

**Halesowen Area Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 management issues. The Town Centre Working Group of Members and Officers last met on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009 to consider issues affecting the regeneration of the Town Centre. The Head of Executive Support will provide a verbal update on the outcomes of the Working Group at this Committee.

**The Town Centre Development**

3. Following the redevelopment and successful opening of the Cornbow Centre and Bus Station in late 2008, attention is being given via the Town Centre Working Group to improving the street scene and to further regeneration projects in the town centre. This is being considered in 2 stages; firstly a series of 'quick win' environmental improvements, and secondly the development of a strategy for improvements to town centre public realm which is expected to include improvements to key gateways, town centre lighting and public spaces. The results of this are expected to inform the Area Action Plan for Halesowen, which is due to be adopted as part of the Council's Local Development Framework in March 2012. Following the consideration of the emerging proposals for these improvements at the Town Centre Working Group of on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009 a verbal update will be provided to the Committee.

**Town Centre Management Issues**

4. Issues addressed by the Town Centre Manager since the report to this Committee at its meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009 have included;

- Dealing with the consequences of the closure of a number of stores, including Woolworths, in the town centre
- Carrying out a survey of retailers regarding the current economic climate and the effect the Council's annual events programme events has had on trading
- Liason with Sandvik Ltd and Halesowen Chamber of Trade over sponsorship of planters in the town centre

### **Pool Road Car Park**

5. In the last 6 years a significant amount of necessary repair work and improvement work has been undertaken on Pool Road car park. There have been 2 refurbishment contracts on the car park lifts, the first being essential repair of the lift winding mechanism and the second refurbishment of the lift cars, landing doors and frames and upgrading the controls to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. The car park decks and stairwells have, over the course of the last 4 years, been completely rewired and relit. Last year the CCTV system was updated and extended to address safety concerns of customers and work has been undertaken to enable the future securing of the upper levels of the car park to reduce anti- social behaviour and vandalism of the structure itself.
6. At present next year's structural programme has not been developed however priorities for this car park are the securing of a contract to effect the night time closure of the car park to prevent anti-social behaviour. This will follow consultation with other major stakeholders such as the Leisure Centre and Cornbow Hall for both of whom this is a well used "out of hours" facility. There will also be work to include the rewiring and relighting of the exit spiral (work on this was deferred until after completion of the new multi storey car park due to pressure on parking space in Halesowen during the construction period and the fact that work on the spiral will require phased closure to complete safely.)

### **Finance**

7. 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 Economic Regeneration Division.

### **Law**

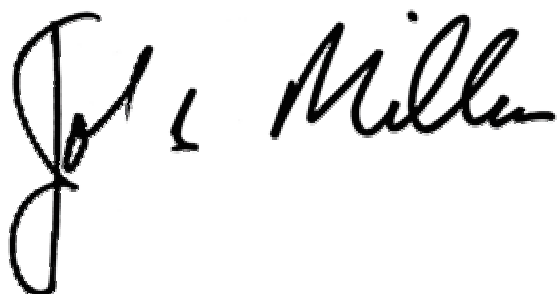
8. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of any part of the Borough.

### **Equality Impact**

9. The proposal contained within this report complies with the Councils equal opportunities policy.
10. 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**

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



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**John B Millar**

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### **List of Background Papers**

**None**