

**Halesowen Area Committee – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008**

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

**Halesowen Town Centre Development**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update Members and the public on progress with regard to physical developments taking place in Halesowen town centre.

**Background**

2. At the 14 March 2007 Halesowen Area Committee, Members requested that progress reports be presented to future Committees with an update on progress with regard to the development of the Cornbow shopping centre, bus station and town centre management issues. Since the last report presented to Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008, officers from the Council have met again with representatives from Vale Retail, CENTRO/WMPTA and the Police (Halesowen Regeneration Meeting; 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2008). Over the lifetime of the development period, officers will continue to liaise with Vale Retail, CENTRO/WMPTA and the Police to ensure building works are carried out and communicated to the public in the most efficient and effective way. The Town Centre Working Group of Members and officers met on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008 to consider the issues raised by the partners. The Head of Policy, Executive and Support Team will provide a verbal update on the outcomes of the Progress Meeting and Working Group at this Committee.

**Cornbow Shopping Centre**

3. Vale Retail has confirmed that the project is over half-way complete and remains on programme. Demolition and foundations for the Asda store are now complete as is 65% of the steel frame. Cladding and render works are now complete to the west elevation. Cladding is also progressing to the north and south elevations. The programme remains very much on track and the fit out team are scheduled to start work in early August.
4. A meeting was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> May with Asda to look at the detailed programme for the completion of the store and to confirm the store opening date.

5. Practical completion remains scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> November and the scheduled store opening date is at present Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

### **Halesowen Bus Station and Highway Realignment**

6. The highway works are progressing well and the 2 week closure went well with the reconstruction works of sections of the highway completed slightly ahead of schedule. The Puffin Crossing outside Barclays bank has also been commissioned and is now in use. Outstanding works are areas of block paving, surfacing of the footways, pedestrian guardrail, street lighting, road signs and road markings. There have been some delays due to suppliers of the street furniture but substantial completion of the highway by the beginning of June is currently planned.
7. After progression of highway realignment works by the Council's Framework Contractor in the last few months, attention is now being focused on construction of the adjacent bus station. Piling operations for the new shelter areas have been completed and works are substantially advanced with construction of the shelter ground slabs. Works above ground also started on 9th May 2008 with the installation of pre-cast concrete wall units commencing on the south shelter.
8. The project team, including the main contractor, is actively managing the works to ensure that the bus station remains on target for completion, in accordance with the timescales for wider regeneration of Halesowen town centre. In this respect, close liaison is taking place with other partners, in particular with Vale Retail

### **A456 and Grange Roundabout**

9. At its meeting of the 24th January 2008 this Committee supported the proposals contained within the Halesowen Town Centre Access Study, including safety improvements to the Grange roundabout; originally proposed by the Highways Agency. The Committee agreed that further consultation should be carried out on a revised safety scheme for the Grange roundabout as prepared by the Council and this took place for three months between February and May. All properties directly affected by the proposal were contacted and a copy of the proposal was displayed at the town centre library having been advertised locally. Response was on the whole very positive and a report will be made for consideration of the committee at a future meeting following the deliberations of the Town Centre Working Group of Councillors. Authority for the A456 - Manor Way transferred to the Council on the 28th April and as part of the transfer arrangements the Highways Agency have made available a £750k contribution towards construction of the safety scheme.

## Town Centre Management Issues

10. The Town Centre Management service has an ongoing entertainment and activities programme taking place in Somers Square. Since the last Halesowen Area Committee on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008 the following events have taken place.

Friday 21st March	Churches Together hymn singing
Tuesday 25th March	Children's play trailer, Abby and Teabags face painting and balloon modelling
Thursday 27th March	Rumples circus skills
Friday 28th March	Ray Roberts Mini Fun Fair (three fair rides for small children)
Tuesday 31st March	Brum and Dudley street theatre
Thursday 3rd April	Abby and Teabags face painting and balloon modelling
Friday 4th April	Ray Roberts Mini Fun Fair (three fair rides for small children)

11. In addition to the events and activities taking place in Halesowen Town Centre, the Mayor officially opened Plaza Mall on Friday 2nd May 2008, and this event received extensive press coverage in Halesowen.
12. On Saturday 3rd May 2008 a Mediaeval event took place with historic re-enactments taking place in Somers Square, which was suitably decorated with red white and blue bunting. Knights in armour took to the town centre with displays including demonstrations of medieval surgery, fletching and wattle and daub demonstrations. Many children enjoyed tile and gargoyle making, against the background of authentic live medieval music. The event was very well attended by the public and the town again received extensive press coverage.
13. The following future free Children's events are planned for Halesowen in 2008:

Tues 27th May	Climbing Wall	Somers Square
Thurs 29th May	Brum & Dudley childrens street theatre	Somers Square
Fri 13th June	Local Primary Schools Celebration	Somers Square
Saturday 5th July	Halesowen Community Safety Day	Somers Square
Tues 22nd July	Rumples circus skills	Somers Square

Thurs 24th July	Brum & Dudley childrens street theatre	Somers Square
Fri 25th July	Ray Roberts Mini Fun Fair (three fair rides for small children)	Somers Square
Tues 29th July	Climbing Wall	Somers Square
Thurs 31st July	Childrens Games Arena	Somers Square
Fri 1st August	Ray Roberts Mini Fun Fair (three fair rides for small children)	Somers Square
Saturday 2nd August	Halesowen By The Sea	Somers Square
Tues 5th August	Bouncy Castle	Somers Square
Thurs 7th August	Climbing Wall	Somers Square
Friday 8th August	Ray Roberts Mini Fun Fair (three fair rides for small children)	Somers Square
Tues 12th August	Bouncy castle	Somers Square
Thurs 14th August	Childrens Games Arena	Somers Square
Fri 15th August	Ray Roberts Mini Fun Fair (three fair rides for small children)	Somers Square
Tues 19th August	Brum & Dudley childrens street theatre	Somers Square
Thurs 21st August	Rumples circus skills	Somers Square
Fri 22nd August	Ray Roberts Mini Fun Fair (three fair rides for small children)	Somers Square
Tues 26th August	Airborne Adventure	Somers Square
Thurs 28th August	Bouncy Castle	Somers Square
Fri 29th August	Ray Roberts Mini Fun Fair (three fair rides for small children)	Somers Square

## **Finance**

14. A number of the issues raised within this report have a direct financial implication on the Council. However, all costs detailed which fall on the Council will be funded by existing capital or revenue budgets held within Economic Regeneration Division.

## **Law**

15. 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. The council will carry out highway improvement/ maintenance work under the Highways Act 1980.
16. The Council is empowered to improve Highways under section 62 of the Highways Act 1980. Traffic Regulation orders are made under powers contained in section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

### **Equality Impact**

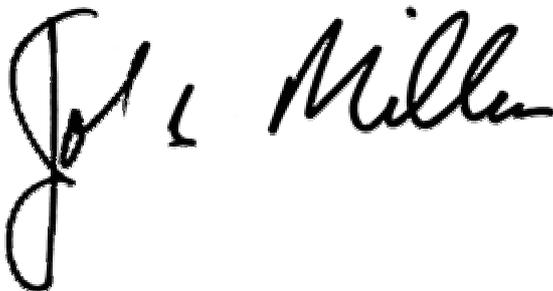
17. A principal role of the Directorate of the Urban Environment is to encourage inclusivity amongst all sectors of the community, including the needs of children and young people. The Cornbow shopping centre development responds to the strong demand amongst the local community for the presence of an anchor retail food store. A principal aim of the bus station development is to improve accessibility for all users to and from the town centre in a safe and secure environment. 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.

### **Recommendation**

18. It is proposed that the contents of this report be noted

### **Background Papers**

None



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**John Millar**

**Director of the Urban Environment**

Contact Officer: Rupert Dugdale

Telephone: 01384 815538

Email: [rupert.dugdale@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:rupert.dugdale@dudley.gov.uk)