

Halesowen Area Committee – 16th November 2005

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Town Centre Management

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on the activities of the Town Centre Management Team in relation to Halesowen.

Background

2. The Council is committed to the delivery of a town centre management service to the four main town centres in the Borough of Dudley. The service in Halesowen is delivered by two full time officers, namely a Town Centre Manager and Information and Support Officer. It is important to note that both officers also cover Brierley Hill Town Centre.
3. The information contained in this report provides a summary of progress made by the team since the last report presented in September 2005. The Town Centre Management Team will also be represented at Committee to provide a verbal update on this report, covering any issues that may have arisen since publication.

French Market

4. The Town Centre Management Team in partnership with Halesowen Chamber of Trade hosted a “Pilot” French Market in the town centre on a trial basis on the 29th September – 1st October 2005 (inclusive).
5. The French Market consisted of twelve stalls, collectively offering a true flavour of French produce such as olives, cheeses, sausages, pasties, bread, cakes, soap, biscuits, leather, oils and vinegars and crepes. The event was held as a pilot project the market was something that residents, businesses and visitors wanted to see encouraged in the future.
6. The intention of hosting a French market in Halesowen was to complement and diversify the town’s retail offer, boost footfall and create a vibrant atmosphere. The market was well attended with hundreds of people coming into the town centre to shop. Several retailers have also agreed to take part in a survey to further explore the effects of the market on the town and initial feedback from Halesowen Town Chamber representatives has already been very positive.

7. Press reports for the French Market were very favourable with articles appearing in both the Halesowen News and the Express and Star.
8. Town Centre Management have now been contacted by other “continental” market organisers with a view to holding a further pilot market in the New Year. A decision as to which market organisers will be invited to provide work, on an annual basis, will be made once the Council is in a position to judge which organisers offer the best market, based on experiences this year.

Future Developments

9. Halesowen Town Chamber intend to hold their annual “Christmas lights” event on Saturday 19th November 2005. As a result of Halesowen Area Committee’s award of financial support to the Chamber, it is now possible to enhance the current lighting scheme and improve the quality of lighting in the town. For information, following concerns expressed at previous Area Committee, the Cornbow Shopping Centre are investing time and resources into helping organise the Christmas Lights through the Chamber in support of the initiative.
10. A small fun fair will also be in the town on the day. The Australian celebrity actor Kip Gamblin (who portrays Scott Hunter in ‘Home and Away’) has been booked to switch the lights on, which will trigger a firework display. Organisers hope that the event will benefit the town, drawing in shoppers to see the new lights and once again, raising Halesowen’s profile.

Pigeons

11. The initial survey carried out in Halesowen was neither comprehensive nor conclusive. Town Centre Management is now working with Pigeon Control Services who have worked with local authorities throughout the country offering a humane approach to reduce a town’s pigeon population. They have assured Town Centre Management that they rescue stray racing pigeons (reported as 70% of a towns pigeon population) and remove feral pigeons. Town Centre Management now await PCS’s quote before contracting with them on a trial basis.

Finance

12. The activities discussed in this report are delivered from existing budgets.

Law

13. The promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area is supported by Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.

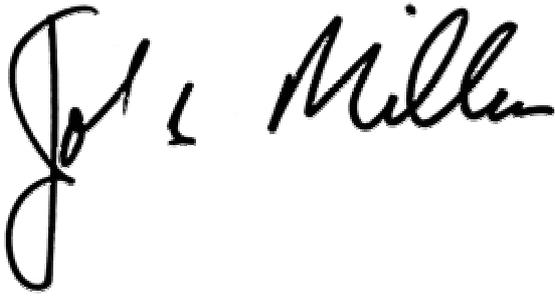
Equality Impact

14. A primary role of the Town Centre Management Team is to encourage inclusiveness amongst all sectors of the community.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended that:-

- The contents of this report, and subsequent verbal update are noted



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List of Background Papers

None