

Halesowen Area Committee-11th November 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 14th 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 13th October, 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.

Regeneration Issues

Halesowen In Bloom/Environmental Improvements.

3. The Halesowen Town Centre Working Group has overseen the preparation of proposals for improvements to public realm in and around the town centre, a feasibility study on the opportunity for a 'Halesowen in Bloom' initiative, and a series of events with an environmental theme.
4. The first stage of work has been completed on a study for proposals for improvements to the public realm and includes proposals for improvements to key gateways, town centre lighting and public spaces. This study is identifying opportunities for environmental improvements, will set priorities for action on the basis of short, medium and long term projects and will assist in allocating financial resources as and when they become available.
5. The Working Group have asked for more detail to be prepared for proposals in 2 areas of the town centre and these were considered by the Working Group and In Bloom steering group on the 13th October. The two areas selected were in the vicinity of St Johns Church, and for the development and enhancement of the Husky Dog Island/Hagley Street/ Somers Square area.
6. As part of the research for the In Bloom initiative, partners and elected members attended a visit to the Friends of Broadwaters Park in Kidderminster on the 23rd September as an example of an In Bloom Project / public realm relevant to emerging proposals for Halesowen. The partnership approach to developing the "in

bloom" initiative is continuing with partners from Sandvik, Asda, Vale Retail and the Chamber of Commerce

7. The World Rivers week of events took place during October half term week, with Lidl secured as a new partner.
8. The Flag for Halesowen Competition is underway and submissions have been invited before the closing date in mid November 2009.

Transportation issues

9. The Grange Island safety scheme is proceeding according to programme. At the time of writing the scheme is nearing completion
10. The Council's Landscape Architects have started work on the design for the surface using themes local to Halesowen to help to mark this gateway location. A second future phase comprising a piece of sculpture using, perhaps, references to Halesowen Abbey, the Stour and Clent Hills and the surrounding countryside, would depend on the availability of future finance. This could include imaginative lighting, helping to give a sense of place to the gateway to Halesowen from the A456.
11. It is proposed to display an explanation of the ideas at Halesowen Library and to post the display on the Council's website between 12th- 19th November 2009 following a report and display at this Committee. A comment sheet will be available to seek the views of residents.
12. The Area Committee agreed at its meeting on the 3rd September 2009 to recommend to the Cabinet Member improvements to 4 pedestrian crossings between the Grange and Hayley Green islands. This is stated in the minutes. There is ambiguity however, over which additional pedestrian crossings were referred to as when the Area Committee originally considered the whole Grange proposal on the 4th September 2008 the minute refers to "high profile road markings needed to be installed at the four crossing points in the vicinity of the A456/B4186 junction for the safety of pedestrians". It has been brought to our attention that the intention of the Committee was also to include the 4 crossings to the west of Hayley Green Island on the A456 leading to the boundary with Worcestershire.

Town Centre Management Issues

13. Since the last report on this subject to the Area Committee on the 3rd September 2009, the Town Centre Management service has no subsequent events to report on.

Proposed events:

14. Events currently being planned include:
 - Christmas Light Switch On
 - Preparations are under way for the St Georges Day Celebrations that are due to be held in Halesowen

Finance

15. There are currently limited resources available for public realm developments which could contribute to an 'in Bloom' initiative. All other activities and developments detailed within this reported are funded from resources held by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.
16. As detailed in paragraph 6 of this report, a partnership approach is being developed in order to potentially fund a Halesowen in Bloom initiative.

Law

17. 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, or the social or environmental wellbeing of any part of the Borough.

Equality Impact

18. The proposal contained within this report complies with the Councils Equal Opportunities Policy.
19. 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

That the Committee

- a. notes the progress of development in Halesowen Town Centre

and that

- b. subject to the funding being available, the Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended to include the 4 crossings to the west of Hayley Green island within the Grange Island scheme.



John B Millar
Director of the Urban Environment

Contact Officers: Michelle Clare
Telephone: 01384 815428
Email: michelle.clare@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers: None