

**Meeting of the Development Control Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2014**  
**Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

**Public consultation on the Dudley Area Action Plan ‘Preferred Options’ stage document**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Development Control Committee of Cabinet’s approval for the Preferred Options stage of the Dudley Area Action Plan (AAP) document to be used as a basis for public consultation commencing in January 2015 for a period of 6 weeks.

**Background**

2. The preparation of an AAP for Dudley is a key activity in delivering a priority of the Council Plan (2013 – 2016) improving the vibrancy and attractiveness of the Borough’s town centres.
3. Within the Black Country Core Strategy (adopted in 2011) a framework to regenerate and plan the sub region up to 2026. Dudley 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 communities needs in the most accessible and sustainable way. The policies of the Dudley AAP seek to carry forward and provide a focus for delivering change and regeneration on the ground.
4. The Dudley AAP will guide new investment in Dudley Town Centre up to 2026, including identifying where new development should be located along with the infrastructure required to support the growth and to benefit the local community and local environment in general.
5. The AAP is a planning document against which decisions on planning applications will be made for the period 2016 – 2026. The Preferred Options document considers such issues as:
  - Which areas need regenerating, and which need to be conserved.
  - What new development is needed and where this should happen.
  - Where the primary shopping area of the Town Centre is, thereby guiding retail and non-retail development to appropriate locations.
  - Whether any new or enhanced infrastructure is needed to service the Town Centre, such as public spaces, streets or green infrastructure.
  - What principles should guide new development, particularly in terms of urban design.

6. The 'Preferred Options' document sets out a vision, strategy and policies for the town centre which have been informed by earlier consultation stages and the 'Issues and Options' stage consultation undertaken between March and April 2014 following cabinet approval in March 2014, where overall support was expressed for the key issues and suggested ways forward within the Plan. Several town centre consultation events were held where members of the public, landowners and developers provided their views on the planning issues and sites within the Dudley AAP boundary. During the 6-week consultation period an 'Issues and Options' response form was available to download on the Council's website as well as a separate online questionnaire. More than 90% of the 91 online respondents offered their support to the Council's emerging proposals for the future of Dudley town centre.
7. The AAP needs to deliver the retail floorspace requirements which are set out in the Black Country Core Strategy Policy CEN4 'Regeneration of Town Centres,' for Dudley. These being 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> net of convenience (food) and 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> gross of comparison (clothes, white goods etc) retail floorspace. Implementation of one or more of the three approved foodstore planning consents in the town centre will help deliver these floor space totals.
8. On the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2014 Cabinet approved the document for consultation and it is proposed that the Preferred Options document will be available on the Council's website as well as main libraries and Council Offices during the 6 week period of consultation from the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015 until Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015 to allow consultees to identify any further issues for inclusion or to provide comments or suggested improvement. A copy is also available in the Members' Room. Notification of the consultation details will be sent (by letter and/or email) to Statutory Consultees, landowners, agents and key stakeholders who have expressed a wish to be involved in developing the document. There will also be an online questionnaire and a series of drop in events for the public and Members in the town centre during this period. The exact locations, dates and times of these will be confirmed and advertised in due course. Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a new "duty to co-operate" with its neighbouring Councils and key stakeholders. Various meetings continue to be held to ensure that the Council can meet its obligations in relation to this duty.
9. Any representations following the consultation period will be incorporated, if appropriate, into the next stage of the plan process. It is anticipated that the final draft of the document will be published in autumn 2015 for consultation prior to submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

## **Finance**

10. The Dudley Area Action Plan will be funded from existing budgets and resources dedicated to the production of Development Plan Documents and other such statutory planning documents.

## **Law**

11. The production of the Dudley Area Action Plan is necessary in order to update and replace the Dudley chapter of the Dudley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and will deliver those regeneration requirements for the town set out in the Black Country Core Strategy.

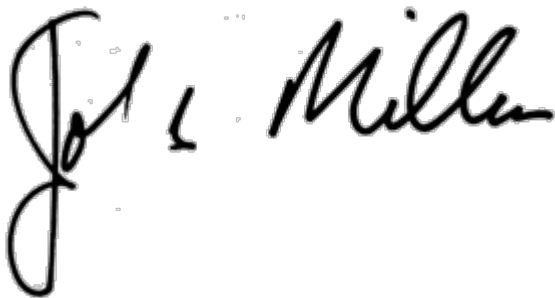
12. The Dudley Area Action Plan is a Development Plan Document (DPD), produced in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the NPPF (2012). When adopted, the Dudley AAP will form part of Dudley's statutory planning framework and will be used as the basis for decisions in planning applications for development in the Town.
13. In addition 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**

14. The Dudley Area Action Plan will set the planning framework for the development of Dudley Town Centre up to 2026. The Area Action Plan will seek to ensure that sufficient homes, shops and employment, social 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.
15. This consultation document is accompanied by a 'Preferred Options' Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report. The SA Report promotes sustainable development through the integration of environmental, social and economic conditions into the AAP's preparation.

### **Recommendation**

16. That Development Control notes Cabinet's decision to approve the Dudley Area Action Plan (AAP) Preferred Options document to be used as a basis for public consultation commencing on 16th January 2014 for a period of six weeks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. B. Millar', with a stylized, cursive script.

**J. B. Millar**

**Director of the Urban Environment**

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