

**Halesowen Area Committee 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2006**

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

**Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise – Progress Report**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Committee on progress of the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise.

**Background**

2. In June 2006, Members endorsed the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise and the formation of an Elected Member and Officer Working Group. In September 2006, Members agreed the Terms of Reference for the Halesowen Town Centre Exercise Working Group and agreed the Project Brief.
3. The six-week town centre consultation exercise commenced on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September and closed on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2006. The purpose of the consultation exercise, branded '*Halesowen Town Matters*' was to respond to concerns expressed by Elected Members, residents and businesses in Halesowen with regard to the short term impact of regeneration activities in the town centre and in respect of associated transportation issues (refer to 22 March 2006 report).
4. The exercise was carried out separately to the Halesowen Area Action Plan which is scheduled to commence in July 2008 and for which the timescale is constrained by the Council's Local Development Scheme. However, the results obtained from the consultation exercise will provide useful information which will support the early evidence gathering for the development of the Area Action Plan and additional council plans.
5. The consultation exercise consisted of the following methods:
  - A public questionnaire (included as a 'wrap-around' in the *Halesowen Chronicle* on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2006 and also made available to download via the internet;
  - Staffed exhibition stands in Somers Square (10am to 4pm) on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September and Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2006;

- Permanent stand located at the entrance to Halesowen Library explaining the purpose of the consultation exercise and providing an opportunity for visitors to complete a questionnaire;
  - Designated consultation website [www.dudley.gov.uk/halesowentownmatters](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/halesowentownmatters);
  - Details of consultation outlined on Council's Consultation Database;
  - A generic email address ([halesowen@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:halesowen@dudley.gov.uk)) for respondents to submit qualitative comments; and
  - All generic queries handled by Dudley Council Plus;
6. As of 31 October 2006, approximately **800** responses have been received. All questionnaires will be analysed by the Dudley Council's Strategic Research and Intelligence Team. Detailed findings of the consultation exercise will be reported back to Halesowen Area Committee on 24 January 2007. All Elected Members of Halesowen Area Committee will receive a hard copy of the report. A Stakeholder Feedback Session will take place in January 2007 to present findings to stakeholders. The Working Group (at its meeting on 8 November) considered the initial findings of the consultation exercise and the proposal for an initial feedback session to be held in January 2007. A verbal report will be given at Area Committee outlining the outcomes of this meeting.

### **Finance**

7. The cost of delivering the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise has been met from existing revenue budgets.

### **Law**

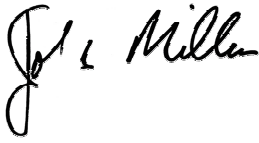
8. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of any part of the Borough.

### **Equality Impact**

9. The proposals set out in the report accord with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **Recommendation**

10. That the Committee notes the headline findings of the Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise



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**John B Millar**  
**Director of the Urban Environment**

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### **List of Background Papers**

1. Report to Halesowen Area Committee (22<sup>nd</sup> March 2006) '*Halesowen Town Centre – Transport and Regeneration Issues*'
2. Report to Halesowen Area Committee (28<sup>th</sup> June 2006) '*Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise*'
3. Report to Halesowen Area Committee (12<sup>th</sup> September 2006) '*Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise – Progress Report*'