

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE – 2nd APRIL, 2009

REPORT OF THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA LIAISON OFFICER

MATTERS RAISED AT THE BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update Committee on a number of issues raised at the 29th January 2009 Brierley Hill Area Committee that relate to services provided by the Council.

BACKGROUND

2. The Council provides a number of services that have considerable impact on local communities.
3. Requests for service and information are received at Area Committee on a regular basis from both members and the general public, relating to a range of services. Few enquiries can be answered immediately, with many prompting further investigation, feasibility studies and public consultation, prior to being reported back to Committee.
4. To keep Committee updated, a progress report is attached.

FINANCE

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

LAW

6. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders are largely governed by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
7. Provisions relating to Highways including trees thereon are contained in the Highways Act 1980.
8. Provisions relating to the Council's Housing stock are contained in the Housing Act 1985.

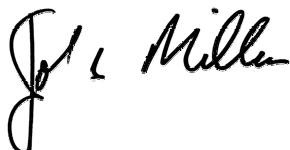
9. Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Council as Waste Disposal Authority for its areas to provide places where its residents may deposit their household waste free of charge.
10. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
11. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.
12. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.
13. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area.

EQUALITY IMPACT

14. This report is consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity policy and has no direct equality implications.

RECOMMENDATION

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



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Brierley Hill Area Committee Liaison Officer

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BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE – 2nd APRIL 2009
AREA LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

PETITIONS

ISSUE: Minute 62 (a)

A petition from residents of Tansey Green Road, Pensnett was submitted by Councillor Foster, requesting the Council to install traffic calming measures given the number of speed related incidents and the increasing volume of heavy goods vehicles using the road. The petition was received and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention

RESPONSE:

A full response was provided by the Council's Traffic and Road Safety Team to the first named petitioner as requested.

NB: This issue is also covered in the Public Forum section of this report under minute 65 (c)

ISSUE: Minute 62 (b)

A petition from residents of Wall Heath, Kingswinford was submitted by Councillor D Harley, requesting the Council to install traffic calming measures and a pedestrian crossing on the A449 Kidderminster Road, (access point to Wall Heath village), to counteract the problem of speeding vehicles. The petition was received and referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for attention.

RESPONSE:

A full response was provided by the Council's Traffic and Road Safety Team to the first named petitioner as requested.

PUBLIC FORUM

ISSUE Minute 65 (a)

A question was raised by the proprietor of Brierley Hill Motor Spares regarding the possibility of time restrictions on the parking bay(s) outside the premises, as these were constantly used by members of the public for lengthy periods of time.

RESPONSE:

A Traffic Regulation Order for the area in question has been made whereby vehicles will be allowed to park for one hour between 8.00am and 6.15pm, Monday to Saturday, with no return within 1 hour. Arrangements will be made for this order to be supported by an appropriate time plate and when in place, Traffic Engineers will advise the Council's Parking Enforcement Officers to include this site as part of their routine inspections.

ISSUE Minute 65 (b)

A question was raised in relation to the lack of drainage in Tansey Green Road. The Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) would liaise with the questioner and carry out investigations.

RESPONSE:

A capital highway drainage scheme was constructed approximately five years ago to resolve highway flooding in Tansey Green Road at the junction with Smithy Lane but, there is a lack of highway drainage for the remainder of Tansey Green Road up to the High Street.

Officers are aware that in heavy rainfall, the width of water in the channel does cause some issues with larger vehicles splashing pedestrians and adjacent boundary walls but

there have been no reports of any internal property flooding. The water does ultimately discharge into the 'new' highway drainage system further along Tansey Green Road.

The Council is actively working on a 'floods register' with a view to introducing a rolling capital programme for improvement works but until the necessary feasibility studies have been undertaken to identify the root causes and possible solutions, it is difficult at this stage to identify the level of funding that would be needed or what order of relative priority each scheme would be assigned.

ISSUE Minute 65 (c)

Questions were raised relating to speeding traffic and the accident rate in Tansey Green Road, Pensnett.

NB: This issue was the subject of the petition referenced previously in this report [Minute 62 (a)].

RESPONSE:

Speeding issues are strictly an enforcement matter for the Police Authority. The Council currently introduces complementary traffic calming measures only as part of a local safety scheme where the emphasis is related to a reduction in the recorded number of personal injury accidents.

Incidents resulting in damage only are not generally recorded on the accident data base and whilst anecdotal evidence can be helpful in trying to assess any particular situation or circumstances, details of these accidents would not normally be available.

Not all roads are suitable for the introduction of certain types of traffic calming as for example, the introduction of road humps along routes of strategic importance to the highway network or the emergency services, could actually create more acute problems. This would certainly be the case for this particular road because:

1. Tansey Green Road between High Street and Smithy Lane is a classified road and forms part of the classified road network system which is deemed to be appropriate for all classes of vehicle
2. Tansey Green Road between High Street and Stallings Lane has been identified by the emergency services as being of 'Primary' importance to their operations. This is the highest classification that they assign to any road in the Borough and one to which they would oppose the introduction of any traffic calming measures because they would directly affect response times to emergency calls where seconds can save lives and also because they wish to minimise the level of discomfort that may be experienced by patients who are in a sensitive or even critical condition.

Against this background, it is the considered opinion of Road Traffic Engineers that physical traffic calming measures would not be appropriate along Tansey Green Road and that in this instance, visual deterrents are more likely to be preferred.

In order to consider this option further, Engineers will now take this opportunity to:

1. Add Tansey Green Road to the list of sites that will be considered as part of the assessment process that the Council undertakes on an annual basis for inclusion in a future programme of works
2. Consider the introduction of speed visor/vehicle activated signs.
3. Liaise with the West Midlands Police in order see if this site would meet their criteria for the deployment of speed camera enforcement either as a permanent site or as part of their mobile operations at community concern sites.
4. Liaise with the local constabulary with a view to them also being involved with any other speed enforcement action that they may be able to undertake with their hand held 'speed guns'

ISSUE Minute 65 (d)

Questions were raised in relation to the approval of the planning application for the extension of the library in Kingswinford, in relation to alleged lack of consultation, and on problems with vehicular and pedestrian access whilst the work was being carried out. Following further concerns it was agreed that the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health would liaise with the Assistant Director, Libraries and Archives and Adult Learning and provide a full written response to questioners

RESPONSE:

Residents were invited to a 'good neighbour' meeting with the contractors and site manager at Kingswinford Library in February and were given information about measures to maintain access to properties, the building programme and methods of communication during the project.

The management of the car parking will be subject to a separate consultation when residents will again be invited to take part.

ISSUE Minute 65 (e)

In response to questions raised in relation to Hauc Construction continuing to operate without planning permission, and the accumulation of rubble, hard core and dirt on the site, it was agreed that the Assistant Director of Planning and Environmental Health would liaise with the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards and provide a written response to the questioners.

RESPONSE:

A response was provided to the questioners as requested.

ISSUE Minute 65 (f)

In responding to several questions raised in relation to the closure of Wartell Bank from Dawley Brook, the Area Liaison Officer indicated that it had been agreed that a meeting would be held on 26th February, 2009, between Principal Officers and local businesses. It was agreed that the matter would be reported on at the next meeting of the Area Committee.

RESPONSE

A verbal update will be provided by the Area Liaison Officer.

ISSUE Minute 65 (g)

Questions were raised relating to the regeneration of Brierley Hill; difficulties with parking in Cottage Street, and problems with the lack of parking spaces for shoppers especially on market days, due to the landscaping on the parallel route, and in respect of the fountain in Brierley Hill High Street.

RESPONSES

The Marcomms Senior Account Manager referred to the Council's Regeneration newsletter that had been distributed to both members of the public and members of the Committee prior to the meeting providing details of the town centre regeneration

The Area Liaison Officer advised that plans included linking the Merry Hill Centre to Brierley Hill High Street would encourage and promote shoppers to attend the High Street

Traffic Regulation Orders affecting Cottage Street, in the vicinity of the Market Hall and the Clinic were already in force prior the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network (the 'Parallel Route') being built so the parking restrictions in these areas are much the same as previously.

However, as the construction of the new road has resulted in the loss of some parking facilities in the area generally, it is intended that the car parking needs for the wider town centre will be reviewed as part of the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan and that this will then

be considered by the Council later this year.

Whilst the Historic Environment Team is aware of the fountain, it is nevertheless under the ownership of the Moor Centre. However, the Team would be happy to consider refurbishing the fountain as part of any future proposals to regenerate the Moor Centre

WARD ISSUES

Issue Minute 68 (e)

In response to comments made it was agreed that the Area Liaison Officer would report to the next meeting of the Area Committee on 2nd April, 2009 providing details of the St George's Day Parade which would be taking place in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area.

RESPONSE

A verbal update will be provided by the Area Liaison Officer.

ENDS