

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE – 19th JUNE 2006

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

STOURBRIDGE INFORMATION GATHERING EXERCISE

Purpose

1. To advise the Committee on the preparation and progress of an information gathering exercise to support the future development and regeneration of Stourbridge town centre.
2. This exercise will be carried out separately to the Stourbridge Area Action Plan, the progress of which was reported to the Committee on 20 March 2006, as the issues to be discussed are not planning related rather they are more Town Management and regeneration initiative focused.

Background

3. Residents and other local stakeholders in Stourbridge have requested that their views on the existing and future role of Stourbridge town centre are heard and reviewed.
4. The information gathering exercise will seek the views of the local community and other stakeholders on their perceptions of the existing town centre environment and opportunities for future enhancements.
5. The results will be analysed and published to raise awareness to the local community and other stakeholders of the deliverability of the findings and techniques for enabling positive change. Feedback of the results will also provide an opportunity for the Council to present an update of any significant longer term proposals that are currently being developed which will impact on the town centre.
6. The results of the exercise will provide useful evidence which will support the development of the Stourbridge Area Action Plan, the progress of which has been reported to this Committee on a number of previous occasions. The exercise will not however form part of the formal statutory planning process.
7. A strategy for preparation and implementation of the information gathering process is currently being prepared in accordance with the Council's 'How to Consult' document, which is a practical toolkit to assist in undertaking consultation activities and the draft 'Statement of Community Involvement' required as a part of the Local Development Framework.

8. A wide section of the local community and other stakeholders will be reached through a variety of consultation techniques. Members of Cabinet and Stourbridge Area Committee and officers comprising the Corporate Board will be invited to attend a briefing session which is planned for July 2006 which will set out details of the marketing/ publicity strategy, stakeholders and proposals for involvement.
9. The timetable for implementing the Stourbridge information gathering exercise is as follows:

July 06	Briefing outlining the purpose of the information gathering exercise and strategy report to Cabinet and Stourbridge Area Committee Members and the Corporate Board.
September 06	Promotion of the information gathering process to the local community and other stakeholders.
October/ November 06	Commencement of the information gathering exercise to take place over a 6 week period. A variety of consultation techniques will be used to involve as many stakeholders as possible. Consultation techniques are likely to include dissemination of a questionnaire, discussion with stakeholder groups and a manned exhibition in the town centre for a week.
29 January 06	Presentation of preliminary findings of the information gathering exercise to Stourbridge Area Committee. The Committee will also be advised of the methodology for disseminating the final results of the exercise to the local community.
20 March 07	Presentation of the final conclusions of the information gathering process to Stourbridge Area Committee
March 07	Dissemination of the final conclusions of the information gathering exercise to the local community and other stakeholders.

Finance

10. The cost of preparing the Stourbridge information gathering exercise will be met from existing revenue budgets.

Law

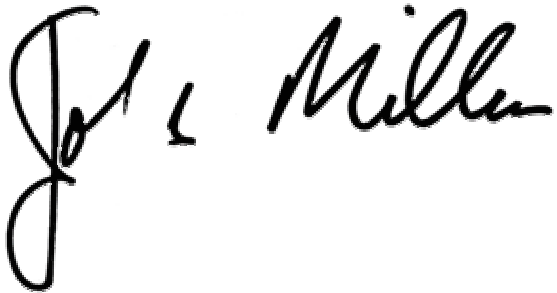
11. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of any part of the Borough.

Equality Impact

12. The proposals set out in this report accord with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.
13. The information gathering exercise will offer the opportunity to engage all sectors of the community including children and young people.

Recommendations

14. That the Committee notes and supports the contents of this report.
15. That reports be submitted to future meetings of the Stourbridge Area Committee to:
 - (a) present the preliminary findings of the information gathering exercise; and
 - (b) present the final conclusions of the information gathering exercise.



John B Millar
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Background Papers

- 16 'How to Consult' (April 2004) Dudley MBC
- 17 'Draft Statement of Community Involvement' (March 2006) Dudley MBC
- 18 Report to Stourbridge Area Committee (20 March 2006) 'Stourbridge Town Centre Masterplan (Area Action Plan)'