

Meeting of the Council – 26th November 2012

Report of the Cabinet

Publication of the Halesowen Area Action Plan

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Council of progress on the Halesowen Area Action Plan (AAP) and to seek approval for the AAP to be submitted to the Secretary of State so that it may be subjected to a Public Examination, following the final six week period of public consultation.

Background

2. The preparation of an AAP for Halesowen is a key activity in delivering a priority of the Council Plan (2013) - improving the vibrancy and attractiveness of the Borough's town centres.
3. Within the adopted Black Country Core Strategy (February 2011), Halesowen is identified within a network of town centres that form a distinctive and valued part of the Black Country's character. The general aim of the Core Strategy is to shape and revitalise these centres to meet the community's needs in the most accessible and sustainable way. The policies of the Halesowen AAP seek to carry forward and provide a focus for these strategic planning aims.
4. The AAP will guide new investment into Halesowen Town Centre up to 2026, including identifying where new shops and homes will be located, along with the transport infrastructure and new public spaces which are needed to help support that growth and benefit the local community and local environment in general.
5. The AAP is a planning policy document against which decisions on planning applications will be made for the period 2013 to 2026. It considers such issues as:
 - Which areas need regenerating, and which need to be conserved.
 - What new development is needed and where this should happen.
 - Where the primary shopping area of the Town Centre is, thereby guiding retail and non-retail development to appropriate locations.
 - Where new or enhanced infrastructure is needed to service the Town Centre, such as public spaces, streets or green infrastructure.
 - The principles that should guide new development, particularly in terms of urban design.

6. This Publication AAP document sets out Dudley Council's finalised set of strategies and policies, some of which are site specific. This final version will be subject to a further period of consultation prior to submission.
7. The period of consultation on the Publication Stage document began on the 9th November 2012 and runs for a period of 6 weeks until 21st December 2012. During that time, the document is able to be viewed at the reception areas at 3 St James's Road Dudley, Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge and Dudley Council Plus, as well as at all main libraries and on the Council's website. It will also be the subject of drop in workshops specifically designed for all members of the Council. Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a new 'duty to cooperate' with its neighbouring Councils and key stakeholders. Various meetings continue to be held to ensure that the Council can meet its obligations in relation to this duty.
8. Following this consultation, it is anticipated that the AAP will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate during early 2013. The submitted plan is then likely to be subject to a formal Examination in Public in summer 2013 and adopted in winter 2013.

Finance

9. The AAP will be funded from existing budgets and resources dedicated to the production of Development Plan Documents and other such statutory planning documents.

Law

10. This AAP is a Development Plan Document (DPD), produced in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.
11. 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

12. The AAP will set the detailed planning framework for the development of the Halesowen area at least up to 2026. The AAP 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 all the communities in the area.
13. 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.

Recommendations

- 14. That following approval of the Publication of the Halesowen Area Action Plan for a statutory period of public consultation, the Council approves the Halesowen Area Action Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of State so that it may be subjected to a Public Examination.

- 15. That authority be delegated to the Director of the Urban Environment, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, and the Opposition Spokesperson for Regeneration, to agree any minor recommended changes to the document prior to submission to the Secretary of State, following consultation which concludes on the 21st December 2012 and that any such changes be notified to all Members of the Council.



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Leader of the Council