

Brierley Hill Area Committee – 3rd April 2008

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Public Consultation on the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan Preferred Options

Purpose of Report

1. This report is for information to advise the Brierley Hill Area Committee on the timescale and process for public consultation on the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan Preferred Options report.

Background

2. The future regeneration of the wider Brierley Hill area has for some time been at the forefront of local planning policy within the Borough and the Black Country and this Area Action Plan is being prepared to drive this regeneration. Brierley Hill is now classified as the strategic town centre for Dudley Borough, a decision brought about by a change in Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This change in regional policy was proposed through the Black Country Study, which informed the RSS Phase One review, approved by the Secretary of State in January 2008.
3. The new strategic centre at Brierley Hill incorporates the High Street, the Merry Hill shopping centre and the Waterfront office development. The Area Action Plan aims to develop the new strategic town centre, including increasing the retail footprint of the Merry Hill centre. Before any new retail floor-space becomes operational at Brierley Hill, there is a requirement that three conditions be met. One of those conditions requires that the Area Action Plan is adopted for Brierley Hill Town Centre which, when adopted, will form part of Dudley's statutory planning framework.
4. The Area Action Plan will guide an estimated £1.5bn worth of investment into the town centre over the coming years setting out where new shops, offices and approximately 3600 new homes should be located. It will also set out where community and leisure facilities, transport infrastructure and new public spaces are needed to support that growth.
5. In preparing the Area Action Plan, the Council has already undertaken informal consultation throughout 2007 with key stakeholders and a six-week period of public consultation on the 'Issues and Options' document. The first period of statutory consultation is now due to begin on 17th March 2008 and run for six weeks. This will involve the public and stakeholders being consulted on the 'Preferred Options' for the development and regeneration of Brierley Hill town centre via a number of workshop events. The Preferred Options Document is

proceeding to the Cabinet of Dudley Council on 13th February 2008 to seek approval to consult.

6. The 'Preferred Options' document sets out the favoured strategy to achieving regeneration in Brierley Hill town centre which has been identified from the representations and comments received through the first rounds of consultation. The Preferred Options report has also been informed by key issues which have been drawn from the vast amount of evidence which has been collected over the years. This evidence base has been re-worked into a 'Baseline Report' which can be read in conjunction with the Preferred Options Document.
7. The Preferred Options Report sets out a strategic option on how to take forward the regeneration of Brierley Hill by sub-dividing the area into urban quarters and identifying specific sites for particular types of development. There are a number of questions throughout the report which people are invited to respond to in considering whether this is the correct way in which to facilitate regeneration.
8. The document will be available in all local libraries and on the Council's website. Details of specific consultation events will be publicised at the start of the consultation period. Following this consultation, a 'Draft submission document' will be prepared based on people's responses and the evidence gathered, which will be submitted to the Government Office in October 2008.
9. The Area Action Plan will then go through an Examination by a Planning Inspector (scheduled for April 2009) after which it is anticipated that the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan will be adopted in October 2009.

Finance

12. The Brierley Hill 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

13. The production of an Area Action Plan for Brierley Hill is a condition for delivering retail-led regeneration as set out in the draft Phase One Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy. This Area Action Plan is a Development Plan Document and has to be produced in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.
14. 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.

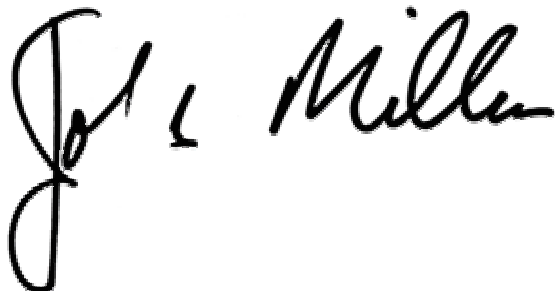
Equality Impact

15. The Brierley Hill Area Action Plan will set the planning framework for the development of the Brierley Hill area at least up to 2021. 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

16. That the Committee notes the contents of this report and is invited to make comments to the consultation within the specified timescale.



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

Contact Officer: Nicki Thomas
Telephone: 01384 816964
Email: nicki.thomas@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers

Brierley Hill Area Action Plan Preferred Options report (available in the Members Room)

Brierley Hill Area Action Plan Issues and Options report
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment--planning/planning/local-development-framework/bhill-aap>

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040005.htm>

Phase One Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy
<http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=55>