

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE – 31st JANUARY 2005

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

STOURBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the progress of the preparation of Stourbridge Area Town Centre Master Plan which will form part of a future Area Action Plan for Stourbridge Town Centre

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the preparation of Masterplan and Development frameworks is already well advanced in Dudley Town Centre and Brierley Hill, where an earlier start has been made possible by the availability of external funding from Advantage West Midlands and the European Regional Development Fund.
- 2.2 Such funding is unavailable for a similar study for Stourbridge due to its location outside the Regeneration Zone and Objective 2 areas; however, funding has now been identified for such a study.
- 2.3 The study area is shown on Appendix A to this report, and includes the town centre and the adjacent land to the north
- 2.4 In line with good practice established for the commissioning of previous studies, a project board has been set up to oversee the preparation of this study, coordinated by the Directorate of the Urban Environment's Town Centres Development Team. This project board is comprised of officers with specialist experience in planning, urban design, transportation, built conservation, housing, property and economic regeneration, and is charged with ensuring that the consultants are appointed on the basis of an appropriate brief and deliver to that brief.
- 2.5 Tenders were invited in November 2004 on the basis of a defined project brief and timescale, however, the legislation relating to this work is new and is to a large degree untested in practice. As a result, tenderers were asked to make proposals on how they would deliver an Area Action Plan in compliance with the new legislation and their responses to this were included in the tender evaluation process in order that the Council could benefit from developing expertise in this area
- 2.6 The study is required to provide the following;
- a Planning Policy Framework to allow the achievement of a land use framework that fulfils the Council's aspirations
 - an economic 'health check' and examination of the condition and potential improvement for the investment in the town

- Re-appraisal of the two Conservation Areas within the Study Area as an opportunity to drive imaginative conservation-led regeneration where appropriate
- an assessment of the provision of car parking required and an analysis of road junction capacity issues, particularly with regard to the effect on the A491
- the provision of a new integrated transport hub
- opportunities to 'calm' the ring road and provide better transport connection to the town centre
- opportunities to realign the ring road
- the provision of attractive calmed traffic movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles throughout the town centre, taking account of access and servicing needs
- improvements to the quality of the town centre's streets to provide benefits to both motorists and pedestrians
- improvements to the edges of the town that face the ring road in order to create sense of arrival and welcome to the town
- maximising the opportunities provided by the River Stour and Stourbridge canal
- an implementation strategy to assist with the delivery of the above objectives and with identification of funding
- As now required by the legislation referred to in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2, a Sustainability Appraisal and the extent to which the plan will achieve social, environmental and economic objectives, in order to ensure sustainable development

2.7 Tenders were opened for the study on the 6th December 2004, and following an assessment of price and quality criteria, the commission was awarded to David Lock Associates. In addition to submitting the best combination of price and quality tenders for this work, this firm has provided a very high quality of service to the Council on previous occasions. The most recent of these was the production of the Area Development Framework for Dudley Town Centre, where this firm led the specialist consultant team comprising transportation, conservation and property advisors which is now proposed for the study which is the subject of this report.

2.8 The need to carry out consultation on the proposals contained in the framework is a statutory requirement of the new legislation. Equally important however has been the need to engage with those likely to be affected by or have an influence on the proposals from an early stage in the project. To assist with this, a Developers' Forum has been set up in order to share information about regeneration initiatives in the town centre and to act as a consultee on the proposals emerging from the study. This Forum, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, is attended by a number of organisations with development interests in the town centre, and its meetings are timed to fit with key stages in the study.

3.0 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 That the contents of this report be noted and that the Committee support the work of officers in developing the Stourbridge Town Centre Area Action Plan
- 3.2 That further reports be submitted on the Stourbridge Town Centre Area Action Plan in due course

4.0 FINANCE

- 4.1 The cost of preparing the Stourbridge Town Centre Area Action Plan will be met from existing revenue budgets.

5.0 ULAW

- 5.1 Local Development Documents are prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 5.2 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do any thing which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic/social or environmental well-being of any part of the borough.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 The proposals in this report accord with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

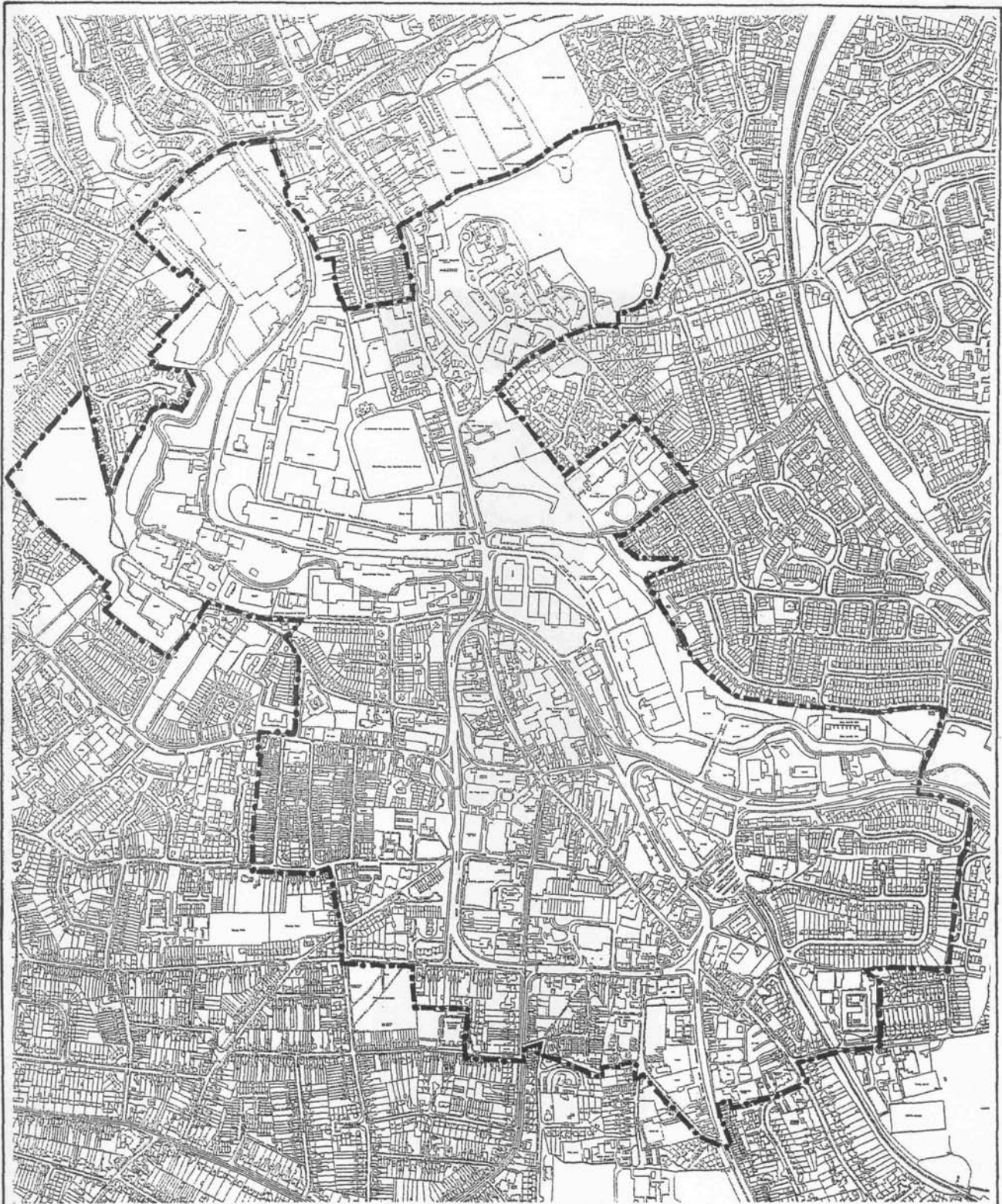
- 7.1 That the proposals set out in paragraph 3.1 and 3.2 of this report be approved



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Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

- 1 Consultants brief – Stourbridge Town Centre Area Action Plan
- 2 Revised Dudley Unitary Development Plan
- 3 Planning Policy Statement 12 – Local Development Frameworks



Title: Town Development Framework: Area of Scope

Location: Stourbridge

Scale: NTS

Prepared by: LJT


Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council

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