

**Halesowen Area Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009**

**Report of the Director of Urban Environment**

**Halesowen Town Centre Development**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Committee on progress with regard to physical developments taking place in Halesowen Town Centre.

**Background**

2. At the 14<sup>th</sup> 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. Over the lifetime of the development period, officers will continue to liaise with Vale Retail, CENTRO/WMPTA and the Police to ensure building works are carried out and information disseminated to the public in the most efficient and effective way. The Town Centre Working Group of Members and Officers last met on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009 to consider issues affecting the regeneration of the Town Centre. The Head of Executive and Support will provide a verbal update on the outcomes of the progress meetings and Working Group at this Committee.

**The Town Centre Development**

3. The opening of the Asda Store successfully took place on 24<sup>th</sup> November with the bus station proposed for opening on the 14<sup>th</sup> December at the time of the writing of this report.

Together with road improvements, this multi-million-pound transformation has brought together three major projects – each of which on their own would be a significant undertaking for any town- within 18 month period.

All this will create an even better place for people to visit and shop.

The Town Centre Working Group are now looking at ways of improving the street scene and further regeneration projects in the town centre to help complement the new development proposals.

### **Town Centre Management Issues**

4. Against the background of the various major regeneration projects currently taking place in Halesowen it is still very much the case of business as usual. As previously reported, Town Centre Management has an ongoing entertainment and activities programme taking place in Somers Square.

#### **Future Town Centre Activities and Events**

##### **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November: Halesowen's Christmas Lights Switch On Event**

After a fun filled day of entertainment from 96.4FM BRMB and live music from gospel choir and the Commandments soul group with a fun fair throughout the town, Mayor Councillor Ray Burston, Senior representatives from Sandvik Ltd together with the Australian soap star Daniel O'Connor switched the Town Centre Christmas lights on accompanied by a superb fireworks display. This event was very well attended and received excellent press coverage.

##### **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 Annual Christmas Light Switch on**

Mayor Councillor Ray Burston and representatives from Sandvik Ltd were joined by hundreds of school children for the grand unveiling of the Sandvik Ltd sponsored tree in Halesowen Town Centre, on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December. Bringing the festive sound of Christmas carols accompanied by their brass bands: Creating the true Christmas feel to Somers Square. The tree stands next to Wilkinson's store and is set in a new stone feature which will be used as a multi-tiered planter in the summer.

#### **Future Town Centre Events and Activities**

A programme of events is being drawn up for 2009 and these will be reported to area committee when finalised.

### **Finance**

5. 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 and funds earmarked by the Area Committee for the town centre.

### **Law**

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

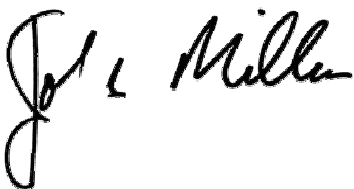
7. The Council is empowered to improve Highways under section 62 of the Highways Act 1980. Traffic Regulation orders are made under powers contained in section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

### **Equality Impact**

8. 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. The Cornbow Shopping Centre development responds to the strong demand amongst the local community for the presence of an anchor retail food store. A principal aim of the bus station development is to improve accessibility for all users to and from the town centre in a safe and secure environment. 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, either sexes and / or other relevant groups.

### **Recommendation**

9. That the Committee notes the progress of development in Halesowen Town Centre.



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### **List of Background Papers**