

**Meeting of the Cabinet – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

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

**Stourbridge Area Action Plan Draft Options Report**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Cabinet of the ongoing work on the Stourbridge Area Action Plan and to seek Cabinet approval for the Stourbridge Area Action Plan Draft Options report to be used (February 2010) as a basis for public consultation.

**Background**

2. Within the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Stourbridge is classified as a non-strategic town centre for the Dudley Borough. The future regeneration of Stourbridge Town Centre and the surrounding urban area has for some time been at the forefront of local planning policy within the Borough and the Black Country and the Area Action Plan is being prepared to drive and shape this regeneration.
3. The Area Action Plan (AAP) will guide new investment into Stourbridge town centre over the coming years and will set out where new shops, offices and homes should be located. It will also set out where community and leisure facilities, transport infrastructure and new public spaces are needed to support that growth.
4. In preparing the AAP Options report, the Council is mindful of work that has already been done, in particular the Lock's report in 2006, which is part of the evidence base to this document. The Council has already undertaken informal consultation with key stakeholders, including major landowners in Stourbridge, Stourbridge town centre traders, developers, environmental and interest groups and Dudley Council officers. This has helped to identify some of the key challenges and issues currently facing the Stourbridge Area and potential regeneration improvements needed to help strengthen the town centre.
5. The Stourbridge AAP Options report sets out a series of options in order to achieve regeneration in Stourbridge town centre. The Options report has also been informed by evidence gathering which has been undertaken since June 2008. This evidence base has been re-worked into a 'Baseline Report'

which can be read in conjunction with the Options Document. The options document will be available to view in the members room.

6. The key role of the AAP is to provide a policy document that will facilitate the development of Stourbridge by helping to identify key area based regeneration priorities, stimulate regeneration, protect areas particularly sensitive to change, identify environmental improvement issues and development opportunity areas.
7. The period of statutory consultation is due to begin on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February and run for six weeks until Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2010. This will involve the public and stakeholders being consulted on the Options document for the development and regeneration of Stourbridge town centre.
8. The Options report will be available to view at the reception areas at 3 St James's Road Dudley, Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge and Dudley Council Plus, as well as all main local libraries and on the Council's website. Following this consultation, a 'Draft Publication Stage document' will be prepared based on the responses received and the evidence gathered. This will be subject to public consultation towards the end of 2010 prior to submission to the Secretary of State in the spring of 2011. The submitted plan will be subject to a formal examination in public by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State.
9. It is anticipated that the Stourbridge AAP will be adopted in April 2012 and it will form part of Dudley's statutory planning framework.
10. Work on the Halesowen Area Action Plan is due to start in the late Spring of 2010 and will be subject to the same level of public consultation and engagement.

### **Finance**

- 11 The Stourbridge 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 an AAP for Stourbridge is necessary in order to deliver retail and housing-led regeneration as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy. This AAP 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.

13 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.

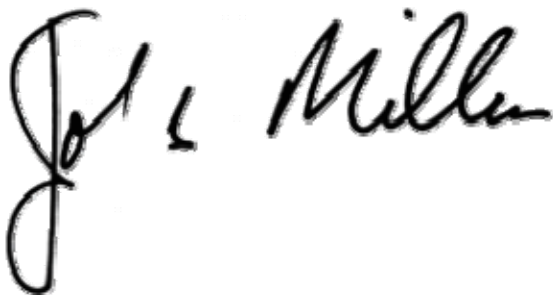
### **Equality Impact**

14 The Stourbridge AAP will set the planning framework for the development of the Stourbridge area at least up to 2026. The AAP 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**

It is recommended that:-

- Cabinet note the work being undertaken on the Stourbridge Area Action Plan (AAP).
- Cabinet approve the Stourbridge AAP Draft Options report (February 2010) as a basis for public consultation.



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**J. B. Millar**  
**Director of the Urban Environment**

Contact Officer: Robin Whitehouse  
Telephone: 01384 81 6810  
Email: [robin.whitehouse@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:robin.whitehouse@dudley.gov.uk)

Stourbridge Area Action Plan draft Options report (February 2010)

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### **List of Background Papers**

Locks report (2006)