

**Meeting of the Cabinet – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005**

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

**Adoption of the Dudley Town Centre Area Development Framework as Supplementary Planning Guidance**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To approve adoption of the Dudley Town Centre Area Development Framework as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

**Background**

2. The Area Development Framework [ADF] reflects the aspirations and policies of the recently adopted Dudley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) October 2005. The SPG has been prepared to supplement the policies in the UDP.
3. The Vision for Dudley Town Centre, within the UDP, is that the centre will be an important focus for an increased variety of shopping, leisure, community, cultural, tourism, housing, civic, further education and administrative activity. The plan recognises that the continuation of the wide ranging activities appropriate to the town centre, alongside an increase in resident population within or close to the town, is essential for the regeneration of the centre.
4. Dudley Town Centre has struggled to maintain a significant level of investment by private developers for quality housing, retail and commercial units over the past 15 – 20 years. This is mainly attributed to local and sub- regional factors, including retail centres that have in the past been more attractive to developers to create and provide favourable returns for their investors. These have been associated with high quality housing, public open spaces and complementary public art, creating a unique ambience for each individual development which attracts visitors and satisfies local residents and business occupiers, thereby delivering economic stability for the development. Over recent years planning regulations that allow out of town retail and commercial centres have changed due to government intervention and such schemes are now becoming more difficult to justify. This has made Town Centres such as Dudley very attractive for investment and ripe for development.
5. A core aim of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG11, Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands, Government Office for the

West Midlands, June 2004) is to cultivate a dynamic network of places across the region, all important in their own right and with distinctive characteristics reinforcing economic, culture and social functions (RPG11, paragraph 3.11). Dudley Town Centre has many attributes that other locations would envy having an 11th century Norman castle and a 12th century market place at its heart. Excellent examples of period architecture are abundant in the Town Centre and many of the mediaeval street patterns are retained. The SPG seeks to emphasise these qualities and ensure the ADF stimulates the regeneration of Dudley Town Centre.

6. Within the context of the need for renaissance of the Town Centre and within the context of the vision of the UDP, the Council has embarked on the production of the ADF in order to address the renaissance issues and develop Dudley Town Centre to meet the commercial challenges from other local centres. The Council applied for 100% funding from Advantage West Midlands, the Regional Development Agency, to produce an ADF for Dudley Town Centre, and this funding was approved in September 2003.
7. David Lock Associates, Urban Designers and Planners, were appointed following a quality, price tender exercise in December 2003 to produce the ADF. In May 2004 a draft proposal, indicating nine key opportunity sites was produced and used to consult with key stakeholders by a series of exhibitions and presentations throughout July and August 2004. The results from this consultation process found that more than 87% of the community consulted returned a questionnaire and more than 83% indicated they supported the proposals and would visit and use the town more often if the proposals were implemented (*Report Of Community Consultation dated Dec 2004 – this has been circulated separately to Members and a copy of the Masterplan and Consultation document have been deposited in the Members library*). From comments and suggestions received through the consultation process a Final Draft Area Development Framework for Dudley Town Centre (See Appendix 2 dated Dec 2004) was produced. The report and its findings were fed back to the public and key stakeholders by exhibition and presentation at Dudley College on 15 December 2004. A summary of the Dudley Town Centre ADF outputs can be found in Appendix 1. The figures used for the Priory Street opportunity site within this matrix, are taken from the Priory Street Opportunity Area - Draft Development Brief that will be presented for adoption upon completion.
8. A statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the Local Authority's response to those representations will be made available with each copy of the SPG.

### **Finance**

9. There are no direct financial implications contained within this report. However, the proposals will assist in securing future funds from

developers in the form of Section 106 agreements.

### **Law**

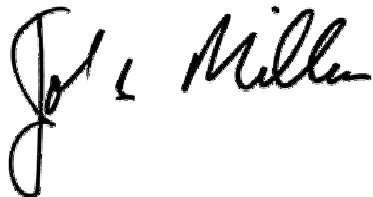
10. The guidance is being prepared under the old planning system, due to its commencement before the introduction of the new planning system, and thus relies on Planning Policy Guidance 12 (Development Plans). The SPG will be a material consideration which may be taken into account, where relevant, in decisions on planning applications

### **Equality Impact**

11. The ADF for Dudley Town Centre seeks to enable all sections of the community and its visitors, to access an adequate supply of housing, retail and commercial accommodation that are of good quality, well designed and maintained.
12. This report complies with the Council's equality and diversity policy.

### **Recommendation**

13. That the adoption of the Area Development Framework for Dudley Town Centre be approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance.



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### **Background Papers**

Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan (October 2005)

Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands, Government Office for the West Midlands, June 2004

Civic Trust Dudley Towns Report, January 2004

