

**Meeting of the Cabinet - 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

**Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

**District and Local Centres Review**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To approve the 'District & Local Centres Review 2008' which identifies the following priority local and district centres for regeneration:-

- Cradley,
- Lye,
- Netherton,
- Pensnett,
- Quarry Bank,
- Shell Corner
- Wordsley

**2 Background**

2.1 One of the Borough's greatest assets is its network of diverse town and local centres, which have evolved from the villages and settlements which formed the Black Country and have been important centres of local employment. Each centre has had to respond to dramatic change over the last 20 years, including far reaching changes in lifestyles and patterns of shopping, accessibility and investment. Combined with structural change this has resulted in the decline of some of the borough's traditional centres. The local and district centres as defined in the Dudley Unitary Development Plan 2005 are as follows:-

**District Centres**

- Brierley Hill High Street
- Kingswinford
- Lye
- Sedgley

**Local Centres**

- Amblecote
- Cradley/Windmill Hill
- Gornal Wood
- Netherton
- Pensnett
- Quarry Bank
- Roseville
- Shell Corner
- The Stag

- Upper Gornal
- Wall Heath
- Wollaston
- Wordsley

- 2.2 Growth resources were secured by the Directorate of the Urban Environment in 2005/06 to address local and district centres within the new planning system and a Project Development Officer, whose remit includes local and district centres, took up post in December 2005.
- 2.3 In order to prioritise those centres with the greatest need that can be dealt with within the resources currently available, a Review of the district and local Centres was undertaken in December 2005. This Review addressed the local and national policy context, undertook an individual analysis of each of the centres summarising the key issues, with an evaluation of performance against some key criteria. The criteria used were vacancy levels, retail representation in the protected frontage, diversity of uses and traffic congestion. Based on this analysis, the centres that were identified as priorities were Shell Corner, Cradley/Windmill Hill, Pensnett, Brierley Hill High Street, Lye and Quarry Bank.
- 2.4 The Council's intention was to develop Regeneration Strategies for the priority centres to guide the renewal of these areas. Due to the urgency in starting the regeneration process in these areas, it was decided that these Regeneration Strategies would be Council approved documents and not formal plans through the Local Development Framework because this would have entailed a lengthy approval process. The exception to this is Brierley Hill High Street, which is now included in the Brierley Hill Action Area Plan (AAP) as part of the new Strategic Centre and therefore not the subject of this report. Lye District Centre is covered by the Lye District Centre Action Plan which was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Council in 2004.
- 2.5 Since the approval of these priority local and district centres in 2006, Regeneration Strategies have been approved for Shell Corner Local Centre, Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre and Pensnett Local Centre. The Quarry Bank Local Centre Regeneration Strategy is currently under development and expected to be presented to Cabinet by December 2009.
- 2.6 The Regeneration Strategies that have been approved are having a positive impact on the regeneration of these centres, projects that are currently implemented or underway include:-
- Creation of new Town Park behind Christ Church in Lye
  - Development of SureStart Centre fronting Lye By-pass
  - Improvements at Lye Train Station, including CCTV, lighting and car park resurfacing
  - Working towards progressing 3 health led schemes on development sites within 3 local and district centres
  - Funding secured to undertake road resurfacing, pavement improvements and roundabout upgrade at Shell Corner local centre
  - Funding secured to improve public right of way on Windmill Hill, road surface enhancements and implement welcome/gateway signs at Cradley/Windmill Hill
  - Negotiations with private developers in relation to progressing the development sites identified in the Regeneration Strategies at Pensnett, Cradley/Windmill Hill, Shell Corner and Lye local centres

Cradley/Windmill Hill, Shell Corner and Lye local centres.

- 2.7 The 2008 District and Local Centres Review is proposed to replace the 2005 Review. The 2008 Review scores each local and district centre on the same criteria as the 2005 Review with the exception of two additional measures; 'footfall counts' and 'road traffic accident' statistics which have been combined with traffic delay times to form a measurement for traffic congestion.
- 2.8 The centres that have been identified as priorities for regeneration over the next 3 years within the 2008 Review are:
- Cradley/Windmill Hill
  - Lye
  - Netherton
  - Pensnett
  - Quarry Bank
  - Shell Corner
  - Wordsley

In order to reverse the decline of these centres, Regeneration Strategies will be required for Netherton and Wordsley because Lye, Pensnett, Quarry Bank & Shell Corner either have Regeneration Strategies or are currently in the process of being developed.

- 2.9 The priority for the Council over the next 3 years will be to progress the implementation of actions in the Regeneration Strategies in the priority centres of, Cradley, Lye Pensnett, Quarry Bank and Shell Corner .The future review of existing Regeneration Strategy and the future production of Strategies for 2 new priority centres (i.e. Netherton and Wordsley) will be dealt with through the Development Plan System as part of the Development Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD). The DPD will deal with reviewing centre boundaries, protected frontages, site allocations and retail policies specific to local and district centres. It will also address some issues relating to each specific local and district centre; however the delivery of actions and activity will need to be addressed by individual centre delivery/investment strategies. The DPD is due for adoption in March 2012.

### **3.Finance**

- 3.1 Those activities detailed in the report which are delivered directly by the Council are funded within existing revenue and capital budgets.

### **4. Law**

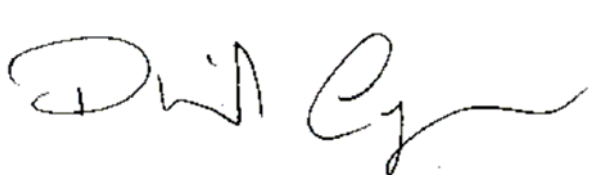
- 4.1 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well being of its area.

## **5. Equality Impact**

- 5.1 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.

## **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet approve:-
- The identification of Cradley / Windmill hill, Lye, Netherton, Pensnett, Quarry Bank, Shell Corner and Wordsley as priorities for district and local centres regeneration activity.
  - Review of the existing local and district centre regeneration strategies and strategies for the 2 new priority centres will be dealt with through the Development Plan Process as part of the Development Plan DPD.



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**Director of Urban Environment - John B. Millar**

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### **List of Background Papers**

Dudley UDP 2005  
District & Local Centre Review 2005  
District & Local Centre Review 2008  
Shell Corner Local Centre Regeneration Strategy December 2008  
Lye District Centre Action Plan 2004  
Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan July 2007  
Draft Pensnett Local Centre Regeneration Plan February 2009