
Halesowen Area Committee – 12th November 2008

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Halesowen Town Centre Development

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Committee on progress with regard to physical developments taking place in Halesowen Town Centre.

Background

2. At the 14th March 2007 Halesowen Area Committee, Members requested that progress reports be presented to future committees with an update on progress with regard to the development of the Cornbow shopping centre, bus station and town centre management issues. Over the lifetime of the development period, officers will continue to liaise with Vale Retail, CENTRO / WMPTA and the Police to ensure building works are carried out and information disseminated to the public in the most efficient and effective way. The Town Centre Working Group of Members and Officers last met on the 29th October 2008 to consider the issues raised by the partners. The Head of Executive and Support will provide a verbal update on the outcomes of the progress meetings and Working Group at this Committee.

The Town Centre Development

3. The multi-million –pound development of the new Asda, the Bus station and associated highway improvements are on schedule to be completed by Christmas

The anticipated opening of the Asda Store is 24th November. Centro have informed the Council that work on Halesowen bus station is on track to be completed as originally planned by 19th December.

This multi-million–pound transformation is bringing together three major projects – each of which on their own would be a significant undertaking for any town – all within an 18 month period.

All this will create an even better place for people to visit and shop.

The Town Centre Working Group will now be looking at ways of improving the street scene in the town centre to help compliment the new development proposals.

Town Centre Management Issues

4. Against the background of the various major regeneration projects currently taking place in Halesowen it is still very much the case of business as usual. As previously reported Town Centre Management have an ongoing entertainment and activities programme taking place in Somers Square.

Saturday 2nd August: Halesowen by the Sea - Somers Square

Halesowen Town Centre held its third “Halesowen by the Sea event” with donkey rides, sticks of rock and Punch and Judy shows, sand pit and bunting transforming Halesowen into a seaside town for the day

Street theatre was provided and the RNLI brought in a life boat and collected on the day

The afternoon was attended by the Mayor and lady Mayoress. The event was very well attended and received extensive coverage in the media and positive feedback has been received from individual traders.

Activities in Somers Square

During the Summer Holiday Town Centre Management arranged for free children’s activities and entertainment to take place in Somers Square. This program of activities was well received.

Future Town Centre Activities and Events

Autumn Half Term Activities

Tuesday 28 th October 2008	The Climbing Wall	11am to 3pm
Friday 31 st October 2008	Children’s Fun Fair	11am to 3pm

Saturday 15th November: Halesowen’s Christmas Lights Switch On Event

Halesowen’s Christmas event main sponsor this year is Sandvik Ltd.

Dudley Mayor Councillor Ray Burston, Senior representatives from Sandvik Ltd and an Australian soap star are due to switch on the Town Centre Christmas lights.

Monday 1st December 2008 Annual Christmas Light Switch on

Sandvik Ltd annually invite Dudley Mayor & Mayoress for lunch, prior to visiting the town for a "tree light switching on" ceremony (due to take place this year on 1st December between 2pm & 2.30pm). It is a popular even with excellent support from Halesowen Area Committee Councillors and usually has 200 to 300+ Primary school children in attendance singing carols. (Please note this is separate to the Chamber led event due to take place on the 15th November).

Finance

5. A number of the issues raised within this report have a direct financial implication on the Council. However, all costs detailed which fall on the Council will be funded by existing capital or revenue budgets held within Economic Regeneration Division.

Law

6. 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.
7. The Council is empowered to improve Highways under section 62 of the Highways Act 1980. Traffic Regulation orders are made under powers contained in section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. 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. Section 111 of the local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

Equality Impact

8. Principal role of the Directorate of the Urban Environment is to encourage inclusivity amongst all sectors of the community, including the needs of children and young people. The Cornbow shopping Centre development responds to the strong demand amongst the local community for the presence of an anchor retail food store. A principal aim of the bus station development is to improve accessibility for all users to and from the town centre in a safe and secure environment. This work has been conducted in full accordance with the Council's equality and diversity policies and should in no way have any prejudicial impact on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and / or other relevant groups.

Recommendation

9. That the Committee notes the progress of development in Halesowen Town Centre



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Director of the Urban Environment

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