

Halesowen Area Committee 12th September 2006

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise – Progress Report

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on progress of the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise and agree Terms of Reference and the Project Brief.
2. To note the formal consultation process which will take place between 15th September to 27th October 2006.

Background

3. Members will recall a report of the Director of the Urban Environment, presented on 28th June 2006, advising the Committee of the preparation of a consultation exercise to support the future development of Halesowen town centre. The Committee endorsed the consultation exercise and timetable from July 2006 to March 2007 and also agreed the formation of a Member and Officer Working Group to steer the consultation exercise.
4. The purpose of the public consultation is two-fold. Firstly, to seek the views of all sections of the Halesowen community on their perceptions of the existing town centre environment and opportunities for future enhancements. Secondly, to collate information in relation to transportation and accessibility issues within and adjacent to the town centre.
5. To clarify, this exercise is to be carried out separately from the Halesowen Area Action Plan which is scheduled to commence in July 2008 and for which the timescale is constrained by the Council's Local Development Scheme. However, the results obtained will provide useful information to inform early evidence gathering to support the development of an Area Action Plan for the town centre.
6. Since 28th June 2006, the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise Working Group has been established and held its first meeting on 9th August 2006.

Overall, the principle remit of the Working Group is to champion the consultation exercise and guide the consultation process. Membership of the Working Group is outlined in the Terms of Reference (Appendix A). At its inception meeting the Working Group:

- Endorsed the terms of Reference for the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise Working Group (Appendix A); and
- Endorsed the Project Brief (Appendix B) outlining the purpose, scope, quality expectations and timescales of the consultation exercise.

7. Consultation Timetable

With regard to the consultation timetable the exercise will be split into three stages, namely;

Stage one

The first objective of stage one included the formation of a Members and Officer Working Group. In August / early September 2006, pre-consultation will have been carried out with a number of service providers with an active role in Halesowen town centre (detailed in Table A of the Terms of Reference). The preliminary findings of the pre-consultation will be verbally reported back to this Committee. Overall, the purpose of the pre-consultation stage is to collate early evidence to inform the content of a public questionnaire.

Stage two

The consultation exercise will cover a six-week period from 15th September to 27th October 2006. As agreed by the Working Group, the consultation exercise will be branded '**Halesowen Town Matters**' to reflect the 'Matters' themes of the latest Council Plan; i.e. Regeneration Matters, Environment Matters etc. In order to engage with a representative sample of the Halesowen community the following consultation methods will be delivered, namely:

- Public questionnaire
- Staffed exhibition stands located in the town centre on:
 - Friday 29th September 2006
 - Saturday 30th September 2006
 - Tuesday 3rd October 2006
 - Wednesday 4th October 2006
- Permanent exhibition stand in Halesowen Library over the six-week consultation period outlining the purpose and timetable of the consultation exercise and to include hard copies of the public questionnaire; and
- A designated website for people to access further information, submit comments and download the public questionnaire.

Stage three

In order to disseminate the headline findings of the consultation exercise a Stakeholder Feedback Session will take place in January 2007. Date and venue for this meeting will be notified at the Area Committee to be held on 22nd November 2006. Detailed results of the consultation exercise together with solutions to address town centre concerns will be reported to Halesowen Area Committee in March 2007.

Finance

8. The cost of preparing the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise will be met from existing revenue budgets.

Law

9. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of any part of the Borough.

Equality Impact

10. The proposals set out in the report accord with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. The consultation exercise will offer the opportunity to engage all sectors of the community particularly 'hard to reach' groups such as children and young people, ethnic communities and elderly.

Recommendation

11. That the Committee agrees the Terms of Reference for the Halesowen Town Centre Exercise Working Group; attached as Appendix A.
12. That the Committee agree content of the Project Brief; attached as Appendix B.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John B Millar'. The signature is stylized, with a large 'J' and 'M'.

John B Millar
Director of the Urban Environment

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List of Background Papers

1. Report to Halesowen Area Committee (22nd March 2006) '*Halesowen Town Centre – Transport and Regeneration Issues*'
2. Report to Halesowen Area Committee (28th June 2006) '*Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise*'

**HALESOWEN TOWN CENTRE CONSULTATION EXERCISE
WORKING GROUP**

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of this document is to outline the terms of reference of the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Working Group coupled with details of membership and project key milestones.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the Working Group are as follows:

1. To champion the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise
2. To agree that the consultation exercise be branded '*Halesowen Town Matters*'; to reflect the theme of 'Regeneration Matters' within the latest Council Plan
3. Agree the consultation Project Brief (Appendix B)
4. Agree methods of consultation
5. Receive regular progress reports from the Project Manager
6. Monitor progress against the agreed timetable approved by Area Committee in June 2006
7. Identify and resolve any constraints to project progress
8. Guide public relations and communication issues for the project

Membership

Membership of the Working Group will consist of both Elected Members and Officers of Dudley MBC, respectively.

Councillor	Ward
Councillor Harold Jackson MBE (Chairman of Working Group)	Halesowen South
Councillor Richard Body	Cradley and Foxcote
Councillor Alan Taylor	Halesowen South
Councillor Bob James	Belle Vale
Councillor Jeffrey Hill	Halesowen North
Councillor Kenneth Turner	Hayley Green and Cradley South

Substitute representatives can be nominated

Additional Officer and/or Councillors will be invited as appropriate.

Frequency of Working Group Meetings

Working Group No.	Date	Purpose
1	9 August 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree Terms of Reference• Agree consultation Project Plan (attached)• Agree methods of consultation• Agree marketing strategy / branding (Marketing and Communications)
2	8 November 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of headline findings• Agree methodology for feedback of results and Stakeholder Feedback Session to be held in January 2007
3	February 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of final results• Agree strategy for addressing / implementing the outcomes of the exercise

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PROJECT BRIEF

APPENDIX B

Project Title: Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise
Project Purpose: To seek the views of all sections of the Halesowen community on their perceptions of the existing town centre environment, transportation and accessibility issues and opportunities for future enhancements.
Background: Members, residents and local stakeholders in Halesowen have requested that their views on the existing and future role of Halesowen town centre are heard and reviewed. Members will recall a joint report of the Director of the Urban Environment and Halesowen Area Liaison Officer presented on 22 March 2006 advising the Committee of the measure currently being taken to address concerns relating to town centre regeneration and transportation issues. Specifically, the report detailed proposals by Vale Retail, concerns relating to the departure of Safeway, traffic congestion and town centre access, proposed improvements to Halesowen bus station, traffic regulation orders, sustainable transport and car parking. This report stated that given wide range of regeneration and transportation issues identified “consultation with the public, town centre traders and others would be appropriate”. The Area Committee on the 28 th June 2006 subsequently authorised the consultation project to be steered by a working group of representatives for each Ward in Halesowen advised by Council officers.
Scope: This project is an independent, “one off” information gathering exercise. The exercise will be carried out separately to the Halesowen Area Action Plan which is scheduled to commence in July 2008. Further, this exercise is separate to the consultation exercises carried out with regard to Vale Retail and Halesowen Bus Station, respectively.
Quality Expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Working Group will champion the consultation exercise and guide the overall consultation process• All consultation material to be branded ‘<i>Halesowen Town Matters</i>’• Consultation material to be published in plain English and made available in different languages and formats on request (in liaison with Marketing and Communications)• Progress reports and final findings reported back to Halesowen Area Committee at timely intervals• Statistically valid sample of responses• To engage with a representative cross-sample of the Halesowen population• Pre-consultation to be carried out with key stakeholders to inform the focus of a public questionnaire and Stakeholder Feedback Session (see Table A below)• Headline findings to be reported back in January to key stakeholders via a

Stakeholder Feedback Session

Timescales:

Stage One

August 06 Working Group established consisting of nominated Elected Members and Council Officers of Dudley MBC

August / early September 06 Prior to the six-week consultation exercise, pre-consultation will be carried out with key stakeholders (refer to Table A) to inform the focus a public questionnaire and Stakeholder Feedback Session. A progress report will be presented to Halesowen Area Committee in September detailing stakeholders consulted and a timetable for consultation

Stage Two

12 September to 24 October 06 Commencement of six-week consultation period to include the following:

- Marketing and Communications to manage all promotional material and liaise with media and interested parties
- Public questionnaire
- Staffed exhibition stands located in Somers Square / Cornbow Centre (28th – 30th September & 2nd – 4th October 2006)
- Permanent exhibition stands in Halesowen Library over 6-week period
- Website for further information and access electronic copies of questionnaire
- Article / Questionnaire in Dudley Matters and Dudley Together magazine

Further progress report to Area Committee in November detailing the headline findings of the six week consultation and stakeholders consulted

Stage Three

January 07 Stakeholder Feedback Session to disseminate and consult on headline findings

March 07 Final report to Halesowen Area Committee detailing the outcomes of the consultation exercise and solutions to address town centre concerns

Table A: Pre-consultation Stakeholders
Halesowen Chamber of Trade
Queensway Centre Trustees & OAP Drop in Centre
Youth Council
CENTRO (West Midlands PTE)
West Midlands PTA
Ring and Ride (West Midlands Special Needs Transport)
All public transport operators operating in Halesowen
Dudley Race Equality Network
Police service (Halesowen Police Station)
Halesowen Community Fire service
Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership
Dudley South Primary Care Trust
Halesowen-Dudley Yemeni Community Association
Zion Christian Centre
The Lighthouse Project
Blackheath Jamia Mosque
St John the Baptist Church
Windsor High School
Earls High School
Our Lady and St Kenelm
Halesowen Youth Club
Halesowen Scout HQ
Halesowen Brownies