

Halesowen Area Committee 11th March 2009

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Matters raised at the Cradley/Windmill Hill Regeneration Plan Delivery Working Group

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Area Committee about the progress of the Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan and to report on the discussions of the Working Group

Background

2. The Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan was approved by Cabinet in September 2007.
3. This Committee has requested that progress reports be submitted in relation to those projects identified in the Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan. The formation of a Cradley Working Group was approved at the Halesowen Area Committee on 12th March 2008, a Working Group meeting took place on 27th January where the following issues were discussed:-
4. Public Realm Improvements
 - The Council has appointed Colin Buchanan consultants to undertake some of the improvements identified in the Regeneration Plan, and proposals which can be taken forward with the £30,000 capital funding that has been secured for this purpose have been drawn up in detail in consultation the Council's Engineers. The proposals, which include footpath resurfacing, parking and highways signage, were discussed in detail at the meeting, and subject to the outcome of a tender exercise, will be implemented in the 2009/10 financial year. The Working Group supported the public realm proposals
5. Foredraft Street Development Site

Colin Buchanan consultants who are undertaking the Developers Brief have met with the Council's Engineers to agree the most appropriate access arrangement to the proposed new housing scheme and the rear of shops on Windmill Hill. At the date of writing a consultation is planned with Ward Members and neighbouring residents in February 2009, and the results of this will be reported verbally to the Committee

6. LIFT Scheme- Methodist Church Site

The Chief Executive of Dudley Infracare LIFT attended the meeting and advised on the current position of a LIFT scheme in Cradley. Officers are continuing to work closely with Dudley Infracare LIFT to seek the securing of a suitable site for this development

7. 118-122 Windmill Hill Development Site

The developer has agreed to organise a meeting with the landowners of the properties that need to be acquired. The developer is interested in assembling the development site identified in the Regeneration Plan for a mixed use housing and retail development. A further update will be provided once this meeting has taken place.

8. Proposed improvement on the A458 at Colley Gate – consultation

The Working Group considered a consultation report on proposed improvements to the A458. In summary, these are designed to improve the capacity of the junction, converting the pelican crossing near Maple Tree Lane to a more efficient Puffin crossing and improvements to the Burfield/Park Road junction. Following the consultation with the Working Group it is considered that the scheme to modify the junction and affect the access to Bur field Road would not attract sufficient local support to be progressed. Officers have therefore dropped this proposal.

It suggested that the yellow box within the junction could be extended across Burfield Road to stop blocking back and an instruction has been sent to carry this out at the earliest opportunity. Officers were also asked to investigate the re-staging the signals to reduce the conflict from opposing right turns on the side arms Colley Lane and Chapel House Lane. This has been modelled with the proprietary software and as a result would severely affect the capacity of the junction as a whole and thus increase congestion. Officers therefore do not intend to take this suggestion any further.

Following public consultation on the proposals, most respondents had agreed that the operation of the signals had been affected by the removal of the bus lay-by fronting the chemist on Windmill Hill. Officers have therefore asked that a scheme be considered that allows traffic to safely pass loading buses.

9. Colley Gate/Maple Tree Lane

It was agreed that right turning traffic causes considerable delay at this junction and it is suggested that a right turning lane would be the best solution to this problem. Officers have investigated this but find that there is just enough space in the wide footpath to do this, however, it would require the relocation of many services currently in the footpath. Having contacted the service companies we find the costs to be very high and beyond current budgets. It is therefore proposed to add this proposal to the list of schemes to be brought forward as part of the traffic management package being developed for the whole of the A458 from Stourbridge to Halesowen. These schemes will be consulted on separately at the appropriate time.

10. Beecher Road Junction with Drews Holloway

It has been suggested that a yellow box would greatly improve the operation of this junction and instructions have been issued for this to be carried out at the earliest opportunity.

Finance

11. 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

12. 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 and environmental well being of its area.

Equality Impact

13. 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. The Cradley Regeneration Plan will seek to regenerate the local centre for adults, children and young people alike, hence promoting equal opportunities for all.

Recommendation

14. It is recommended that the Committee notes the progress of regeneration work in Cradley/Windmill Hill local centre.



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List of Background Papers

1. Centres and Retail – District and Local Centres Review February 2006
2. Cradley/Windmill Hill local Centre Regeneration Plan July 2007