
**SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ADULT EDUCATION–
10th SEPTEMBER 2007**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

PROGRESS REPORT ON REGENERATION OF DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE

PURPOSE

1. To update the Select Committee on progress to date in relation to the regeneration of Dudley Town Centre

BACKGROUND

Strategic Context

2. The Council's Economic Regeneration aims are to: -
3. **Optimise the opportunity for local people to obtain local jobs through:**
 - building the capacity of local residents to access local jobs;
 - delivering training programmes for local unemployed people;
 - providing job brokerage facilities;
 - providing employment related support and advice to potential/existing trainees; and
 - developing sustainable communities.
4. **Support new and existing businesses through:**
 - creating new jobs;
 - increasing inward investment;
 - safeguarding existing jobs;
 - proactively communicating with local businesses; and
 - providing sites/premises for new employment opportunities.
5. **Strengthen and diversify the local economic base through:**
 - developing the skills base through quality training;
 - stimulating an enterprise culture and encouraging business innovation;
 - developing the Visitor Economy; and

- creating a safe, attractive and healthy environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

6. **Improve the economic infrastructure through:**

- maximising the potential of the major development sites;
- improving transportation infrastructure and increasing choices in mode of travel;
- delivering and caring for high quality landscape and urban design;
- regenerating the Borough's 4 town centres and 15 local centres; and
- developing and maintaining a positive image.

7. **Champion the interests and assets of Dudley Borough**, securing resources and improving its position regionally, nationally and internationally through:

- creating and maintaining close working relationships with international, national and regional public and private sector funders;
- marketing widely opportunities for future development and improvements in the Borough; and
- celebrating Economic Regeneration successes to a wide audience.

8. The Council's Economic Regeneration aims are clearly linked to the Council's Community Strategy and Council Plan priorities and a range of regional and sub-regional strategies that influence and impact on local issues. They include:

9. **The Community Strategy** - Economic regeneration delivers the jobs theme of the existing Community Strategy, developed by the Dudley Community Partnership (DCP), and will be a key driver for "creating a prosperous and attractive Borough". The DCP established themed partnerships to deliver the priorities set out in the Community Plan. The Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership (EDRP) was established to deliver their Economic Regeneration agenda.

10. **The Council Plan** - Economic Regeneration delivered the Richer Borough Theme of the original Council Plan and delivers the Regeneration Matters agenda of the current Council Plan. Economic Regeneration also underpins and supports key activities delivered through all the other themes of the current Council Plan (environment matters, safety matters, learning matters, caring matters and quality matters).

11. **The Economic Strategy** - The Council's Economic Strategy sets out a 15-20 year vision and focus for economic regeneration activities in the Borough. It recognises the changing national, regional, sub-regional and local strategies and policies which impact on the local economy including the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy, the Black Country Study which provides a 30 year vision of improving the social, physical and environment for the sub-region, the Arc of Opportunity Regeneration Zone Implementation Plan (2005-8) for West Birmingham and the South Black Country and Dudley's Neighbourhood Management Strategy.

12. The Economic Strategy makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the priorities contained within the Dudley Community Strategy, particularly the "Creating a Prosperous Borough" theme, and the Council Plan, principally the Regeneration

Matters theme, and supports other themes such as Environment Matters and Safety Matters.

13. The Economic Strategy brings together, not only the economic regeneration activities delivered by the Council, but also those delivered by a number of partner organisations and these are clearly set out within the Strategy's action plan. The Strategy is produced with the input of a significant number of staff across all Directorates in the Council. It is also subject to wide ranging consultation, both internally and externally, and is formally approved through the Cabinet and full Council. Implementation of the Strategy is monitored by the Economic Development & Regeneration Partnership and scrutinised by the Council's Regeneration, Culture & Adult Education Select Committee.
14. **Directorate and Service Plans** - Economic Regeneration features as a key component of the Directorate of the Urban Environment's Strategic Plan. Each of the service areas within the Economic Regeneration Division produces an annual Service Plan setting out the clear priorities for their respective Sections.
15. **West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (WMRES)** "Delivering Advantage" 2004–2010 - sets out the region's approach to the economic development and regeneration of the West Midlands. The strategy is based on the four objectives or "pillars" that will drive the transformation of the West Midlands:
 - Pillar 1. Developing a diverse and dynamic business base;
 - Pillar 2. Promote a learning and skilful region;
 - Pillar 3. Create the conditions for growth; and
 - Pillar 4. Regenerate communities in the West Midlands.
16. To deliver the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy, resources are targeted through the region's Regeneration Zones, Business Clusters and High Technology Corridor. The Strategy contains an action plan of 45 actions to be delivered by a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector partners across the region.
17. **West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)** - published originally as Regional Planning Guidance 11 (RPG11), sets out the Government's vision for the metropolitan area and neighbouring shire counties. Its vision is for: " an economically successful, outward looking and adaptable region which is rich in culture and environment, where all people, working together, are able to meet their aspirations and needs without prejudicing the quality of life for future generations." The RSS Phase 1 Revision, subject to approval by the Secretary of State, is pivotal to the future role of Dudley Town Centre. Whereas Brierley Hill is proposed as the fourth strategic centre in the Black Country, the RSS Phase1 revision sets out a vision for Dudley whereby its "future renaissance will be founded upon the town's unique tourism and cultural assets and major residential development as well as retail and other appropriate to a non-strategic centre".
18. **The Local Transport Plan (LTP)** - recognises the synergy between economic development, regeneration, housing and transport and the LTP strategies are closely aligned to the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies. It is vital that if the vision for economic growth is to be sustained, the infrastructure is geared to support the

regional aspirations and investment targeted to support regeneration. The shared vision for the LTP is:

- a thriving and sustainable community where people want to live and where business can develop and grow;
- town, city and local centres that are attractive and vibrant;
- clean air and less congested traffic conditions;
- a safer community; and
- equal opportunities for everyone to gain access to services.

19. **West Midlands Regional Visitor Economy Strategy (2004)** - presents a coherent framework for tourism in the West Midlands. A key feature of the strategy is the need to create successful, sustainable destinations. It identifies the need to focus on key destinations and visitor gateways. This strategy identifies the Black Country as an emerging destination which requires regeneration investment. The Black Country Visitor Economy Strategy was developed in 2004 and provides a framework for tourism development. The Strategy identifies the need for a Black Country Partnership to build on the existing Black Country Tourism initiative. It also identifies the need to invest in the 5 key destinations of the Black Country including Dudley Town Centre and Brierley Hill/ Merry Hill.
20. A review of the delivery structure created in the West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy was undertaken in late 2006 which proposed alterations to the organisations responsible for delivering the visitor economy strategy. A 'refresh' of the Strategy will be undertaken in late 2007, identifying priorities for investment.
21. A piece of work is currently being undertaken to take forward the Black Country Visitor Economy Strategy and more generally tourism in the Black Country. The outcomes are due to report in late 2007. An update on the Visitor Economy is also being presented to this Select Committee where further information will be provided.
22. **City Regions** - The government sees the City Regions as being motors for national progress challenging how they can take their economic and social development to a new level. The Council is actively involved in the City Region in the West Midlands through involvement with our regional partners. The City Region's aims include:-
 - delivering jobs and investment and a new strategic global growth opportunity as a key driver for the wider "Midlands" to add to the UK's wealth creation potential; and
 - delivering a new high quality urban environment and quality of life of international standing which encourages diversity, knowledge, creative and vibrant communities. This builds upon the city centre regeneration projects which have been seen across the conurbation but extend this quality into local communities.
23. **Black Country Study** – The Council, along with the Black Country Consortium and its partners, is taking an active role in the Black Country Study, which aims to articulate the Consortium's aspirations as set out in its vision "Looking Forward: The Black Country in 2033". The study is a dynamic project to develop the long-term renaissance of the Black Country and will be critical in shaping the future regeneration of Dudley Borough. The four key objectives of the study are to:

- reverse the trend of people leaving the Black Country;
 - raise income levels;
 - accommodate a more balanced population (achieving parity with the national social grade profile); and
 - create high quality, sustainable environments.
24. The Consortium is leading efforts with partners to prepare a comprehensive Delivery Plan at present. This will highlight the key projects to be undertaken by the private sector, local authorities, Centro, AWM, English Partnerships and other delivery bodies. A detailed 5 year programme and an indicative 10 year programme are now being prepared towards an overall 25 year transformational development strategy.
25. **The “Arc of Opportunity” Regeneration Zone Implementation Plan 2005-8** - The Arc of Opportunity is the largest of the West Midlands Regeneration Zones covering an area stretching in an arc from the western edge of Birmingham city through Sandwell and across areas of central Dudley to Lye. The key aim of the Zone is to link regeneration activity with the areas of greatest need and ensure that resources and policies are coordinated to the best effect. The strategic focus of the plan is underpinned by 3 inter-related themes:
- business;
 - places; and
 - people.
26. **Joint Core Strategy** – Every local authority has to produce a Core Strategy for their Local Development Framework. Due to the work on the Black Country Study, all 4 Black Country Authorities are to adopt a pioneering approach by working together to produce Joint Core Strategies for their Borough's.

Current Regeneration Initiatives in Dudley Town Centre and recent achievements

Dudley Town Centre Area Development Framework

27. In January 2004, £125,000 of Advantage West Midlands funding was secured to prepare a Masterplan for the regeneration of Dudley Town Centre. Following extensive consultation with local retailers, developers, local residents and community groups, an Area Development Framework (ADF) was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in December 2005 identifying 9 opportunity areas for development. Work is now progressing and funding being sought to take forward proposals for specific sites. The potential outputs of implementation of the ADF include; creation of 1,048 residential units, an increase of 2,536 residential population within the town centre, 3104 jobs created, £9.8m of public realm improvements and the proposed development will have an estimated end value of £258m.
28. In November 2004, Dudley Council was invited by ASDA to present the Dudley ADF as a good practice model at the Live, Work and Shop national conference for Local Authority planners in Birmingham, sponsored by ASDA. The Council was also been invited to present the model to Birmingham City Council in October 2005 for the development of their local centres.

29. Two outline applications have been approved by AWM to assist in the land assembly of key sites within the Priory Street and Tower Street Opportunity areas, respectively. A further full application totalling £6.66m (Priory Street, £1.26m; Tower Street, £5.4m) for the purchase of specific land and premises was approved by AWM on the 16th August 2007.
30. Cabinet, on the 13th June 2007, approved the principle of delivering the Dudley Area Development Framework via a Joint Venture approach. Offices are currently working with specialist consultants and in partnership with AWM and English Partnerships to prepare a detailed business case for consideration by Cabinet, which if approved, will lead to the (a) creation of an Arms Length Company to coordinate the regeneration of the 9 opportunity areas and (b) the procurement of a development partner to carry out the development activity itself. An up-dated report and recommendations will be submitted to the meeting of the Cabinet on the 31st October 2007.

Dudley Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

31. The THI is a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant-giving programme to assist in the repair and regeneration of the historic environment within conservation areas in towns and cities. Its aims include:
 - to use built heritage as a stimulant for economic regeneration;
 - to contribute to the sustainability of local economies; and
 - to support the communities that live and work in each project area, for example, by bringing vacant floor space in historic buildings back into use, whether for public, commercial or residential functions, or by making a historic area more attractive as a location for business or as a tourist destination.
32. The Council has been successful in securing a grant of £1.95M from the HLF subject to securing match funding of at least £2M. The Council has contributed £150,000 and a full application is currently in preparation to Advantage West Midlands for the balance
33. The THI is proposed to operate on the basis of the Council administering, issuing and monitoring a grant scheme to property owners by drawing on the 'Common Fund'. Applicants will apply for grant assistance based on predetermined eligible criteria and percentage grant rate. It is predicted the Dudley Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) project will start in 2008 and run until 2013 and is expected to bring around £8 million investment to Dudley town centre over the next 5 years.

Castle Hill

34. A revised outline planning application was submitted by St. Modwen's Properties plc and approved by Development Control Committee in June 2005 to develop a 65.7 hectare site at Castle Hill Dudley (including the Freightliner site). The application includes the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Dudley Zoo and Castle complex including a new origins attraction, residential development of 65 dwellings, a garden

centre, heritage retail, a fitness and leisure complex, a hotel and a public house, integration of a metro stop, improved junction works and integration with Dudley town centre, and a revitalised woodland walk. This development, with a potential end value of £100 million, is seen a vital component in the regeneration of Dudley town centre and a milestone in the further development of Dudley's tourism offer.

35. The Council has been successful in securing £5.05m from Advantage West Midlands. Outputs directly attributed to AWM funding include the creation of 673 full-time jobs, 60 full-time jobs safeguarded, 639 people assisted to get a job (employment support), 25.12 hectares of brownfield land reclaimed; and £33.35 million private sector investment levered (£31.56m capital; £1.79m revenue funding from Castle Hill Dudley Ltd (CHDL).

Town Centre Management

36. To support the increased activities for economic regeneration projects and proposed developments in the four principle town centres the Department has recently been restructured to meet increasing demands.
37. Two new Regeneration Officers have been appointed to assist with the development of town centre Masterplans, project implementation strategies and the project management of major schemes and developments as stated within this report. Regeneration Officers also assist with external funding applications and management of steering groups for major projects.
38. Since April 2006 there have been 4 Town Centre Managers in post covering the 4 principal town centres. Each Town Centre Manager is working with internal and external partners to deliver environmental enhancement and crime reduction schemes for each town centre and assisting with change management issues that are associated with major improvement and development schemes. Town centre managers are responsible for staging events which promote the town centres and increase footfalls. They also bring forward various environmental projects which without their intervention would probably never happen.
39. In that time 17 events have been held in Dudley including the Christmas lights switch-on and a Continental Market and the following environmental improvements have been achieved:
 - Street furniture including benches, bollards, guard rails and bins have been re-painted;
 - Problems and issues surrounding public toilets are being addressed;
 - Various derelict buildings around the town centre including 74 King Street have been re-secured;
 - Weeds are being removed from footpaths around the town centre;
 - A 'Don't Litter Dudley' Campaign has been launched;
 - Funding has been secured to replace the historical interpretation panels around the town centre;
 - Neglected areas around the town have been cleared; these include land in Trindle Road, land in Court Passage and loading bays around the town;
 - Fingerposts have been corrected;

- Meetings are being held to address traffic problems in Market Place, Wolverhampton Street and Union Street; and
 - Buildings purchased for the Masterplan are being managed
40. The Town Centre Manager has also been working with local charities such as Connexions, DREC, No Smoking Campaign and Dudley Stroke Association to bring events into the town centres to educate the public and promote good causes. She has also worked with the police and the Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership to reduce town centre crime. In Dudley the TCM has been asked to chair the monthly Police and Community Team meetings which bring together residents, businesses and key stakeholders to discuss their concerns regarding crime and anti-social behaviour across the town centre.

Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership Initiative

41. Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership Initiative was launched in August 2003 in Brierley Hill, Halesowen, Merry Hill and Stourbridge. During 2004 the initiative was expanded into Sedgley, Kingswinford, & Netherton. At present, membership of the Radio Link is 74 members. Partnership membership stands at 108 and there are 29 companies who are members of both the Radio Link and Partnership. Encouragingly, the Partnership was the first crime partnership:
- with a Crown Prosecution Service board member;
 - to cover a whole borough;
 - to have an intranet of 5 computers in 5 centres to access crime and criminal activity; and
 - in the West Midlands to be awarded the Safer Shopper Award (business crime safety standard) by the newly formed Action Against Business Crime Initiative launched by the Home Office in 2004.
42. The Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership Initiative has been awarded:
- best practice for Crime Partnership by GOWM;
 - best practice Crime Partnership by the Association of Town Centre Management; and
 - the West Midlands regional winner for the Community Safety Award.
43. A new business crime database has been commissioned that not only works between the 5 current centres in the borough but links to 10 city & town centres across the UK to track travelling business crime across the country. Future links will be established in 2006/7 to an additional 7 local centres in the Borough.
44. A major new initiative is currently being developed through the Council's Intranet broadband for a failsafe radio link system that can communicate when all radio and telephone lines are down and can be used for implementing emergency plans, acts of terrorism or major criminal activity. It is being coordinated through the Directorate of the Urban Environment's IT section and involves all partners in the Business Crime Partnership.

Strata - Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve and the Seven Sisters Mine

45. Strata will be a new visitor attraction linking the Seven Sisters Mines and underground canal tunnels at Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve to Castle Hill, Dudley. At present, the project is part of the Black Country's bid to the Big Lottery Funds Living Landmarks: The People's Millions initiative – an opportunity for one transformational project within the UK to win up to £50million.
46. In August 2006, A Million People: Black Country as an Urban Park was one of six short-listed projects who were successful in obtaining a development grant from the Big Lottery Fund of £500,000. The Stage 2 application was submitted by the Black Country Consortium on behalf of the four Black Country local authorities and the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust on May 31st 2007. A two day assessment was undertaken at the end of June by the Big Lottery Fund and the partnership will be informed during the middle of October whether we are successful in moving forward to the televised public vote.
47. The winner of the televised vote, in conjunction with ITV will win a grant of up to £50million. The Black Country has requested a total grant of £49.3million, with the Strata project being allocated in the region of £18million. If the project is selected to move forward to the televised vote, it will take place over the weekend of the 7th – 10th December 2007.
48. A separate paper on Strata is being presented to the Working Group on Strata on the 29th October and will provide further detailed information on the Strata project and the bids associated with it.

Priory Park

49. £3.4 m of ODPM funding, secured through the Liveability Pilot Project, and £372,000 of Big Lottery Funding through Transforming Your Space is being supplemented by Section 106 and other grant monies to improve public parks and green spaces within the Borough, reform Council Services and build community capacity through greater involvement of the Friends of the Parks Groups, comprising of local residents. A Local Involvement Programme, with dedicated officers from Groundwork Black Country, are working with Friends of the Parks Groups to develop their skills and abilities to be self sustaining in their aim to improve their local park or green space. Physical improvements are being undertaken based on long term Master Plans developed for the participating parks which are based on public consultation and the views of the Parks Groups. Within Priory Park this has resulted in spend of £150,000 on an extension to the play area, a new multi-use games area and tennis courts. The Directorate's Landscape Architect is currently coordinating a Stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Parks for People programme for the restoration of Priory Park Ruins.
50. Alternative methods of grounds maintenance, using trainees in horticulture, are being explored through a Groundforce programme in Priory parks; the trainees gain qualifications and work experience through secondments to the Council's Greencare team. A high percentage of trainees then secure permanent employment. Through reciprocal arrangements with Greencare, their permanent workforce also receives

training to develop the skill base of employees. The respective Friends groups are involved with the project management of this element of the project.

FINANCE

51. There are significant financial implications arising for the Council as a result of the various initiatives and programmes described above. A considerable amount of external funding has already been approved, or is being sought, with matching Council or other resources being applied where affordable.
52. Each individual strategy or development programme should be financially justifiable, and following project appraisal will be reported to Cabinet recommending inclusion in the Council's capital programme or revenue budget where appropriate.

LAW

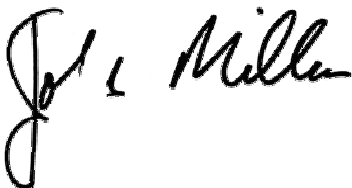
53. The matters contained in the report cover a range of the Council's statutory powers, but generally rely on Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, which enables the Council to do anything which is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic social or environmental wellbeing of its area.

EQUAL IMPACT

54. This work has been conducted in full accordance with the Council's equality and diversity policies and should in no way have any prejudicial impact on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and/or other relevant groups. The needs of children and young people are considered in any planning and implementation activities.

RECOMMENDATION

55. It is recommended that the Committee note the significant progress made in regenerating Dudley Town Centre



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Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

Dudley Area Development Framework (December 2005)
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=20794>

Draft Phase One Revision, The Black Country Study, Examination in Public, 9th to 18th
January 2007, Report of the Panel (March 2007)
<http://www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk/page.asp?PageRef=88>

Economic Strategy for Dudley Borough 2007/08
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/business/regeneration/economic-strategy--intelligence>

Dudley Borough Community Strategy 2005-2020
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=2301>

Dudley Council Plan 2007
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=1630>