

**Halesowen Area Committee – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005**

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

**Town Centre Management**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Committee on the activities of the Town Centre Management Team in relation to Halesowen.

**Background**

2. The Council is committed to the delivery of a town centre management service to the four main town centres in the Borough of Dudley. The service in Halesowen is delivered by two full time officers, namely a Town Centre Manager and Information and Support Officer. It is important to note that both officers also cover Brierley Hill Town Centre.
3. The information contained in this report provides a summary of progress made by the team since the last report presented in June 2005. The Town Centre Management Team will also be represented at Committee to provide a verbal update on this report, covering any issues that may have arisen since publication.

**Somers Square**

4. Several pavement slabs on the square were damaged earlier in the year by a local delivery vehicle when an amount of motor oil was dripped onto the surface. Numerous attempts have been made by the Councils Environmental Services Department to clean up the damaged slabs, but unfortunately this has not helped to remove the oil stains.
5. Following a site meeting held by the Town Centre Manager, prices are now being obtained to replace the damaged slabs with the view to restore the square back to its original state of cleanliness. A complete jet wash of the area has already been completed to aid future repair work.

**French Market (Pilot project)**

6. The Town Centre Management Team is in the process of working with Halesowen Chamber of Trade to welcome a new French Market into the town centre on a trial basis on the 29<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2005 (inclusive). Initial discussions held with the French organisers have now developed to a stage that the event is viable and can be brought into the town centre. Opportunities to pilot other types of

markets in the future will continue to be explored in partnership with the Chamber by the Town Centre Manager.

7. The event is being held as a pilot project (on a trial basis) initially, with the view to establishing if the market is something that residents, businesses and visitors want to see encouraged in the future. One of the key considerations has been to ensure that local businesses are not negatively affected, and following initial consultation both businesses and the current Farmers Market organisers are happy for the market to be held.
8. It is important to stress that as a pilot project, the market will be closely monitored by the Town Centre Manager to ensure everything goes as smoothly as possible, and that the views of visitors to the market, and local businesses, will be carefully considered in view of any future decisions to hold the event again. The establishment of French Markets in town centres across the country is proving to be extremely popular as the markets offer both new products to shoppers and have been proven to increase footfall into town centres to support existing businesses.

### **Pointing the way**

9. The Council has now installed a new illustrative map of the town centre at the top of Hagley Street in the Sandvik Tree enclosure. The map, commissioned by the Town Centre Management Team, consists of a large scale plan of the town centre and provides historic background information of certain points of interest. Initial feedback to date has been positive and it is hoped that the sign will prove a useful asset for those people needing direction.

### **Entertainment in the town centre**

10. Since the last Committee meeting, the Town Centre Management Team has been able to successfully bring into Halesowen:-
  - Make Poverty History Campaign – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2005  
Promotional event held by the Global Justice Group, in partnership with St Johns Church (incl. a balloon release, banner around the church spire and a variety of entertainment/ relevant events marking the campaign).
  - Harry Potter Book Launch Competition – 9<sup>th</sup> July 2005  
In partnership with Woolworths and the Library, the Town Centre Management Team supported the launch of the new Harry Potter Book.
  - Halesowen College Students – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005  
Students from the college used Somers Square to entertain and delight the crowds in the town centre with a variety of music and song.
  - Beacon Bouncer ‘Bouncy Castle’ – throughout August 2005  
In partnership with Beacon Radio, Somers Square used for a giant bouncy castle and flagged by the ‘Black Thunders’ 4 x 4 vehicles, with regular promotion on the radio of the town centre.

There are resource issues about further expenditure which are currently being considered for town centre entertainment. A future report will outline these expenditure plans.

## **Pigeon Problems**

11. Following initial problems highlighted at previous Committee meetings, the Town Centre Manager commissioned an independent study of the pigeon problem in Halesowen. A final report is now due and the results considered prior to deciding upon an appropriate course of action to reduce the problems currently being experienced.

## **Finance**

12. The activities discussed in this report are delivered from existing budgets.

## **Law**

13. The promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area is supported by Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.

## **Equality Impact**

14. A primary role of the Town Centre Management Team is to encourage inclusiveness amongst all sectors of the community.

## **Recommendation**

15. It is recommended that:-
  - The contents of this report, and subsequent verbal update are noted

*Bernard Meade*

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**John Millar**  
**Director of Urban Environment**

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## **List of Background Papers**

None