

Halesowen Area Committee- 9th March 2011

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Halesowen Town Centre Development

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Committee on progress with regard to physical developments taking place in and around Halesowen Town Centre.

Background

2. At the 14th 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 development and management issues.

Regeneration and Planning Issues

3. Work is continuing on environmental improvements with proposals being drawn up for potential environmental and ecological improvements to the River Stour in the vicinity of the town centre
4. Empty Shops Initiative. Following a survey of vacant properties in the Town Centre, a number of properties have been identified as possible units where vinyls could be used to brighten up the outside of the property. Permission has been sought from agents/owners for seven suitable vacant properties. As a result, the occupiers of two properties have formally agreed to be included in the initiative and work to commence in March. It should be noted that the Council is not able to compel any property occupiers to take part in this initiative
5. Halesowen In Bloom. Following the successful Halesowen College competition for a marketing brand for Halesowen in Bloom, the winner, Oliver Whittall and the other 10 entrants were presented with prizes and certificates at an event on the 20th January. The winner will now working with the Council's Graphics team to develop the logo and brand for use in promoting the in Bloom initiative. All the students found this to be a valuable exercise and of use in applying for employment or University places. A copy of the winning design will be on display at this meeting
6. Applications for external funding are currently being prepared for the Lloyds TSB Foundation and the National Lottery Peoples Millions
7. Sponsorship for the 2011/12 year currently stands at approximately £5,600 with recent offers of sponsorship received from A & D Ironwork and Wilkinson's. A marketing pack is currently being prepared which will set out, for the various potential contributors,

including business sponsors, residents and community groups, how they can contribute and how to go about offering support, using some of the example of contributions that have been made to the In Bloom initiative.

8. Work is well underway on the Peckingham Street planter project. The shrub removal and ground preparation has been completed by GreenCare and a planting design has been donated by Halesowen landscape architect Martin Holland. The tree planting and the steel perimeter fence are due to be complete in February, and a community planting event is due to take place in March after which the Halesowen Gardening Club will take over the maintenance of the planter. It is hoped that projects such as this and the recent bulb planting will demonstrate to the community how a shared approach to projects such as this can be delivered

Finance

9. There are currently limited resources available for public realm developments which could contribute to an 'in Bloom' initiative. All other activities and developments detailed within this reported are funded from resources held by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

Law

10. 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

11. The proposal contained within this report complies with the Councils equal opportunities policy.
12. A principal role of the Directorate of the Urban Environment is to encourage regeneration which will impact on all sectors of the community, including the needs of children and young people.

Recommendation

13. That the Committee notes the progress of development in Halesowen Town Centre



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John B Millar

Director of the Urban Environment

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List of Background Papers

None