
Halesowen Area Committee – 9th November 2011

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Regeneration of Cradley/Windmill Hill

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on the delivery of the Cradley/Windmill Hill Regeneration Strategy

Background

3. The Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan was approved in February 2008 following extensive consultation during 2007. Its proposals are set out in 3 sections, Development, Movement and Environment and based on four key principles:

- The local centre is a focus for the local community
- The local centre maintains its role as a local convenience centre
- That transport improvements act as a catalyst for change and,
- That all improvements respect the local character/fabric.

Delivery of the actions is set out in a phasing plan of short/medium/long term actions, a number of which have already successfully been delivered.

4. The Regeneration Strategy was developed in 2007 through a substantial consultation exercise with local people, members and stakeholders. This process tested a number of options, with a number of radical approaches being proposed at an early stage and then rejected as a result of views expressed by those engaged in the public consultation. An expressed desire was to find solutions to the traffic issues that were pragmatic and not overly ambitious and encourage development that should respect the character of the centre and conserve key local buildings, and it is this approach which has led to the actions contained in the adopted Regeneration Strategy
5. Following concerns expressed by residents and Members about the speed of delivery of development activity, a more radical approach than that set out in the adopted Regeneration Strategy was explored in late 2010. This approach involved looking not only at the development sites identified in the Strategy, but also other sites that could help provide a solution to the traffic issues and create significant new development opportunities. The results of this exercise were reported back to this Committee on the 13th January 2011, when members were advised that this radical approach would not be financially viable if promoted either by the Council or the private sector. It was proposed that a piecemeal strategy, based on bringing forward small sites on an individual basis as the market improves, would be most likely to be successful in securing long term regeneration of the centre, and the

Committee endorsed this approach, as set out in the adopted Regeneration Strategy

6. All the development sites within the plan are being progressed and some of the highway and public realm works have been carried out with funding from the Capital Programme. Appendix 1 shows the progress on actions in the Implementation Plan.
7. In terms of major redevelopment opportunities the Council is seeking to promote activity on a number of key sites set out in the Regeneration Strategy.

7.1. Foredraft Street (Site 2)

This Council owned site is the subject of a development brief approved in May 2010 and has been subject to market testing with prospective developers for a residential end use. However, the outcome of this is that there does not appear to be sufficient value in the site to allow for the costs of bringing Foredraft Street up to adoptable standards, and as result it is not considered appropriate to consider the site for disposal until market conditions improve

7.2. 118-122 Windmill Hill (Site 3)

An outline planning permission was approved for this site, subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement, by Development Control Committee on the 30th August 2011. The application includes the provision of the following:

- A new car park located towards the rear of the site
- One retail unit of 300 m² of floor space
- Two retail units of 70 to 100 m² of floor space
- Three smaller units with approximately 50 to 60 m² of floor space
- 14 two-bedroom residential apartments built over the retail units with designated rear parking
- Highways improvements to Maple Tree Lane

7.3. Providence Methodist Church (Site 1)

This site had been considered for the location of a LIFT scheme (a health led development) and replacement church facility. However after initial feasibility work it was not considered suitable due to its size and other limitations, being primarily topography and access. Officers are currently assisting representatives from the church with their aspirations to redevelop the site for residential use incorporating a replacement church facility. There will be however be issues related to the loss of the historic church building that will need to be considered in line with the Council's planning policies.

8. Improvements to public realm in the centre are a key element of the Regeneration Strategy, and work has been undertaken to develop the content and cost of the proposals shown in this document. Proposals have been prepared on improvements to car parks, footpaths, open spaces and on the potential for public art to celebrate the history of the area and these will be on display at the Committee. It is proposed to carry out a public consultation on these proposals, which will also be used to bid for external funding and prioritise available funding through, for example, Section 106 receipts.

9. The Committee approved at its meeting on 10th March 2010 that funding be allocated from the Council's Empty Shops Grant towards the Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre. Survey work on the vacant properties in the centre has been completed and occupiers of vacant properties have been approached. Negotiations are underway with the developer of the 118-122 Windmill Hill site who has expressed interest in this initiative as a way of promoting the proposed development.

Finance

10. All spend incurred to date has been funded by appropriate Council budgets. All future spending on Council assets relating to the regeneration of the Cradley/Windmill Hill local centre will be included in the Capital Programme as necessary.

Law

11. 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

12. 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 needs of children and young people are considered in the planning process for centres

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that Committee note the progress made in delivering the Regeneration Plan



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List of Background Papers

Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan (2007)
Report to Select Committee for Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education -13 September 2010
Report to Halesowen Area Committee; Cradley Regeneration- 9 September 2010
Report to Halesowen Area Committee; Cradley Regeneration -13 January 2011

Halesowen Area Committee – 9 November 2011

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Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan

APPENDIX A – Progress on implementation of the Implementation Plan

Short term Actions (1-2 years; 2007/9)

Action		Status
Improvements to footways and streetscape	✓	<i>Works carried out in 2009 using Capital programme funding</i>
Improvements to pedestrian links to the town centre from the surrounding residential areas.	✓	<i>Works carried out in 2009 using Capital programme funding</i>
Provision of cycle parking in the local centre	✓	<i>Work completed in 2010</i>
Review local bus services and customer needs in consultation with TWM	✓	<i>A borough wide bus review was implemented in April 2008</i>
Redesign of bus stop/layby adjacent to nos. 28 to 40 Windmill Hill.	✓	<i>Measures investigated but rejected on safety grounds</i>
Provision of loading facilities for shops at top of Windmill Hill	✓	<i>Proposals investigated but rejected following public consultation</i>
Exploration of possible options or designs for visual gateway treatments at each end of Windmill Hill in the vicinity of the existing signalised crossing facilities	✓	<i>Works carried out in 2009 using Capital programme funding</i>
Short term measures to improve Toys Lane junction	✓	<i>Measures investigated but rejected on safety grounds</i>
Short term improvements to the existing public car parks	✓	<i>Works carried out in 2009 using Capital programme funding</i>

Medium term Actions (2 - 5 years; 2009/12)

Action		Status
Possible development at Sites 1,2 and 3		<i>Extensive liaison has taken place with Dudley Infracare LiftCo, Methodist Church, landowners and potential developers to bring development forward; Development Brief completed for Foredraft Street; Outline planning permission granted for residential/retail development</i>
New key public space on open space adjacent to Methodist Church		<i>Section 106 Open Space and Public Realm funds are being pooled for future use on this area. Public Realm proposals are being drawn up and costed prior to public consultation</i>
Introduction of small public spaces with seating and public art along Windmill Hill		<i>Section 106 Open Space and Public Realm funds are being pooled for future use on this area. Public Realm proposals are being drawn up and costed prior to public consultation</i>

Shop front improvements particularly at protected frontages and run down properties		<i>Vacant premises survey is complete and proposals are being prepared for improvements via the Council's Empty Shopfronts Grant scheme</i>
Improvements to public space associated with rights of way footpath		<i>Public Realm proposals are being drawn up and costed prior to public consultation. Section 106 Open Space and Public Realm funds are being pooled for future use on this area</i>
Improvements to the approved circular cycle route and links to the centre		<i>Funding to be identified before this can be progressed</i>
Zebra or puffin controlled crossing on Windmill Hill opposite Methodist Church	✓	<i>Proposals rejected following public consultation</i>
Provision of raised entry treatments on Highfield Road, Two Gates Lane, Foredraft Street and Maple Tree Lane		<i>Funding to be identified before this can be progressed</i>
New partnership arrangement with TWM associated with the improvements		<i>Negotiations are underway with Centro & bus service operators</i>
Provision of a parking/loading box at 90 Windmill Hill		<i>Detailed proposals have been prepared but are not able to be progressed due to highways design constraints</i>
Promotion of a community-based travel plan linked to improvements to bus infrastructure and services		<i>Community group to be identified</i>
Dedicated right turn lane for traffic turning into Maple Tree Lane from Colley Gate	✓	<i>Measures investigated but rejected on safety grounds</i>
Junction improvements at Colley Gate/Colley Lane / Park Road junction	✓	<i>Proposals rejected following public consultation in favour of extended box junction</i>
Junction improvements at Windmill Hill / Two Gates Lane	✓	<i>Improvements constrained by adjacent property</i>
Junction improvements at Windmill Hill / Beecher Road	✓	<i>Box junction implemented</i>
Conversion of a number of the existing private car parks to public use should also be considered	✓	<i>This is not being pursued as there is currently sufficient capacity in the public car parks to meet demand</i>
Landscaping of public and private car parks		<i>Public Realm proposals are being drawn up and costed prior to public consultation. Section 106 Open Space and Public Realm funds are being pooled for future use on this area</i>
Partnership/Contract with Travel West Midlands		<i>Negotiations are underway with Centro & bus service operators</i>
Personalised Travel Plans		<i>Community group to be identified</i>

Long term Actions (6 - 10 years; 2013/17)

Action		Status
Possible footway widening as part of long term traffic improvements	✓	<i>Measures investigated but rejected on safety grounds</i>
The provision of traffic signals at the Toys Lane junction (due to the need for minor widening of Windmill Hill)	✓	<i>Measures investigated but rejected on safety grounds</i>