

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday 1 July 2008 at 7.00 p.m.
at the Brier School, Bromley Lane, Kingswinford

PRESENT:-

Councillors D Blood, Mrs E Blood, Ms Boleyn, Ms Foster, Mrs Greenaway, Mrs D Harley, P Harley, Ms Harris, Islam, Mrs Jordan, Miller, Nottingham, Southall, Tyler and Mrs Wilson and, following his appointment as a co-opted member, Mr D. Horrocks.

Officers

The Director of the Urban Environment (as Area Liaison Officer), Assistant Director, Resources and Planning (Directorate of Children's Services), Head of Sport and Recreation, Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) and Manager Executive Support Team – (all Directorate of the Urban Environment), Assistant Director (Policy, Performance and Resources), Head of Housing Options and Area Community Renewal Officer (all Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Senior Account Manager, Marketing and Communications, (Chief Executive's Directorate), Mr K. Edwards, solicitor and Mr J Jablonski (both Directorate of Law and Property).

together with twelve members of the public

1 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor D Blood be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Councillor D Blood thereupon took the Chair)

2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor P Harley be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

3 **COMMENTS MADE BY THE CHAIRMAN**

Arising from the foregoing election and appointment, the Chairman expressed thanks to the former Chairman, Councillor Mrs Wilson, and the former Vice Chairman, Councillor Tyler, for their work undertaken in their respective capacities in previous years.

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Inspectors Jones and Galloway of West Midlands Police.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared the interest indicated in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, as follows:-

- (i) Councillor Ms Boleyn – a personal interest in Agenda item 18 (Matters raised at the previous meeting of the Committee), in so far as the item related to stray and illegally grazed horses, in view of her membership of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

 - (ii) Councillor Ms Foster – a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 17 (Capital Allocations) in so far as the item related to the application received from West Midlands Fire Service, in view of her employment with West Midlands Fire Service; and

 - (ii) Councillor Tyler – a personal interest in Agenda item 17 (Capital Allocations) in so far as the item related to the applications received from the Kingswinford Methodist Church and St Andrew's United Reform Church in that he had encouraged those bodies to apply for an allocation.
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6 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 April 2008, be approved as a correct record and signed.

7 TERMS AND REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted setting out the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the terms of reference and protocol for Area Committees, be noted.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of persons to serve as co-opted members of the Committee for the 2008/09 municipal year.

During consideration of this matter, it was proposed that a youth representative, Daniel Horrocks, who was present at the meeting, be co-opted to the Committee.

On Daniel indicating that he was willing to serve, it was:-

RESOLVED

That Daniel Horrocks be appointed as a co-opted Member of the Committee for the 2008/09 municipal year, as a youth representative.

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of representatives to serve on various outside bodies for the 2008/09 municipal year.

RESOLVED

That, subject to the checking of the constitutions of the community associations indicated, the following Members be appointed to serve on the following bodies, for the 2008/09 municipal year, or for the term or period of time indicated:-

Social Inclusion

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|-----|--|--|
| (a) | Brierley Hill Committee for the Welfare of the Physically Handicapped – Councillors Mrs Wilson and Islam, with Councillor Ms Harris as a deputy. | Annual |
| (b) | Peter Harris Almshouses – | Councillor Islam - four year term to 30.06.2012

Councillor Ms Harris four year term to 18.11.2012 |

Community Associations

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------|
| (a) | Brockmoor – Councillors Ms Foster with Mrs Jordan and Mrs Greenaway | Annual |
| (b) | Dingle – Councillors Mrs Blood, Nottingham and Southall | Annual |
| (c) | Fens Pool – Councillors Mrs Jordan and Mrs Greenaway with Councillor Ms Foster | Annual |
| (d) | Hawbush – Councillors Ms Harris and Islam with Councillor Mrs Wilson | Annual |
| (e) | Kingswinford – Councillors P Harley, Miller with D Blood | Annual |
| (f) | Nine Locks – Councillor Islam with Councillors Ms Harris and Mrs Wilson | Annual |
| (g) | Pensnett – Councillors Ms Foster and Mrs Jordan with Councillor Mrs Greenaway | Annual |
| (h) | Wall Heath – Councillors Ms Boleyn, Tyler and Mrs D Harley | Annual |
| (i) | Wordsley – Councillors Mrs Blood, Nottingham and Southall | Annual |

APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the re-appointment of working groups for the 2008/09 municipal year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Capital Allocations Working Group be re-appointed, comprising Councillors D Blood, Ms Foster, Mrs Greenaway, Southall, Tyler and Mrs Wilson.
- (2)(a) That the Brierley Hill Young People’s Working Group be re-appointed, comprising the Chairman, Councillor D Blood, and Councillors Mrs Blood, Ms Boleyn, Mrs Harley, Harley, Ms Harris and Mrs Jordan together with Mr D Horrocks, the co-opted youth representative and that a representative from the Brierley Hill Area Youth Forum also be invited to attend meetings of this Working Group.

- (b) That the first meeting of this working group be held prior to the next meeting of this Committee so that recommendations made could be considered at that meeting .
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11

COMMUNITY RENEWAL SERVICE

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted updating the Committee on the new arrangements for the Community Renewal Service, previously known as Neighbourhood Management.

The Assistant Director – Policy, Performance and Resources in his presentation of the content of the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted setting out a first draft of a local community plan, introduced Tony Siddaway, the Community Renewal Officer for the area.

As part of the new arrangements, it was proposed that a working group of this Committee be appointed to consider their draft local community plan and amend it as necessary so that it reflected member influence working with all agencies and sectors of the Community.

Arising from the presentation given Members made a number of points.

Arising from responses given to the various points raised, it was:-

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the new arrangements for the Community Renewal Service, previously known as Neighbourhood Management, and in respect of the draft local community plan, be noted.
 - (2) That a working group of this Committee be appointed to engage with the further development of the draft local development plan, supported by the Area Community Renewal Officer and the Head of the Community Renewal Service, and that the working group comprise Councillors D Blood, Ms Foster, Mrs Greenaway, Mrs D Harley, Islam, Southall and Tyler.
 - (3) That, in order to take into account the various needs of communities and interests, the Committee consider the co-option of representatives from local neighbourhood partnerships or Neighbourhood Employment and Skills Plans groups, which can be determined by the working group with the support of the Area Community Renewal Officer.
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PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBER VISITS TO ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE ESTABLISHMENTS 2007/08

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the progress of visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments, undertaken by Members of the Committee during 2007/08, and on further nominations for participation in the rota of visits for the 2008/09 municipal year.

It was noted that any Members wishing to be involved in the visits would require a full Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. Full training would also be given to Members.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the progress of elected Member visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments during 2007/08, be noted.
- (2) That Councillors Mrs Blood, Ms Boleyn, Ms Harris (in respect of visits to Children's Social Care Establishments only), Nottingham and Tyler be appointed as the nominees of this Committee to undertake rota visits to Social Care Establishments in the municipal year 2008/09.

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PETITIONS

The following petitions were received:-

- (1) From Councillor Ms Foster in respect of pedestrian safety measures at Station Road, Brockmoor, which had been referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for attention and reply. It was noted that this matter had been dealt with.
- (2) From Councillor Ms Boleyn in respect of a request from residents of Stallings Lane, Kingswinford, for a speed camera, which she reported had now been dealt with by the Directorate of the Urban Environment. She expressed her thanks to the officers concerned for their attention to this matter.

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YOUTH ISSUES

The following matters were raised:-

- (a) Daniel Horrocks referred to the fifth annual Dudley Youth Awards, whereby any young person could be nominated for a number of categories. An inspiring adult could also be nominated. Nomination forms could be obtained from youth centres, main libraries and Dudley Council Plus or by calling 01384 813941, and must be received by 18th July 2008. Forms received would be judged by the Dudley Youth Council.
- (b) A member of the public referred to activities that had been arranged in the Brierley Hill and Brockmoor and Pensnett Wards during the school holidays.
- (c) A Detached Youth Worker, queried the current position regarding the provision of a skatepark, a matter that had been raised previously.

Arising from the discussion on such provision and on other possible provision, it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to arrange for the submission of a report to the first meeting of the Brierley Hill Young People's Working Group on the provision of a skatepark and other facilities for use by youth in the area, and that such report include issues of joint working, with a view to the submission of a report to the Area Committee.

PUBLIC FORUM

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

- (a) In relation to parking on roads outside Russells Hall Hospital, clarification was sought on the issue of enforcement and in this regard the Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) reported that with effect from 7th July 2008, if vehicles were found to be contravening the provisions of a Traffic Regulation Order, the Council, under its new powers from that date, would be able to take action. However, in the absence of an Order, the Police would be the ones to take action, for example, if there was parking causing an obstruction. There would also be liaison between the Council's Enforcement staff and the Police on parking issues.
- (b) It was noted that questions raised in relation to the proposals for the Pensnett/Crestwood Academy would be dealt with in conjunction with consideration of the report at Agenda item 18 – Matters raised at the meeting of Brierley Hill Area Committee on 3rd April 2008.

- (c) In relation to a query raised in respect of Pensnett Community Centre, the questioner was asked to discuss her point with the Assistant Director – Policy, Performance and Resources at the conclusion of this meeting.

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APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on requests relating to land and property controlled by the Council.

Arising from the consideration given to the proposed disposal of a number of garage plot sites and the concerns expressed by Members in respect of certain of the sites, Councillor Ms Harris requested that her concerns over the proposed sale of the sites at Harrison Road, Wordsley, and Blackthorn Road at this time be recorded with the particular comment made that she did not consider that the passing of these sites into private ownership would be beneficial.

RESOLVED

- (1) That in respect of the request to purchase land adjacent to 24 Redfly Lane, Pensnett, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to refuse the application for the reasons stated in the report submitted.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be recommended to agree to the declaration of the twenty two Housing garage plot sites, as shown on the plans attached to the report submitted, as surplus to requirements, for sale upon terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.

17

BRITISH TELECOM – CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED PUBLIC PAYPHONE REMOVALS

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted arising from the receipt of notice from British Telecom, that, due to changes in the communications culture, in recent years, namely the increase in mobile telephone ownership, they proposed to remove a number of public payphones in the Borough, two of which, at Larch Road, Kingswinford and on Stourbridge Road, Brierley Hill, were located in the area of this Committee.

Arising from the consideration of this matter, Members requested that representations be made to British Telecom in respect of the payphone at Stourbridge Road, Brierley Hill, in that this was a main thoroughfare with few public payphones and that given concerns that the area in which it was located was considered not to have many landlines or owners of mobile telephones, giving rise to further concerns on safety grounds, particularly in relation to women, it was requested that these concerns be conveyed to British Telecom and that they be asked to reconsider their proposal to remove the payphone on Stourbridge Road, Brierley Hill.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on British Telecom's current programme of proposed public payphone removals, be noted and that British Telecom be requested to reconsider the removal of the public payphone on Stourbridge Road, Brierley Hill, for the reasons indicated above.

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted in respect of five requests that have been received for a capital allocation.

Consideration had been given to the requests made at an informal meeting of Members held prior to this meeting and the Area Liaison Officer informed the Committee of the recommendations made at that meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the application received from West Midlands Fire Service be approved in the sum of £1,613 for use in meeting the capital costs associated with a Fire Reparation Intervention Education project under the auspices of the Dudley Children and Young People's Trust.
- (2) That, subject to confirmation that the coaches involved had all received satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau checks, the sum of £1,074 be approved in respect of the application submitted by the Kingswinford Shotokan Karate Club to fund training equipment, training mats and storage boxes.
- (3) That the sum of £3,895.50, fifty percent of the total costs involved, be approved in respect of the request made by the Kingswinford Methodist Church towards building works that would provide a safe and secure outdoor area for the various groups/users of the premises.

- (4) That the sum of £3,453, fifty percent of the total costs involved, be approved in respect of the request made by St Andrew's United Reform Church, for help in meeting the cost of replacing windows, a new water heater, the provision of new tables/trolleys, together with a set of screens to act as partitions in the main hall.
- (5) That, subject to clarification of health issues and issues relating to the receipt of competitive quotations, the sum of £3,495.50, fifty percent of the total costs involved, be approved in respect of the request made by Barnett Lane Allotment Association for funding towards the cost of the provision of a composting toilet.

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

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

Particular comments were made on the following issues:-

- (a) Shops at Beech Road, Kingswinford – it was reported that a consultation letter had now been sent out to traders, residents and local Councillors regarding the most appropriate option for this site. In response to a query raised, the Head of Housing Options stated that she would check whether traders in Beech Road, Kingswinford, had received a copy of the consultation letter.
- (b) Changes at Bell Street South junction – Councillor Ms Harris expressed her thanks to officers in the Directorate of the Urban Environment in the light of a meeting held with residents on this matter. A letter from the Reverend Barry Gilbert, Rector in the Brierley Hill Team Parish, in respect of proposed traffic, parking and access restrictions in Bell Street South, Bell Street, Church Street, Church Hill affecting parishioners' and visitors' movement to and from Brierley Hill Parish Church, addressed to the Group Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety, was passed by Councillor Ms Harris to the Chairman.
- (c) In respect of the large pothole at Council garages at Portway Close, Councillor P Harley queried the response given. The Area Liaison Officer reported that, in liaison with officers from the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, the matter would be looked at again.

(d) In respect of proposals for the Pensnett/Crestwood Academy the following principal points were made:-

- In response to the question raised at the public forum agenda item, deferred for consideration at this agenda item, on whether the Local Authority can assure Pensnett parents of their commitment to make Pensnett/ Crestwood an Academy, in the light of the recent rejection by the DCSF of Dudley's inclusion in the Building Schools for the Future programme, the response given by the Assistant Director, Resources and Planning (Directorate of Children's Services) was that an assurance could be given that the Council was committed to moving forward the proposals. It was also reported that the proposals were on schedule in respect of the appointment of a sponsor and that following such an appointment, discussions would take place with all interested parties and that the first engagement with people would be just before the end of the current term.
- In response to a question regarding the position should the Academy not perform satisfactorily, the Assistant Director reported that it would still receive national funding and that the role of the sponsor was the provision of an endowment fund of approximately £1.5m over a five-year period. Therefore, this fund was on top of Government funding and would be used to provide additional staff in relation to youth services and community groups. Such funding would, therefore, bring added value building on existing funding. The comment was also made that there should be no concerns in respect of funding should the Academy fail.
- In response to a question raised, it was reported by the Assistant Director, that, in addition to a meeting of Governors of the Crestwood School, there would also be a meeting of the Governors of Pensnett School and that once a sponsor for the Academy had been identified, there would be further meetings of both Governing Bodies, either jointly or separately, as they determined.

- In response to a query regarding the formal consultation, the Assistant Director reported that this was still scheduled for around October 2008. However, as previously indicated, details had still to be finalised and there needed to be full engagement with the sponsor yet to be identified. Information arising from the period through to September would be reflected in the consultation to be undertaken so that all concerned were clear as to what was being proposed.
- A request was made that Members be kept fully informed.
- In respect of a query regarding places at the Academy, the Assistant Director responded that as regards projected figures, those figures could be shared and that there would be a place for those pupils currently on role at the schools and any new starters in September. The position as from September 2009, the proposed opening date of the Academy, was that all pupils would have a place. The Assistant Director also reported that as previously indicated, a commitment had been given that there would be sufficient accommodation for those pupils wishing to attend the Academy and that nothing had changed in this respect.
- As regards the consultation process, it was re-iterated that informal consultations had been conducted and that the formal consultation stage was a legislative requirement. A variety of methods would be used to inform all interested parties, for example, through the children attending both schools; invitation of parents to meetings; letters home; displays; the information gained prior to the formal consultation and the dissemination of the information to areas where people were likely to go. There would also be involvement from the sponsor to be identified, the extent of which was currently unknown.
- In response to a query as to the position of the school site, should the Academy proposals not proceed, the Assistant Director reported that there was a high expectation that the proposals would go ahead and that the site chosen would be dependent upon the feasibility work to be carried out. He also indicated that there was no intention to sell the site that was not used for the Academy.

- A request was made that, when carrying out the consultations, the primary schools likely to provide pupils for the Academy also be included in those consultations.
- Councillor Tyler requested that if there were to be any discussions regarding the projections as to places at the Academy, that he would wish to be involved in such discussions.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, updating the Committee on a number of issues raised at the meeting of this Committee held on 3rd April 2008, together with the further comments made, as indicated above, be noted and, where appropriate, actioned as indicated.

20

WARD ISSUES

- (a) In response to concerns raised by Councillor Islam regarding the difficulties people had in crossing the Bank Street/High Street junction, it was noted that the Section Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety) would respond in writing to Councillor Islam on the points raised .
- (b) Councillor Ms Foster referred to the response she had received in connection with the petition regarding pedestrian safety measures at Station Road, Brockmoor, referred to earlier in the meeting, and asked that the timescale for implementing the improvements indicated in that response be forwarded to her. In response to a further query, it was confirmed to her that the assessments in respect of the pedestrian site list assessments were carried out at the end of each calendar year in preparation for the next financial year.
- (c) Councillor Ms Harris referred to the announcement of a memorial to the Round Oak Steel Workers but expressed concerns, also raised by a number of residents, that the memorial would not actually be on the site of either the Steel Works or its workings. Arising from a request made, it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to arrange for a report on this matter to be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

- (d) It was noted that the building referred to by Councillor P Harley off Greenfields Road, Kingswinford, the subject of vandalism, was owned by Age Concern and that they were in the process of selling the building.
- (e) In response to queries from Councillor Mrs Jordan as to why the gates to Wordsley Park were being closed at 9pm, and whether the security company engaged could not patrol the park after 9pm, it was indicated that the Director of the Urban Environment would arrange for the points raised to be investigated and a response sent to her.

21 SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

The dates of future meetings of the Council's Select Committees in the current municipal year were received and noted.

22 DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The dates and venues of future meetings of the Committee in the current municipal year were received and noted.

23 MR RAY WATSON – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR RESOURCES AND PLANNING (DIRECTORATE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

As this was Mr Watson's last attendance at a meeting of this Committee prior to him leaving the employment of the Council, the Chairman thanked him for his contribution to the work of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.

CHAIRMAN