

**Meeting of the Cabinet – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

**Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

**Public Consultation on the Black Country Core Strategy**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To seek endorsement to undertake local consultation events for the Black Country Core Strategy.

**Background**

2. The context for this is set by the new planning process of which many members will already be aware. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 came into force on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2004. The Act sets out the requirements of the new planning system advocating the production of a series of local development documents on a rolling basis which make up the Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework will gradually replace the Adopted Unitary Development Plan (2005) as the statutory development plan for Dudley Borough.
3. The Core Strategy is one of the first local development documents that must be produced and once adopted Dudley's subsequent local development documents will have to be in conformity with it.
4. On 16<sup>th</sup> October 2006, Council confirmed Dudley Council's commitment to working with Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils on the production of a joint 'Black Country Core Strategy'. This was proposed in order to take forward and plan for the proposals and recommendations set out in the Black Country Study submission and consequent revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy.
5. The preparation work for the Black Country Core Strategy has now begun in earnest. To progress this work it is now necessary to seek public opinion on the issues within the Black Country which will need to be considered in the production of the Core Strategy. To this end, a launch event was successfully held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2006 by the four Black Country local authorities at which Councillor Caunt gave the keynote presentation. The launch event must now be progressed via local consultation in each of the four Black Country local authorities.

6. In order to seek the views of local people within Dudley it is proposed that a programme of publicity and consultation exercises be undertaken including a series of manned exhibitions, to be held between 10am and 4pm at:
- The Churchill Centre in Dudley on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2007
  - The Cornbow Centre in Halesowen on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2007
  - The Ryemarket in Stourbridge on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2007
  - Merry Hill in Brierley Hill on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007
  - Signpost on Brierley Hill High Street on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007
  - Ladies Walk Centre in Sedgley on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2007
7. The results from these consultation exercises will be considered along with those from the other Black Country local authorities, other relevant plans and strategies and the various technical evidence in compiling a Black Country Core Strategy 'Issues and Options' document which will be presented to Cabinet in summer 2007 for approval for further public consultation.

### **Finance**

8. The Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country will be funded jointly between the four Black Country local authorities. Dudley Council's proportion of the costs will be sourced from existing budgets and resources dedicated to the production of Development Plan Documents and other such statutory planning documents.

### **Law**

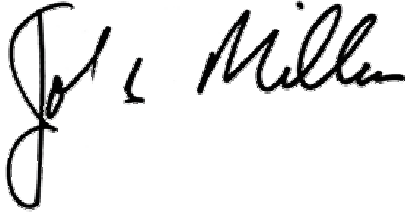
9. The production of a Core Strategy as a Development Plan Document is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
10. In addition, Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, allows the Council to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic or environmental well-being of the area.

### **Equality Impact**

11. The Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country will set the planning framework for the development of the Borough, as well as the rest of the Black Country at least up to 2021. The Core Strategy will seek to ensure that sufficient homes, shops and employment, social, educational and recreational facilities are planned and provided for in that time to meet the needs of all communities and everyone within those communities. This will include meeting the needs of children and young people seeking to provide sufficient facilities for them as well as having a positive effect for future generations.

## **Recommendation**

12. Cabinet members are asked to endorse the undertaking of local public consultation events for the Black Country Core Strategy.



**J. B. Millar**  
**Director of the Urban Environment**

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## **List of Background Papers**

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004  
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040005.htm>