

## **Halesowen Area Committee**

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

#### **Halesowen Town Centre Development – 14 March 2007**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update Members and residents on progress with regard to physical developments taking place within Halesowen town centre.

#### **Background**

2. From March 2007, a progress report will be presented to each Halesowen Area Committee updating Elected Members and members of the public on progress with regard to the development of the Cornbow shopping centre, bus station and town centre management issues.
3. Members will recall the findings on the Town Centre Consultation which were reported to the January Halesowen Area Committee Meeting. Further to the findings of the consultation exercise approval was given to the preparation of a Town Centre Management Risk Strategy to promote the viability of the town centre and minimise disruption during the construction of the Vale Retail and Bus Station developments. In addition, an Access Study will review issues of congestion and car parking. The Town Centre Working Group is meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> March to progress these issues and a verbal update will be given at the Area Committee.
4. In terms of the overall development in the town centre, officers will liaise with the developers of the Cornbow and Bus Station to ensure building works are carried out in the most efficient and effective way. Progress will be reported regularly to the Area Committee. The current situation is detailed below.

#### **Cornbow Shopping Centre**

5. Vale Retail plans a major regeneration of the Cornbow Centre to provide a new Asda store on two levels plus larger shop units for other retailers. The existing Precinct car park will be replaced with a larger multi-storey car park over the Asda store. In a scheme which responds to the needs of the town on this highly visible site, Vale Retail will enhance Halesowen as a shopping destination and improve the facilities available

to the general public. The anticipated completion date for this development is December 2008.

6. Vale has confirmed the project is progressing well and a new temporary entrance to the Cornbow shopping centre will be started in early March to allow works to progress safely for the duration of the project. Advanced demolition works of planters, which are on the corner of Church Croft and those fronting 33 to 53 Queensway, and the short length of walls fronting the two accesses to the Andrew Road car park, are scheduled to be demolished week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> February 2007.
7. Gas and water utilities also require to do advance works prior to their diversionary works to enable Vale Retail to start excavating for their subterranean works; these will be in the existing footway fronting the Cornbow, Works are due to commence towards the end of February and are likely to take two to three days.

### **Halesowen Bus Station**

8. The new bus station will be provided by CENTRO / WMPTA and will include an attractive entrance canopy feature, new high quality passenger waiting areas, closed circuit television (CCTV) for extra security, electronic passenger information to make using the bus much easier. The anticipated completion date is spring 2008.
9. In order to accommodate the new bus station DMBC will realign a section of Queensway further north between Andrew Road and Church Croft. The scheme will include new and improved pedestrian crossing facilities, traffic calming measures and the introduction of a 20mph speed limit. The new pedestrian crossing will be located opposite the entrance to the Cornbow Centre and to the east of the bus station outside Barclays Bank.
10. At the time of writing this report, the bus station is expected to close at midnight on 4<sup>th</sup> March and the one-way system from High Street towards Queensway will come into operation. The one-way system is expected to be in operation for approximately 15 months. Centro's / WMPTA's consultants are currently working on the detailed design for the new bus station. Construction of this improved facility will be able to start on site in September 2007, after the developer has completed the new lower shop units, which will be partly below the new bus station.
11. Vale Retail's contractor (B & K) will erect hoarding around the bus station in order to begin excavation and construction for their subterranean extension and the utilities will hopefully start their diversion during March. It is expected that the utility diversions (working on the Queensway outer footway) will last approximately 3 to 4 months dependent on utility resources available and unforeseen circumstances.
12. Vale Retail's advance works will be within the existing bus station, Husky Dog roundabout and on some areas of the Queensway around the bus station; hence the introduction of a one-way system. The advance works are expected to be completed around August / September 2007.

13. The realignment of the bus station works are expected to start upon completion of the Cornbow advance works and will last approximately 9 months. The works will be undertaken by the contractor Carillion who is DMBC's Framework Contractor.
14. In order for construction to take place it will be necessary to close the existing bus station and temporarily re-route bus services to drop off and pick up passengers at different places in Halesowen town centre. Centro / WMPTA have produced a leaflet detailing the temporary relocation of bus services.

### **Town Centre Management Issues**

15. Severn Trent Water intends to carry out sewer replacement works from 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007. This work is expected to take up to four weeks. South Staffordshire Water intends to install a new water main in the town and this work is scheduled to commence on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and be complete by 26<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The Town Centre Manager has liaised with current street traders in order to find suitable alternative locations within the town centre whilst the works are carried out.
16. A provisional schedule of events to take place in the town centre over 2007/08 financial year include the following:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
31 <sup>st</sup> March – 15 <sup>th</sup> April	School Easter holidays, Somers Square
1 <sup>st</sup> May	May Day Event in partnership with local primary schools, Somers Square
26 <sup>th</sup> May – 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Whitsun Week – activities for children
June 2007 (to be confirmed)	Halesowen College Entertains
16 <sup>th</sup> June	Halesowen Rotary Victorian Street Fayre
23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Halesowen Parish Church Tricentenary Celebration of the Church Bell installed in St John's
29 <sup>th</sup> June	Creative Networks – Local Schools Entertainment Festival
18 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> July	Foreign Market
7 <sup>th</sup> July	West Midlands Police Community Safety Events
July (to be confirmed)	Summer Holiday Events
	Halesowen by the Sea
November (to be confirmed)	Halesowen Christmas Lights switch-on
December (to be confirmed)	Christmas Celebration Mayor and Sandvik

### **Finance**

17. 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 the Economic Regeneration Division.

### **Law**

18. 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**

19. A primary role of the Town Centre Management Service 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 of the bus station development is to improve accessibility for all users to and from the town centre in a safe and secure environment.

## **Recommendation**

20. That the Committee note the progress development in Halesowen town centre

*Bernard Meade*

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**for John B Millar**  
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## **List of Background Papers**

Report to Halesowen Area Committee (24<sup>th</sup> January 2007) '*Halesowen Town Centre Consultation Exercise*'