
Halesowen Area Committee - 21 March 2012

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 and around Halesowen Town Centre.

Background

Regeneration and Planning Issues

Halesowen In Bloom/Environmental Improvements

2. The Halesowen In Bloom Working Group has overseen the preparation of the in Bloom initiative around the town centre, and Area Committee funds have been secured to purchase equipment for the scheme. A promotional day will be held in the Cornbow Shopping Centre on April 19 where visitors can view plans for the scheme and sign up to volunteer or offer sponsorship / donations for Halesowen in Bloom.
3. The partnership approach to developing the Halesowen In Bloom initiative is continuing with partners from Sandvik, Asda, Vale Retail, Halesowen College, the Chamber of Commerce, and members of the community. Work is also currently being developed to be carried out by the volunteers of Dudley MIND with regard to Plough Gardens and an offer to maintain planted areas.

Halesowen Area Action Plan

4. The Halesowen Area Action Plan will form part of Dudley Borough's wider 'Local Development Framework'. It will provide a vision for what the Council aims to achieve in the Town Centre by 2026, and through its policies and site allocations, it will set out how that vision will be delivered. The Halesowen AAP will be a planning policy document against which decisions on planning applications will be made for the period 2013 to 2026, and will consider such issues as:
 - What new development is needed and where this should happen.
 - Which areas need regenerating, and which need to be conserved.

- Identifying the Town Centre's primary shopping area (formerly retail core) and thereby guiding retail and non-retail development to appropriate locations.
 - What principles should guide new development, particularly in terms of urban design
 - Whether any new infrastructure is needed to service the Town Centre, or the new development planned within it, such as public spaces, streets or green infrastructure.
5. The planning process requires that the community and other stakeholders are engaged in the preparation of development plan documents such as area action plans – hence the need for the 'Preferred Options' stage document and its subsequent formal public consultation period between January 9th and February 20th 2012. Representations received by the Council during this 6 week consultation period are currently being collated and analysed. A verbal update will be given at the Committee.
 6. All the representations received on the 'Preferred Options' document will now be taken into account in the next stage of the preparation of the Halesowen Area Action Plan – the 'Publication' stage being anticipated to be published in September 2012 for a further round of public consultation.

Transportation issues

7. A report for bus lanes within the Halesowen area has been prepared as a separate agenda item for this Committee

Finance

8. A partnership approach is being developed in order to potentially fund a Halesowen in Bloom initiative which will be supported by external funding.
9. The Halesowen Area Action Plan will be funded from existing budgets and resources dedicated to the production of the Development Plan Documents and other such statutory planning documents.

Law

10. 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.
11. The production of the Halesowen Area Action Plan is necessary in order to update and replace the Halesowen chapter of the Dudley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) the UDP having a plan period to the end of 2011.

Equality Impact

12. The proposals contained within this report complies with the Councils equal opportunities policy.

13. A principal role of the Council is to encourage regeneration which will impact on all sectors of the community, including the needs of children and young people.
14. The Halesowen Area Action Plan will set the planning framework for the development of Halesowen up to 2026. The Area Action Plan 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 the communities in the area. This will include meeting the needs of children and young people by seeking to provide sufficient facilities for them as well as having a positive effect for future generations

Recommendation

15. That the Committee notes the content of this report.



.....
John B Millar
Director of the Urban Environment

Contact Officers: Michelle Clare
Telephone: 01384 815428
Email: michelle.clare@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers
None