking, and undertook to raise the issue again at the Cradley Action Group.

- A resident asked why Dudley Council could not take over the derelict buildings situated in Colley Gate.

Councillor Crumpton stated that the Council was aware of the buildings however there were a number of issues in respect of redeveloping. He stated that the buildings had been on the market for twelve months, and that it would be beneficial for an owner to purchase the entire building to redevelop. Councillor Crumpton invited the resident to attend the Cradley Action Group.

- A representative of Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was in attendance. The Chair requested that members of the public look at the leaflets provided and raise any issues with the representative after the meeting.
- There is a table top sale taking place at Providence Methodist Church on 14th December, 2013.
- There is a Christmas event taking place at the Stambermill St Marks Scout Group on 6th December, 2013.

18 WORKING WITH YOU - TOPICS RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILLORS

- Councillor Hanif commented on parking in Lower High Street, Lye and that the problems would shortly be resolved.
- Councillor Perks

- (a) Referred to Collis Street and the possibility of introducing a weight limit restriction, however the Group Engineer had informed her that this would not be possible.
 - (b) Reported parking problems in School Drive, in particular the restrictions on the car park caused by shrubs. A request had been raised to Greencare about the possibility of removing the shrubs to extend the car park and possibly alleviate the problems
 - (c) Circulated leaflets in relation to reporting rogue traders.
 - (d) Referred to an organisation, namely, Crossways Care, who provided respite care, and requested that anybody who knew of an elderly person who was unable to leave their home to contact the organisation.
- Councillor Body
 - (a) Reported on the three litter picking events in Cradley over a three month period, which were very successful, and thanked those who attended.
 - (b) Referred to a £250k grant awarded to Homer Hill Park, with the possibility of building changing rooms and further facilities on the park for members of the public to use
 - (c) Reported that an acoustic music club would commence from 8th January, 2014 on Wednesday evenings, free of charge.
- Councillor Crumpton
 - (a) That Cradley Library was currently closed for refurbishment, and that a limited service was being offered on Friday's at the Community Centre. It was anticipated that the library would re-open the first week in December.
 - (b) That following the success of Cradley Festival Week, ways on how to improve the festival for next year were being looked at.
 - (c) Referred to the events organised by Providence Methodist Church, in particular that there would be a food bank event taking place in November, and thanked all the volunteers who worked at Providence.
 - (d) Reported on problems in Mogul Lane caused by overgrown trees.
 - (e) Reported on the first Christmas tree being erected by residents from Tanhouse. The tree lights would be switched on on Saturday 7th December, and encouraged members of the public to attend.

(f) The improvements made to the car park and pathways at Wollescote Park

- There is a Meet People Event taking place in Dudley Town Hall on 19th November, 2013 to discuss Community Safety issues. For more information, please visit the website.

19 AREA GRANTS

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted on five applications for funding, and an application approved under delegated powers

The Lead officer reported on a letter received by Stourbridge Cricket Club thanking the Community Forum for the grant awarded to purchase two rain cover sheets.

Representatives from Stambermill St Marks Group; Unit 3 Sixty and Providence – No Strings Attached were in attendance and made comments on their application.

The Lead Officer referred to the application submitted that the application received by Stambermill St Marks Group was incorrect, and that a revised application would be circulated to Members.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the action of the Lead Officer, in consultation with members of the forum, in recommending approval of an application in the sum of £1000 from Fast+Aid towards the purchase of a second vehicle for the Dudley area for faster responses to 999 emergency calls from the ambulance service, be noted.
- (b) That the application received from Stambermill St Marks Group be considered under delegated powers, in consultation with members, following receipt of the revised application.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND

That the Director of Corporate Resources approve the following:-

- (a) A grant in the sum of £480 to Access in Dudley to purchase a version of photosymbols.

- (b)
 - (1) A grant in the sum of £1,004.90 to Dudley MBC Environmental Management Division for the provision of a Christmas tree in Lye – Christ Church, High Street.
 - (2) A request to investigate whether the existing tree in Tanhouse Lane / Chapel House Lane could be utilised, and the funds to be used elsewhere either for December, 2013 or December, 2014.
 - (3) That if the existing tree could not be utilised, then the full amount of £2009.80 be recommended for approval.
 - (c)
 - (1) In principle, a grant in the sum of £5000 to Unity3sixty Indoor Urban Recreation Centre, subject to planning permission being obtained and to the submission of further information on the overall funding of the project.
 - (2) That a further report be submitted to the Community Forum in due course following the receipt of the additional information referred to above and prior to any funding being released by the Director of Corporate Resources.
 - (d) A grant in the sum of £2000 to Providence – No Strings Attached to purchase a high quality video camera.
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20 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community Forum would be on Tuesday 4th February, 2014, starting at 6.30pm at Amblecote Church Hall, Vicarage Road, Amblecote.

The meeting ended at 8.10. pm

**ACTION NOTES OF THE MEETING OF BRIERLEY HILL/BROCKMOOR AND
PENSNETT COMMUNITY FORUM**

HELD AT 6.30PM ON TUESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER, 2013

AT THE BROCKMOOR COMMUNITY CENTRE, PENSNETT ROAD, BRIERLEY HILL

PRESENT:-

Councillor Jordan (Chair)
Councillor Islam (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Foster, Harris and J Martin.

Officers:-

Mr I McGuff (Assistant Director, Quality and Partnership) – (Directorate of Children's Services) (Lead Officer to the Forum) and Mrs K Buckle (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

Together with five members of the public

16 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

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

17 INTRODUCTIONS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and Members introduced themselves. The Chair outlined the purpose of the Forum meeting.

18 OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIR

The Chair referred to death of Alan Miles advising of the vast amount of work within the community that he had been involved with in particular being the Chair and Vice Chair of several associations and forums. The Chair further referred to Alan's wit, charm and presence at Forums stating that he would be missed by all three Ward members.

There followed a period of one minutes silence as a mark of respect for Alan Miles.

19 URGENT CARE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Head of Commissioning for Dudley Commissioning Group, Mr N Bucktin gave a verbal presentation on the Consultation relating to re-shaping the provision of urgent care, advising that the Consultation ended on 24th December, 2013.

He referred to re-providing the service that was currently provided at the walk in centre in Holly Hall by ensuring that patients could access their General Practitioner's surgeries during the day and the re-provision of the walk in centre at Russells Hall Hospital and details of the service provision at Russells Hall Hospital were outlined.

Members of the public raised concerns in relation to the re-provision of the service and were encouraged to participate in the Consultation.

The Vice-Chair suggested that the provision of additional General Practitioner's appointments should be introduced and monitored prior to considering the closure of the walk in centre at Holly Hall.

Concerns were raised by Councillor Martin in relation to centralising the walk in centre at Russells Hall Hospital due to the cost of parking and the affect this would have on the surrounding areas.

Mr Bucktin responded stating that the Clinical Commissioning Group must be satisfied that additional General Practitioner's appointments had been obtained and the Practitioners could cope with the further demand on their services.

As a Member of the Health Scrutiny Committee Councillor Harris advised that the Committee had informed the Clinical Commissioning Group that the Committee must scrutinise any substantive change with the provision of the out of hours service regardless of what the Group decides.

In responding to further questions, Mr Bucktin confirmed that General Practitioners were not at liberty to provide additional appointments but they would be consulted with and further meetings had been arranged with Practitioners in order that issues could be discussed.

He confirmed that a triage service would be provided at the new site at Russells Hall Hospital.

20 DUDLEY GROUP OF HOSPITAL NHS TRUST

Mr D Stenson, Governor of the Trust gave a verbal presentation on Health Watch in Dudley and their involvement with the Clinical Commissioning Group Consultation.

He also referred to Patient Panels at General Practitioner's surgeries and outlined the purpose of the Panels and Members of the public were provided with details of how to become members of the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust.

Mr Stenson referred to the ongoing work with the elderly, frail and those patients with multiple conditions.

He also referred to a recent review which had been undertaken on fourteen selected Trusts in relation to mortality rates and advised that the review outcome as far as Russells Hall Hospital was concerned had been that mortality rates were normal

and referred to the further review which would be undertaken in March, 2014.

Concerns were raised by Members in relation to the lack of Patient Panels in General Practitioners' surgeries.

21 LISTENING TO YOU: QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

Local residents raised questions and made comments as set out below. These issues would be referred to the relevant Directorate or appropriate body for a response.

Nature of Query/Complaint

- 1(a). In relation to the public right of way to the rear of Tesco in Milton Street/Albert Street, Brierley Hill a request that street lighting be installed as following the installation of high fencing by Tesco the right of way was extremely dark and dangerous under foot. Photographs were submitted.
- 1(b). Could the fly tipping be removed from the right of way in Albert Street/Milton Street, Brierley Hill to the rear of the spa, as this was now spreading onto the footpath which was making this impassable. Photographs were submitted.
- 1(c). In relation to the right of way off the High Street to the side of Tesco of Milton Street, Brierley Hill the hedges on the privately owned land were overgrown and could these be pruned and could the fly-tipping be removed. Photographs were submitted.
- 1(d). There is a large pothole in Tennyson Street, Pensnett could this be repaired.
- 2(a). Following gas pipe replacement work in Poets Corner the street had been left in a dangerous state for a number of weeks could the barriers and containers left behind be removed.
- 2(b). What are the Council's plans for the former Pensnett school site.
- 3(a). A member of the public expressed concerns regarding a shop owner in Brierley Hill High Street displaying fruit and vegetables on the pavement outside their shop that were spilling onto the pavement and causing health and safety issues for pedestrians. The questioner referred to an incident where she tripped on the produce and fell injuring her back that required medical attention. Photographs were submitted.

Councillor Harris advised that Officers from the Council's Trading Standards team had attended for a site visit when questions had been raised in relation to ownership and she undertook to contact the relevant Officer's again in relation to this issue.

- 3(b). A member of the public raised concerns in relation to an injured stray horse on Fens Pool Nature Reserve stating that this had been reported six weeks previously to both the Council and the RSPCA.

A meeting with parks and voluntary groups at the Pensnett Nature Reserve was referred to. Councillor Foster advised that a Working Group had been formed to investigate a number of issues at Fens Pool and a further Working Group meeting would take place shortly. She advised that the status and general care of the Nature Reserve would be investigated.

- 3(c) Concerns were raised in relation to irresponsible people fishing on Fens Pool Nature Reserve which was causing a danger to the swans and cygnets with an incident occurring where a cygnet had been entangled in a fishing line.

The questioner was urged to report such matters as and when they occurred and a Member of the public advised that illegal fishing on Fens Pool Nature Reserve had been discussed at the last PACT meeting and was being investigated by the Police who were aware of this.

22 WORKING WITH YOU: TOPICS RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Councillor Foster referred to the Consultation on the future of Children's Centres outlining the proposals which affected the Brierley Hill/Brockmoor and Pensnett areas. She urged Members of the public to join in with the consultation advising that details of this were contained on the Council's website. She also referred to a link to a Petition which was on the website.

Councillor Harris referred to a meeting which was to take place in December with key agencies and local residents in relation to parking problems on the Promenade in Brierley Hill which would investigate overall solutions for the residents on the Brickiln Court/Chapel Street estate.

23 COMMUNITY FORUM GRANTS

A report of the Lead Officer was submitted on three applications for funding that had been received which were referred to in the report submitted

AGREED

1. That the Director of Corporate Resources be recommended to approve a grant in the sum of £1,305.52 to Dudley MBC Environmental Management Division to provide a Christmas tree in the Moor Street Shopping Centre, Brierley Hill to include the costs associated with the installation and maintenance of the tree lights

2. That the Director of Corporate Resources be recommended to refuse the applications received from:-
 - (a) Fast+Aid for the sum of £1,000 to meet part of the funding of purchasing a second vehicle to be used in the Dudley area for faster responses to 999 emergency calls from the ambulance service.
 - (b) Unit3sixty for the sum of £5,000 to meet part of the costs of creating a local community enterprise/facility for young people in Stourbridge.
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24 CLOSING REMARKS OF THE CHAIR

The Chair urged Members of the public to check the Council's website and local radio stations for announcements in relation to the next meeting of the Forum should this have to be cancelled due to any adverse weather conditions.

The Chair confirmed that the work of the Brierley Hill Civic Society would be reported on at the next meeting of the Forum and suggested that the Council's Cabinet members be invited to future meetings of the Forum in order to explain their roles and responsibilities.

It was requested that Members and Members of the public could also provide suggestions of any attendees they would wish to speak at future meetings of the Forum.

25 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted, that the next meeting of the Community Forum would be Wednesday 5th February, 2013 at 6.30pm at the Nine Locks Community Centre.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm

ADULT, COMMUNITY AND HOUSING SERVICES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 11th November, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Islam (Chair)
Councillor James (Vice Chair)
Councillors Baugh, Body, Evans, Herbert, J Martin, Miller, Mottram, and
Vickers.

Officers

Assistant Director, Customer Services (Lead Officer to the Committee),
Treasurer, Policy and Performance Manager and Team Manager, Customer
Services (All Directorate of Corporate Resources), Director of Adult, Community
and Housing Services, Assistant Director of Housing Strategy and Private
Sector, Assistant Director, Housing Services, Head of Service - Housing
Options, Head of Service, (Housing Management South), Housing Finance
Manager, Head of Commissioning, Head of Finance and Team Manager
(Income) North (All Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services) and
Mrs K Buckle (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

20 **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor
M Wilson.

21 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

22 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th
September, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

23 **REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2014/15**

A joint report of Officers was submitted on the proposed Revenue Budget Strategy for 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In presenting the report submitted, the Treasurer referred to Appendix C of the report submitted outlining the proposed savings in line with the terms of reference of this Committee.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services outlined the approach being taken in the Directorate in order to achieve the savings required, confirming that the level of need and the model of need required was clear including the investment needed in community support. Details of work that would be undertaken with the Clinical Commissioning Group were provided in relation to helping to keep people out of hospitals and reducing the level of dependency that people had on resources and providing a package of care for the lifetime of patients. Details of the funding that would become available from the Clinical Commissioning Group in order to achieve this were also provided.

Arising from the presentation of the report, and Appendices to the report submitted, Members asked questions and raised concerns as follows:-

- The overspend in relation to Looked After Children and how this had arisen;
- How the level of need upon services compared with other Authorities;
- Was it anticipated that the elderly would require care for longer periods of time;
- How confident was the Directorate that the spending and savings outlined in report were accurate;
- Were the figures outlined in report in relation to Health integration achievable;
- How would the Directorate deal with the increase in demand from dementia patients;
- Who were the external providers in relation to the transfer of home care and how did they qualify to provide this service;
- Would the Government remove Local Enterprise Partnerships funding from Local Authorities;

Officers responded to members questions as follows:-

The Treasurer advised that the overspend was in respect of increased social work caseloads increasing and increased numbers of children in care, in particular very challenging high-cost cases, and that further detail would be provided to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

The Head of Commissioning reported that the level of need upon services were comparable with other Black Country Authorities and the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services undertook to provide Councillor Evans with comparable percentage levels of care as they related to the Council and other Black Country Authorities.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services advised that there were a number of ways to invest in and develop different ways of providing services in order to make them more cost effective such as prevention services, increasing the advice and the level of knowledge and working with the voluntary sector and the public in order to achieve this.

She also referred to working closely with providers in order to produce different and new levels of care in order to expedite patients being discharged from hospital and provide continuing care at home for those patients.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services referred to the provision of extra care housing and the continuing work in order to deliver this service upon a more cost effective basis and addressing alternative systems in order to avoid rationing care, should the elderly require this for longer periods of time.

She also referred to the huge amount of work that was being undertaken in order to accelerate the whole service and the Head of Commissioning also advised that each care case would be examined in conjunction with the skills and assets that the Directorate had in the workplace advising that new systems should be in place by August, 2014.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services advised that in relation to the growth figures raised by the Chair, that the Directorate had calculated these on the demographic population and pressures known to the Directorate based on the demand on services. This is combined with benchmarking figures and the Demand Management System that is operated by the Directorate. The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services also referred to continuing work with General Practitioners in order to diagnose dementia at an earlier stage which was increasing local knowledge of the numbers and demand within this area of the service.

In relation to dealing with the increase in demand for dementia services the Head of Commissioning advised that work was continuing in order to make better use of resources and this would include working with partners to provide the service.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services explained about the Integration Transfer fund being transferred from the National Health Service into Adult Social Care. The national figure was £3.8 billion. A large proportion of the money had already been transferred to the Directorate, and the majority of the funding was used, under a legal section (Section 256) with health partners, to reduce pressures on hospital beds with the main focus on the growing older population. That the Directorate provide additional activity for this investment and then need to ensure some of the funding is used to pay for the life time costs of care for those people who are taken out of hospital.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services advised that the remaining financial transfer being discussed was £1.9 billion nationally and was not new money, it was money which was already being used by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to fund existing health services. The Directorates route to accessing the money was to join up with health and community

colleagues to develop a plan for integrating the Directorates social care services, once again in order to reduce pressure on hospital beds, thus enabling the CCG to reduce current funding in order to invest in the social care element of those services. It was stated that the Directorates plans were well progressed and were committed to providing excellent community based responses as trusted alternatives for any order person who may currently be admitted to hospital. The Directorate were determined that any unplanned admission to hospital or residential care would be seen as a failure of the whole systems approach.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services stated that if the integration plans were successful it would reduce pressures on the budget, but would not provide a solution for it all.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services referred to the relocation of reablement service beds from two small homes into Russell Court and there was no disruption to people who use this service.

The Treasurer reported on the amount of New Homes Bonus to be top sliced for the Local Enterprise Partnership and confirmed that officers were seeking to secure investment of this money for the benefit of the borough.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet's Revenue Budget Strategy proposals for 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy, as set out in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted be noted and the Cabinet be informed that there were no observations that this Scrutiny Committee wished to make on the proposals.

24 IMPACT OF THE BENEFIT CAP AND REMOVAL OF THE SPARE ROOM SUBSIDY ON INCOME COLLECTION WITHIN DUDLEY

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the impact of the Benefit Cap and the removal of the spare room subsidy on income collection within Dudley.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted a member raised concerns in relation to the spare room subsidy and the increase that had resulted in rent arrears, the lack of transitional arrangements that had been put in place by the Government prior to introducing the subsidy and the additional work that had resulted including the demand on Council resources.

A member raised concerns in relation to the large amount of benefits that were being received by some as compared to the average income although it was accepted that there were genuine cases.

Members thanked Officers for the report submitted.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the impact of the Benefit Cap and the removal of the spare room subsidy on income collection within Dudley, be noted.

25 THE IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM ON DUDLEY HOUSING STOCK

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the impact of Welfare Reform on Dudley Housing Stock.

The Head of Service, Housing Options distributed to members the data in relation to Walsall Council that reflected how their housing stock compared to the Council's.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted members asked questions and made comments and the Head of Service, Housing Options responded as follows:-

- She was not aware of any recent cases where tenants were sub-letting their council properties, however two Fraud Officers had been put in post in the Directorate's Anti Social Behaviour team and they would deal with such cases should they arise.
- In relation to the waiting list the majority were those wishing to downsize.
- One hundred and fifteen tenants had downsized in anticipation of the spare bedroom subsidy.
- In relation to high rise accommodation prospective tenants were mainly concerned about mobility problems that may result by moving into this accommodation;
- That a fast track process had been implemented in order to advertise void properties and there was also a show flat open day event at the end of November;

Following a suggestion by a member that some maisonettes could be remodelled and converted into one bedroom flats the Head of Service, Housing Options advised that this would need to be addressed as part of the general Capital Programme.

Members thanked the Head of Service, Housing Options for the content of the report submitted.

RESOLVED

That, the information contained in the report submitted, on the impact on Welfare Reform on Dudley Housing Stock, be noted.

26 RECLASSIFICATION AND REMODELLING OF COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK – OPTIONS PAPER

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the options for reclassification and remodelling of council housing stock.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted members asked questions and made comments as follows:-

A member referred to the possible loss in income that may result from re-classification of properties and suggested that parlour type properties could be used to re-house those requiring four bedroom properties.

That offering high rise properties to those with families may pose problems to older residents.

It was recommended that the report submitted be referred to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety.

The Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services confirmed that the Futures Housing Board already facilitated discussions in relation to reclassification and remodelling of council housing stock with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety.

She also responded to a question in relation to the council purchasing new build housing stock that could not be sold by developers advising that this had not been investigated but could be an option for the future.

A member requested that ground floor bedrooms in maisonettes should be taken into account when investigating possible re-classification as these were sometimes not used by tenants due to health and safety concerns and that in relation to two bedroom high rise properties the creation of a kitchen diner should be investigated due to many of those properties containing small kitchen areas.

In responding to a question from a member in relation to converting two bedroom maisonettes into one bedroom properties in order to generate income the Housing Finance Manager indicated that this would depend upon the cost of re-modelling and was dependant upon whether tenants already occupying those properties wished to be re-housed and the Council could re-house them.

The Assistant Director of Housing Services in responding to a question from a member advised that the Housing Futures Board would look at the Council's housing stock as to sustainability which would include evaluating areas and addressing the issues of costs and re-housing with the long term sustainability of the proposed re-modelling.

The Head of Service, Housing Options responded to a member's question stating that the Best Use of Stock partnership would look at shared ownership models advising that there was funding available to the Regional Housing Group to work on this.

The Housing Finance Manager referred to the different avenues and agencies used to trace former tenants with rent arrears advising that rent arrears could be revived should a former tenant be traced.

The Assistant Director of Housing Strategy and Private Sector advised that funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership may be available and the Housing Finance Manager reported that this funding could be used for partnership schemes.

A member advised that it may be more cost effective to demolish maisonettes and re-build new properties.

In responding to a member's question the Head of Service, Housing Options confirmed that the Council provided a Statutory Homelessness Service and advised of the process and matters that would be taken into account should the homelessness result from council eviction, stating that every case would be dealt with upon its own merits and there were no blanket decisions.

A member suggested that three bedroom maisonettes could be used to provide accommodation for young people leaving care with those of a young age sharing the accommodation and the Assistant Director of Housing Strategy and Private Sector advised that he would refer this suggestion to the Housing Futures Board.

RESOLVED

- 1 That, the information contained in the report, submitted on the options for reclassification and remodelling of council housing stock, be noted.
- 2 That the report submitted on options for reclassification and remodelling of council housing stock be referred to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety with the request that the reclassification and remodelling of council housing stock be investigated taking into account the council's resources to do so.

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

CHAIR

TAXIS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14th November, 2013 at 5.30 p.m.
In Committee Room 3 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Body (Chair)
Councillor A. Aston (Vice Chair)
Councillors A. Ahmed, Mrs. Ameson, Cowell, J. Martin, Roberts, Taylor and
K. Turner

Officers:-

Assistant Director (Law and Governance), Mr. T. Holder, Solicitor, Mr. M.
Hanson (Licensing Clerk) and Mr. J. Jablonski (all Directorate of Corporate
Resources)

64. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

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

65. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBER

It was reported that Councillor J. Martin had been appointed as a substitute
member for Councillor Hemingsley for this meeting of the Committee only.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

67. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 17th
October, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

68. REVIEW OF POLICY - INSURANCE POLICY IN RELATION TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on a review of the policy in relation to the production of insurance documentation and, in particular, insurance cover notes and administration charges.

RESOLVED

That, arising from consideration of the review of the policy in relation to the production of insurance documentation and, in particular, insurance cover notes, and administration charges, approval be given to reducing the 30 day time line to 28 days in relation to the production of insurance cover notes.

69. REVIEW OF POLICY - DOOR SIGNAGE FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on the proposed adoption of a policy to allow a condition of licence for hackney carriage vehicles to display the Dudley MBC logo on the off-side and near-side front doors of the hackney carriage.

Arising from the consideration given to this matter, it was suggested that additional wording be included on the sign, a copy of which was circulated at the meeting and as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted.

Consideration was also given to ways in which the identity of the driver might be displayed inside the cab of the vehicle.

RESOLVED

- (1) That approval be given to the adoption of a policy to impose an additional condition of licence to a hackney carriage vehicle licence to the effect that:-

“As from the 1st March, 2014, the proprietor of a hackney carriage vehicle shall display a sign which bears the Dudley MBC logo as prescribed by the Taxi Licensing Committee. The said design shall be displayed on the front near-side and off-side vehicle’s doors, adjacent to the door handles”.

- (2) That the logo as circulated at the meeting and as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted, be updated by the addition of words to the effect that “This hackney carriage is licensed by ...”.

- (3) That further consideration be given to the provision of further identification of the driver of the vehicle inside the cab at a future meeting of the Committee.
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70. REVIEW OF POLICY - VEHICLE TEST EXPIRY DATE IN RELATION TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on a review of the policy in relation to a private hire and hackney carriage vehicle test expiry date.

RESOLVED

That, arising from consideration of this matter, approval be given to Option 2, as set out in paragraph 12 of the report submitted, allowing a licence holder to take their vehicle for an examination test at Lister Road up to 28 days prior to the expiry of the current vehicle examination test date without any loss of days on their existing vehicle licence and that if a vehicle fails the vehicle examination, the vehicle licence be suspended until the vehicle passes its vehicle examination test, the vehicle licence commencing from the date the test was passed.

71. PLYING FOR HIRE

Councillor K. Turner referred to incidents involving a member of the public known to him, who had been stopped on five occasions, as he was walking home, by drivers of private hire vehicles.

Arising from the comments made, the Assistant Director (Law and Governance) reported that all such incidents reported to the Council by members of the public were taken seriously and investigated. On this occasion, appropriate action had been taken and would continue to be taken. In this particular case, as no individual driver had been identified, there was no evidence to take action against a particular person.

An assurance was also given that action would continue to be taken to try to ensure that such events were not repeated.

A member of the taxi trade, who was in attendance, invited members of the Committee to future meetings of Taxi Watch and gave an assurance that the trade would take action against drivers involved in the practice of plying for hire.

Arising from the consideration of this item, the Chair asked that the congratulations of the Committee be passed on to all those taxi drivers involved in the recent event that had raised approximately £1,130 for the Birmingham Children's Hospital.

72. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972, as indicated below and in all the circumstances, the public interest in disclosing the information is outweighed by the public interest in maintaining the exemption from disclosure.

<u>Description of Item</u>	<u>Relevant paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A</u>
Review of hackney carriage driver's licence - Mr. R.H.S.	1.
Grant of private hire of hackney carriage drivers' licences - Mr. W.A.	1.
Grant of hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences – Mr. N.A.	1.
Renewal of hackney carriage driver's licence - Mr. S.A.	1.
Grant of private hire driver's licence - Mr. I.K.	1.
Review of hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences - Mr. M.J.	1.

73. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVER'S LICENCE - MR. R.H.S.

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on a review of the hackney carriage driver's licence issued to Mr. R.H.S.

Mr. R.H.S. was not in attendance at the meeting and the Assistant Director (Law and Governance) reported that a letter had been received from his solicitors, to the effect that Mr. R.H.S. was currently abroad and would be away until the end of December.

In the light of this information, the Committee considered, and agreed, that the matter should proceed in the absence of Mr. R.H.S. The matter had previously been adjourned on three separate occasions.

Arising from the consideration given to the content of the report submitted, in particular, the information relating to the two incidents of driving a hackney

carriage without the meter running, it was

RESOLVED

That the hackney carriage driver's licence issued to Mr. R.H.S. be revoked with immediate effect in the light of his second offence of driving a hackney carriage without the meter running.

74. GRANT OF PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVERS' LICENCES - MR. W.A.

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on an application made for the grant of private hire and hackney carriage drivers' licences in respect of Mr. W.A.

Mr. W.A. was in attendance at the meeting, together with his solicitor, who made representations on his behalf and commented on the various offences outlined in the report submitted, committed by Mr. W.A.

Mr. W.A. also reported that there were no matters pending that needed to be brought to the attention of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That, following careful consideration of the information contained in the report submitted, and as reported at the meeting, approval be given to the grant of private hire and hackney carriage drivers' licences to Mr. W.A. for a period of three months, subject to him undergoing testing for drugs and alcohol and that in the event that the tests were satisfactory, the Assistant Director (Law and Governance) be authorised to issue the licences.

75. GRANT OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS' LICENCES – MR. N.A.

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on an application made on behalf of Mr. N.A. for the grant of hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences.

Mr. N.A. was in attendance, together with a supporter, who commented on the circumstances regarding the offence committed, set out in paragraph 3 of the report.

It was also reported that there were no matters pending that needed to be brought to the attention of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That, following careful consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, approval be

given to the grant of hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences to Mr. N.A. for a period of three months.

76. RENEWAL OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVER'S LICENCE – MR. S.A.

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on the renewal of the hackney carriage driver's licence issued to Mr. S.A. in the light of an offence committed as set out in paragraph 21 of the report submitted.

Mr. S.A. responded to questions asked in relation to the offence committed and informed the Committee that there were no matters pending that needed to be brought to their attention.

RESOLVED

That, following consideration of the information contained in the report submitted, and as reported at the meeting, the hackney carriage driver's licence issued to Mr. S.A. be renewed with effect from the 4th October, 2013 and that he receive a written warning as to his future conduct in the light of the offence committed.

77. GRANT OF PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S LICENCE - MR. I.K.

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on an application made on behalf of Mr. I.K. for the grant of a private hire driver's licence.

Mr. I.K. was in attendance at the meeting together with his solicitor, who made representations on his behalf in relation to the offences committed in 2009. His solicitor also outlined the background to the personal circumstances of Mr. I.K. and considered that since 2009, Mr. I.K. had become a changed person.

In relation to this application, the Committee also considered details submitted by West Midlands Police, which they believed to be relevant to the application.

RESOLVED

That, following careful consideration of the information contained in the report submitted and as reported at the meeting, the application made on behalf of Mr. I.K. for the grant of a private hire driver's licence be refused on the grounds that the applicant is not a fit and proper person in the light of the information contained in the report submitted regarding offences committed by Mr. I.K. and with particular reference to the information submitted by West Midlands Police.

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

78. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS' LICENCES - MR. M.J.

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on a review of the hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences issued to Mr. M.J. in the light of offences committed as set out in the report.

Mr. M.J. was not in attendance at the meeting and a reason for his absence had not been received.

The Committee considered, and agreed, to hear the matter in the absence of Mr. M.J.

RESOLVED

That, following careful consideration of the information contained in the report submitted, with particular reference to the offences committed as outlined in paragraphs 4 and 15 of the report submitted, the hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences issued to Mr. M.J. be revoked in the light of the offences committed.

The meeting ended at 7.25 p.m.

CHAIR