

Halesowen Area Committee – 3rd September 2009

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on progress in delivering the Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan.

Background

2. Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre was identified as 1 of the 5 priority district and local centres for regeneration in the 2005 'Local and District Centres Review' approved by Cabinet in 2006. This Review measured the performance of each of the 16 district and local centres against set criteria. The 5 centres identified as a priority in the Review were Shell Corner, Cradley/Windmill Hill, Pensnett, Lye and Quarry Bank.
3. The Council's intention was to develop Regeneration Strategies for the priority centres to guide the renewal of these areas. Due to the urgency in starting the regeneration process in these areas, it was decided that these Regeneration Strategies would be Council approved documents and not formal plans through the Local Development Framework because this would have entailed a lengthy approval process. For example the Halesowen Area Action Plan, on which work is due to commence in September 2009 is not programmed for adoption until July 2012.
4. The Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan was subject to an extensive consultation process with the local community and partner organisations and was approved by Cabinet in September 2007.
5. The Area Committee has requested that progress reports be submitted in relation to those actions identified in the Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan. The actions identified in the Cradley/Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan are phased into short-term options (1-2 years), medium term options (2-5 years) and long-term options (6-10 years).
6. The Cradley Working Group was formed to oversee the implementation of the Cradley/Windmill Hill Regeneration Plan. The Working Group was approved by the Halesowen Area Committee on 12th March 2008 and was reconvened at the 1st 2009 July Halesowen Area Committee. The Working Group has met on a number of occasions and received reports on the progress of the delivery of the Regeneration Plan.

7. The main focus for the Cradley Working Group has been to progress the implementation of the short-term options within the Regeneration Plan, of which 40% are almost complete. These include £30,000 capital funding secured by Dudley Council to undertake the following actions which were implemented in June/July 2009:-
 - Gateway signage on the boundaries of the local centre.
 - Resurfacing and remarking of the road area around the Gateway signage to emphasise awareness of entering the local centre.
 - Resurfacing and improving the Talbot St Public Right of Way.
8. Outstanding work which will be completed during August 2009 includes the installation of a pedestrian handrail along Talbot St Right-of-Way and erecting signage to direct traffic to Public Car Parks in the local centre.
9. Work is also being progressed on a number of medium term options including the following:-

- Foredraft Street Development Site

The Developers Brief for the development site identified as land at Foredraft Street is being undertaken by Colin Buchanan consultants who are currently consulting on the final draft. Once the Brief is agreed by all Council departments, the Council will then consult with local residents and the Working Group on the proposals and before it is finalised.

- LIFT Scheme- Methodist Church Site

The Primary Care Trust (PCT) has identified the centre as an area in which they would like to see a LIFT Health and Social Care Centre and the Chief Executive of Dudley Infracare Ltd has attended a number of meetings of the Working Group in order to inform Members of the progress in identifying sites.

Initial feasibility works have been conducted in relation to a number of sites but has thus far been unsuccessful as a result of issues around site size, and development constraints, including highways issues and historic buildings. Work is continuing in conjunction with Dudley Infracare Ltd to identify suitable sites. The PCT has confirmed its ongoing commitment to the development of this facility in the area.

Finance

10. 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

11. 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 and environmental well being of its area.

Equality Impact

12. This work has been conducted in full accordance with the Council's equality and diversity policies and should in no way have any prejudicial impact on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and/or other relevant groups. The Cradley Regeneration Plan will seek to regenerate the local centre for adults, children and young people alike, hence promoting equal opportunities for all.

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that the Committee notes the progress of regeneration work in Cradley/Windmill Hill local centre.



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List of Background Papers

1. Centres and Retail – District and Local Centres Review February 2006
2. Cradley/Windmill Hill local Centre Regeneration Plan July 2007