

**Meeting of the Cabinet – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

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

**Public consultation on the Halesowen Area Action Plan ‘Options’ stage document**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To seek Cabinet approval for the Halesowen Area Action Plan (AAP) Options document to be used as a basis for statutory public consultation during July 2010 (copy available in Members Room and on the Committee Management Information System (CMIS)).

**Background**

2. The Council’s existing Dudley Unitary Development Plan 2005 includes a chapter relating to Halesowen, and contains policies and proposals that set the context for the physical development of land in the Borough until the end of 2011. There is therefore a need to produce a new planning policy document for Halesowen Town Centre for 2012 onwards, and an Area Action Plan is considered the most suitable means of achieving this.
3. The Halesowen Area Action Plan will form part of Dudley Borough’s wider ‘Local Development Framework’. It will provide a vision for what we want to achieve in the Town Centre by 2026, and through its policies and site allocations, it will set out how that vision will be delivered.
4. The Halesowen Area Action Plan will therefore be a planning policy document against which decisions on planning applications will be made for the period 2012 to 2026. It will consider 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 retail core of the Town Centre is, thereby guiding retail and non-retail development to appropriate locations.
  - Whether any new or enhanced infrastructure is needed to service the Town Centre, such as public spaces, streets or green infrastructure.
  - What principles should guide new development, particularly in terms of urban design.
5. The Halesowen Area Action Plan will need to conform with and deliver the requirements of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the emerging Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country (JCS). It should be noted that the new coalition Government has expressed an intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. However, current advice is that Regional Spatial Strategies

will continue to form part of local planning authority development plans until such time as the Government formally takes action to rename them

6. These more strategic documents highlight Brierley Hill to be the strategic centre for Dudley Borough, and identify Halesowen as a more locally focussed town centre which will perform an important role in day to day shopping and other town centre related activity. The Joint Core Strategy contains a number of spatial objectives including requirements for 'a network of vibrant and attractive town, district and local centres', and 'a high quality environment'.
7. Following on from and informed by earlier stage information gathering, this Halesowen Area Action Plan 'Options' stage document sets out a preferred vision and set of objectives for the town centre – there being an objective for each of the following themes:
  - Regeneration
  - Land Use
  - Public Realm
  - Nature Conservation
  - Historic Conservation
  - Transport
  - Urban Design
8. Under these themes, a variety of Halesowen town centre issues are identified, together with some preferred (and where appropriate alternative) options and or proposed policies in terms of how these issues may best be resolved.
9. The planning process requires that the community and other stakeholders are engaged in the preparation of development plan documents such as area action plans – hence the need for this 'Options' stage document and its subsequent formal public consultation period during July of this year. The Halesowen Area Action Plan 'Options' stage document therefore necessarily includes a number of questions by which stakeholders and consultees can comment on the contents of the document and as to whether anything additional is required.
10. The next stage in the process will be to prepare the Halesowen Area Action Plan 'Publication' stage document – this being informed by responses received from the 'Options' stage consultation and by other evidence gathered. The 'Publication' stage document will be subject to public consultation during early 2011 prior to submission to the Secretary of State in June of that year. The submitted plan will then be subject to a formal examination in public by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State, with subsequent adoption by the Council anticipated during July 2012. The Halesowen Area Action Plan will then form part of Dudley Borough's statutory planning framework.

## **Finance**

11. The Halesowen Area Action Plan will be funded from existing budgets and resources dedicated to the production of Development Plan Documents and other such statutory planning documents.

**Law**

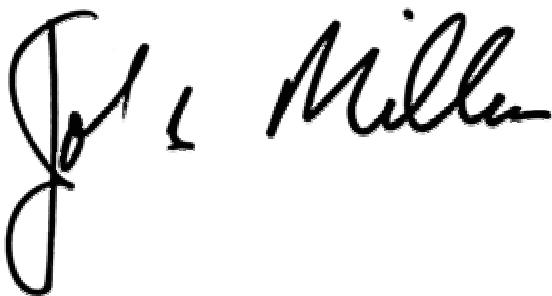
- 12. The production of the Halesowen Area Action Plan is necessary in order to update and replace the Halesowen chapter of the Dudley Unitary Development Plan 2005 (UDP) – the UDP having a plan period to the end of 2011.
- 13. This Area Action Plan for Halesowen will deliver those regeneration requirements for the town as set out in the emerging Black Country Joint Core Strategy. This Area Action Plan is a Development Plan Document and has to be produced in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
- 14. In addition 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**

- 15. The Halesowen Area Action Plan will set the planning framework for the development of Halesowen Town Centre up to 2026. The Area Action Plan 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 the communities in the area. 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.

**Recommendation**

- 16. That the Cabinet approves the Halesowen Area Action Plan (AAP) Options document as a basis for public consultation.



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**J. B. Millar**  
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**List of Background Papers**

Halesowen Area Action Plan (AAP) Options document – available in Members Room

Black Country Joint Core Strategy (Publication Stage, and Proposed Changes to the Publication)

<http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/>