

Meeting of the Cabinet – 18th September 2013

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Adoption of the Halesowen Area Action Plan

Purpose of Report

1. To recommend to Council, the approval and adoption of the Halesowen Area Action Plan (AAP).

Background

2. Within the adopted Black Country Core Strategy (February 2011), Halesowen Town Centre is identified within a network of town centres, that form a distinctive and valued part of the Black Country's character. The general aim of the Core Strategy is to shape and revitalise these centres to meet the community's needs in the most accessible and sustainable way. The policies of the Halesowen AAP seek to carry forward and provide a focus for these strategic planning aims.
3. The AAP will help provide the catalyst for the wider regeneration of the town centre, and sets out Dudley Council's agreed development strategies and policies, (some of which are site specific), in order to guide new investment into Halesowen Town Centre and its environs up to the year 2026. This is achieved by clearly identifying where new shops and homes should be located as well as highlighting the transport infrastructure and new public spaces which are necessary to help support that growth whilst also benefiting both the local community and the local environment.
4. The AAP is flexible enough to ensure that development proposals are encouraged to come forward, yet robust enough to ensure that all development works towards delivering the key elements of the spatial vision for the area.
5. Following examination of the AAP by an independent Planning Inspector, the Inspector's Report has concluded that the Halesowen AAP is "sound" and therefore provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the AAP area up to 2026, providing that a number of minor modifications are made to the Plan. The modifications can be summarised as follows:
 - Insertion of a model policy stating a presumption in favour of sustainable development, to reflect the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012).
 - Additional explanatory text to set out the relationship between the AAP and other parts of Dudley Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) (Local Plan).

- Additional policy wording and supporting text to clarify the AAP's position in relation to potential flood risk at development opportunity sites.
 - A number of further minor modifications to improve the clarity of and assist in the interpretation of the Plan.
6. The recommendations and modifications set out in the Planning Inspector's Report do not result in any fundamental changes and are fully supported by the Local Planning Authority and were agreed during the process of the Examination. The plan as modified is available in the Members Room and on the 'Committee Management Information System'.

Finance

7. The development of the AAP was funded from existing budgets and resources dedicated to the production of Development Plan Documents and other such statutory planning documents.

Law

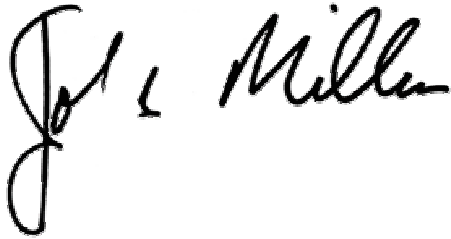
8. This AAP is a Development Plan Document (DPD), produced in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the NPPF (2012). When adopted, the Halesowen AAP will form part of Dudley's statutory planning framework, which will replace relevant parts of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and will be used as the basis for decisions in planning applications for development in the Town.
9. 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, social or environmental well-being of the area.

Equality Impact

10. The AAP will set the detailed planning framework for the development of the Halesowen Town Centre area up to 2026. The AAP 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 the communities in the area. This will include meeting the needs of disabled persons as well as children and young people by seeking to provide sufficient facilities for them as well as having a positive effect for future generations.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that the Halesowen Area Action Plan be approved and recommended to Council for adoption.



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List of Background Papers

Black Country Core Strategy – accessed via
<http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/>

Halesowen Area Action Plan and list of modifications – available in the Members' Room

Planning Inspector's Report into the soundness of the AAP