

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ADULT EDUCATION–
29th OCTOBER 2007**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

PROGRESS REPORT ON REGENERATION OF BRIERLEY HILL

PURPOSE

1. To update the Select Committee on progress to date in relation to the regeneration of Brierley Hill

BACKGROUND

Strategic Context

2. The Council's Economic Regeneration aims are to: -
3. **Optimise the opportunity for local people to obtain local jobs through:**
 - building the capacity of local residents to access local jobs;
 - delivering training programmes for local unemployed people;
 - providing job brokerage facilities;
 - providing employment related support and advice to potential/existing trainees; and
 - developing sustainable communities.
4. **Support new and existing businesses through:**
 - creating new jobs;
 - increasing inward investment;
 - safeguarding existing jobs;
 - proactively communicating with local businesses; and
 - providing sites/premises for new employment opportunities.
5. **Strengthen and diversify the local economic base through:**
 - developing the skills base through quality training;
 - stimulating an enterprise culture and encouraging business innovation;
 - developing the Visitor Economy; and
 - creating a safe, attractive and healthy environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

6. **Improve the economic infrastructure through:**
 - maximising the potential of the major development sites;
 - improving transportation infrastructure and increasing choices in mode of travel;
 - delivering and caring for high quality landscape and urban design;
 - regenerating the Borough's 4 town centres and 15 local centres; and
 - developing and maintaining a positive image.
7. **Champion the interests and assets of Dudley Borough**, securing resources and improving its position regionally, nationally and internationally through:
 - creating and maintaining close working relationships with international, national and regional public and private sector funders;
 - marketing widely opportunities for future development and improvements in the Borough; and
 - celebrating Economic Regeneration successes to a wide audience.
8. The Council's Economic Regeneration aims are clearly linked to the Council's Community Strategy and Council Plan priorities and a range of regional and sub-regional strategies that influence and impact on local issues. They include:
9. **The Community Strategy** - Economic regeneration delivers the jobs theme of the existing Community Strategy, developed by the Dudley Community Partnership (DCP), and will be a key driver for "creating a prosperous and attractive Borough". The DCP established themed partnerships to deliver the priorities set out in the Community Plan. The Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership (EDRP) was established to deliver their Economic Regeneration agenda.
10. **The Council Plan** - Economic Regeneration delivered the Richer Borough Theme of the original Council Plan and delivers the Regeneration Matters agenda of the current Council Plan. Economic Regeneration also underpins and supports key activities delivered through all the other themes of the current Council Plan (environment matters, safety matters, learning matters, caring matters and quality matters).
11. **The Economic Strategy** - The Council's Economic Strategy sets out a 15-20 year vision and focus for economic regeneration activities in the Borough. It recognises the changing national, regional, sub-regional and local strategies and policies which impact on the local economy including the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy, the Black Country Study which provides a 30 year vision of improving the social, physical and environment for the sub-region, the Arc of Opportunity Regeneration Zone Implementation Plan (2007-10) for West Birmingham and the South Black Country and Dudley's Neighbourhood Management Strategy.
12. The Economic Strategy makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the priorities contained within the Dudley Community Strategy, particularly the "Creating a Prosperous Borough" theme, and the Council Plan, principally the Regeneration Matters theme, and supports other themes such as Environment Matters and Safety Matters.
13. The Economic Strategy brings together, not only the economic regeneration activities delivered by the Council, but also those delivered by a number of partner organisations and these are clearly set out within the Strategy's action plan. The Strategy is produced with the

input of a significant number of staff across all Directorates in the Council. It is also subject to wide ranging consultation, both internally and externally, and is formally approved through the Cabinet and full Council. Implementation of the Strategy is monitored by the Economic Development & Regeneration Partnership and scrutinised by this Select Committee.

14. **Directorate and Service Plans** - Economic Regeneration features as a key component of the Directorate of the Urban Environment's Strategic Plan. Each of the service areas within the Economic Regeneration Division produces an annual Service Plan setting out the clear priorities for their respective Sections.
15. **West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (WMRES)** "Delivering Advantage" 2004 – 2010 - sets out the region's approach to the economic development and regeneration of the West Midlands. The strategy is currently based on the four objectives or "pillars" that will drive the transformation of the West Midlands:
 - Pillar 1. Developing a diverse and dynamic business base;
 - Pillar 2. Promote a learning and skilful region;
 - Pillar 3. Create the conditions for growth; and
 - Pillar 4. Regenerate communities in the West Midlands.
16. To deliver the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy, resources are targeted through the region's Regeneration Zones, Business Clusters and High Technology Corridor. The Strategy contains an action plan of 45 actions to be delivered by a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector partners across the region. The updated Strategy is due to be published in December 2007 and will set out revised actions needed for the region to be recognised as world class by 2010 and will also look forward to 2020 and establish what more the region needs to do to continue to improve its economic performance
17. **West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)** - published originally as Regional Planning Guidance 11 (RPG11) in 2004 , sets out the Government's vision for the metropolitan area and the shires . Its vision is for: " an economically successful, outward looking and adaptable region which is rich in culture and environment, where all people, working together, are able to meet their aspirations and needs without prejudicing the quality of life for future generations." This is now being reviewed. There is a three phase review to the Regional Spatial Plan. The full implications for the RSS Phase 1 Revision for a new Strategic Centre at Brierley Hill are set out in paragraphs 27-31 Of this report
18. **The Local Transport Plan (LTP)** - recognises the synergy between economic development, regeneration, housing and transport and the LTP strategies are closely aligned to the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies. It is vital that if the vision for economic growth is to be sustained, the infrastructure is geared to support the regional aspirations and investment targeted to support regeneration. The shared vision for the LTP is:
 - a thriving and sustainable community where people want to live and where business can develop and grow;
 - town, city and local centres that are attractive and vibrant;
 - clean air and less congested traffic conditions;
 - a safer community; and
 - equal opportunities for everyone to gain access to services.

19. **West Midlands Regional Visitor Economy Strategy (2004)** - presents a coherent framework for tourism in the West Midlands. A key feature of the strategy is the need to create successful, sustainable destinations. It identifies the need to focus on key destinations and visitor gateways. This strategy identifies the Black Country as an emerging destination which requires regeneration investment. The Black Country Visitor Economy Strategy was developed in 2004 and provides a framework for tourism development. The Strategy identifies the need for a Black Country Partnership to build on the existing Black Country Tourism initiative. It also identifies the need to invest in the 5 key destinations of the Black Country including Dudley Town Centre and Brierley Hill/ Merry Hill.
20. A review of the delivery structure created in the West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy was undertaken in late 2006 which proposed alterations to the organisations responsible for delivering the visitor economy strategy. A 'refresh' of the Strategy will be undertaken in late 2007, identifying priorities for investment.
21. A piece of work is currently being undertaken to take forward the Black Country Visitor Economy Strategy and more generally tourism in the Black Country. The outcomes are due to report in late 2007.
22. **City Regions** - The government sees the City Regions as being motors for national progress challenging how they can take their economic and social development to a new level. The Council is actively involved in the City Region in the West Midlands through involvement with our regional partners. The City Region's aims include:-
 - delivering jobs and investment and a new strategic global growth opportunity as a key driver for the wider "Midlands" to add to the UK's wealth creation potential; and
 - delivering a new high quality urban environment and quality of life of international standing which encourages diversity, knowledge, creative and vibrant communities. This builds upon the city centre regeneration projects which have been seen across the conurbation but extend this quality into local communities.
23. **Black Country Study** – The Council, along with the Black Country Consortium and its partners, is taking an active role in the Black Country Study, which aims to articulate the Consortiums' aspirations as set out in its vision "Looking Forward: The Black Country in 2033". The study is a dynamic project to develop the long-term renaissance of the Black Country and will be critical in shaping the future regeneration of Dudley Borough. The four key objectives of the study are to:
 - reverse the trend of people leaving the Black Country;
 - raise income levels;
 - accommodate a more balanced population (achieving parity with the national social grade profile); and
 - create high quality, sustainable environments.
24. The Consortium is leading efforts with partners to prepare a comprehensive Delivery Plan at present. This will highlight the key projects to be undertaken by the private sector, local authorities, Centro, AWM, English Partnerships and other delivery bodies. A detailed 5 year programme and an indicative 10 year programme are now being prepared towards an overall 25 year transformational development strategy.

25. **The Regeneration Zone Implementation Plan 2007-10** - The Arc of Opportunity is the largest of the West Midlands Regeneration Zones covering an area stretching in an arc from the western edge of Birmingham city through Sandwell and across areas of central Dudley to Lye. The key aim of the Zone is to link regeneration activity with the areas of greatest need and ensure that resources and policies are coordinated to the best effect. The strategic focus of the plan is underpinned by 3 inter-related themes:
- enterprise
 - employment
 - environment
26. **Joint Core Strategy** – Every local authority has to produce a Core Strategy for their Local Development Framework which will set the strategic spatial policy context for the Borough. The 4 Black Country Boroughs are to adopt a pioneering approach by working together to produce a Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country building on work on the Black Country Study. The Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country has reached issues and Options stage with consultation in June 2007. Officers are currently working towards the next stage of the process.

Current Regeneration Initiatives in Brierley Hill and recent achievements

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

27. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government's recommended proposed modifications to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) published on the 10th September marks a further step in a decade's work in seeking the recognition of Brierley Hill as a Strategic Town Centre. The modifications broadly follow the recommendations made in the Panel Report which was published in March 2007 following the Examination in Public held in January 2007. The adoption of the RSS review is significant both for Brierley Hill and nationally as it will be the first time that an 'out of town' centre has been reclassified as a town centre.
28. The recommendations are good news for the future regeneration of the Black Country as a whole and particularly for the regeneration of Dudley Town Centre and the future development of Brierley Hill which will become a strategic town centre as part of the proposals incorporating the Merry Hill Centre, the Waterfront and Brierley Hill High Street.
29. The proposed modifications are now subject to a consultation period where representations are welcomed up until Friday 9th November 2007. The recommendations will then be finalised and given final approval by the Secretary of State at the turn of the year.
30. The key messages and recommendations contained within the proposed changes are as follows:-
- Designation of Brierley Hill as a new Strategic Town Centre within the Region to include Brierley Hill High Street, the Waterfront and the Merry Hill Centre
 - Recognition of Dudley Town Centre as a significant centre for tourism and cultural facilities as well as for housing-led regeneration making the most of its historic and cultural heritage and its civic function
 - Development of a network of quality public transport routes, building on the existing rail and Metro together with new approaches to bus transport, linking people with jobs and the Black Country network of Centres.

- Provision of new high quality homes along transport corridors creating a much greater variety of choice of homes and living environments for people in the Black Country.
- The strategic town centres of the Black Country will also be the focus for new homes, new office and leisure based opportunities as well as significant new retail development.
- Transformation of the environment using the heritage of canals and nature reserves within the Black Country to make it more attractive to live, work and invest
- The provision of jobs within designated employment land corridors through land assembly and improvements in land, buildings and transport infrastructure in such areas.
- Increasing the emphasis in mitigating for climate change including use of renewable energy sources, reducing waste, reducing the need to travel and enhancing and extending natural habitats and environments

31. The proposed modifications are now being examined closely and Cabinet will be asked to approve the Council's response at its meeting on the 31st October 2007.

Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership

32. Brierley Hill is an example of an area with a declining heavy industrial base that has resulted in economic deprivation, social exclusion and vacant Brownfield land. Whereas regenerative development in the area emerged from the former Enterprise Zones initiated in 1980s, market failures have persisted and these have included:

- Barriers to attract industrial or alternative investment to the area which would reverse the collapse of the manufacturing base in Brierley Hill and the wider area.
- Barriers to replicate the success of the Merry Hill Centre in the Brierley Hill area.
- Barriers to employment and economic opportunities faced by local residents
- The need to co-ordinate the development of Brierley Hill based on robust community engagement, joint agency working and sustainable development principles.
- The need for a co-ordinated and integrated physical, economic and community regeneration within a wider Black Country and West Midlands regeneration framework/vision
- Challenges posed by poor quality land, low skill levels, high unemployment, few high value jobs and low incomes.

36. The idea of a partnership for Brierley Hill to address the above barriers emerged during the late 1990s and the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership (BHRP) was formally established in November 2002. BHRP is a public, private and community partnership, a company limited by guarantee and it is the product of a shared vision for the integrated regeneration of the Brierley Hill - that is Brierley Hill High Street, Merry Hill and the Waterfront areas. Its overall aim is to *co-ordinate policy, strategy and funding to deliver the regeneration of Brierley Hill and to ensure that the benefits of regeneration are maximised and focused on the local community.*

37. The BHRP was set up with four major objectives:

- To facilitate sustainable economic growth for Brierley Hill, ensuring development projects benefit the surrounding communities
- To coordinate employment and other social benefits
- To create sustainable environmental improvements
- To contribute towards delivery of the Dudley Metropolitan Unitary Development Plan (UDP) vision and regional economic objectives.

36. Over four years on, the Partnership's mission remains to: inspire, empower, engage and encourage all public, private and community partners to work together to maximise the benefits of regeneration for all. The BHRP now has six major objectives:
- To facilitate sustainable economic growth within Brierley Hill and ensure development activities and outcomes benefit the surrounding communities and the Black Country.
 - To coordinate employment and other social benefits to build a healthy, wealthy and wise community.
 - To create sustainable environmental improvements that create a sense of place and community pride.
 - To contribute towards delivery of the strategic plans of partners, in particular Advantage West Midlands, the Black Country Learning and Skills Council, the Dudley Community Partnership, Dudley Council's Economic Strategy and the emerging regional Black Country Study.
 - To monitor the progress of the regeneration of Brierley Hill.
 - To create a positive investment environment in Brierley Hill for the public, private and community sectors.
37. The current membership of the BHRP includes:
- The Brierley Hill Community Forum (representing the local community);
 - Dudley MBC
 - Westfield Shoppingtowns Ltd, the current owners of the Merry Hill Centre, Waterfront and much of the surrounding areas; and,
 - Other partners who contribute via the BHRP Partnership Engagement Group include Dudley Primary Care Trust, West Midlands Police, Advantage West Midlands, British Waterways, English Partnerships, Brierley Hill High Street Traders Association and Jobcentre Plus.
38. BHRP activity is delivered via 3 task orientated theme groups: Community Regeneration, Economic Regeneration and Physical Regeneration at which the Council is represented by officers from a number of Directorates. Each of the 3 groups has a list of objectives to meet and contribute to the overall objectives of the BHRP. In addition, the BHRP continues to engage the community and promote the regional and national significance of Brierley Hill and the public/private sector working that is underway.
39. The Council has been working with the BHRP to prepare a vision for the area to ensure that genuine community driven renewal in Brierley Hill can take place. Significant progress was taken towards this with the completion in May 2005 of a Development and Investment Framework for Brierley Hill High Street, which in turn informed the completion of an Implementation Strategy for Brierley Hill High Street, the Waterfront and Merry Hill which was completed in August 2006
40. The Brierley Hill Implementation Strategy reflects the aspirations of the emerging Black Country Study and sets out how Brierley Hill will contribute to the regeneration of the area. Key outputs by 2031 include:
- The creation of over 24,000 new jobs
 - The building of over of 2,800 high quality homes
 - The creation of over 330,000 sq m of new office development

- The introduction of 97,400 sq m of new retail development in line with capacity projections contained within the Centres Report of the Black Country Study
- Over £1billion of private sector investment to be supported by limited funds from the public purse
- Enabling building of the Midland Metro to Brierley Hill through the contribution of £36.5m of private sector funds – the biggest private sector contribution to such a scheme in the whole of the country – bringing a direct benefit to the whole of the Black Country, particularly those living in areas suffering from deprivation
- Provide transportation infrastructure improvements which encourage modal shift towards the use of public transport
- The introduction of new and improved leisure, cultural, community social facilities, civic and health facilities
- The creation of a sense of place and a town of which residents can justly feel proud

41. In parallel to this exercise, the Council began work on the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan (AAP) in August 2006 as part of its Local Development Framework. The AAP will set the planning framework for the area, which will include Brierley Hill High Street, the Merry Hill shopping centre and the Waterfront business park. The AAP will be the basis by which planning decisions are made within the area. The AAP, expected to be adopted by the Council in October 2009, will contain a vision, a series of objectives on how this vision will be reached, and will allocate sites within the boundary for specific uses. Furthermore, it will consider how growth and regeneration of the town centre should be proactively phased and implemented by a public, private and voluntary partnership.

Current Regeneration Initiatives

Current projects underway in Brierley Hill include the following:

Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network

42. This £28 million project centres on a new parallel route to the High Street between Dudley Road and Church Street together with a new road linking Waterfront Way with Pedmore Road. The project also includes junction improvements at Hickman Road/Pensnett Road, Bryce Road/Pensnett Road and Bank Street/Brockmoor High Street.
43. The project will provide immediate benefits to the town centre and surrounding area by reducing congestion, improving air quality and the general environment in Brierley Hill. It will also provide opportunities for future development and improved links to public transport. The Council has entered into a partnership contract with Carillion to design the scheme and carry out the construction works and work is currently underway on site with a completion date of October 2008. Significant sections of the new Parallel Route and associated structures have now been built.

NHS Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT)

44. NHS LIFT is a vehicle for improving and developing frontline primary and community care facilities. It aims to allow Primary Care Trusts to invest in new premises in new locations, not merely reproduce existing types of service and provide patients with modern integrated health services in high quality, fit for purpose primary care premises.
45. The Brierley Hill LIFT is a £21.3m healthcare centre will provide a state-of-the-art community facility on 1.45 acres of land at the former Brier School site, in Cottage Street.

Dudley Infracare LIFT Ltd (DIL), a public-private partnership company created under the Government's Partnerships for Health programme, is delivering this project which will bring modern health and social care services to the area and improve access to services for local patients. The project is currently under construction and is due for completion in January 2010

Brierley Hill High Street Property Improvement Scheme

46. The Brierley Hill Traders Association (BHTA) is managing a High Street Property Improvement scheme. This £400,000 scheme is supported through grant aid of £200,000 from Westfield and aims to support businesses of Brierley Hill town centre to invest in their own futures and the long term future of Brierley Hill. The Brierley Hill Development and Investment Framework recommended the implementation of a property improvement scheme on the basis that enhancements to the town centre environment will support business growth, new ventures and encourage further investment in the area creating new jobs and safeguarding existing employment.
47. The scheme offers a discretionary grant towards the cost of improvements to business and commercial premises located in Brierley Hill Town Centre. A maximum award of 50% of eligible costs applies. Applicants must either own the property or act as the tenant of the property.

Advantage West Midlands Umbrella Bid

48. Officers are currently preparing a major bid to Advantage West Midlands support the regeneration of the Strategic Town Centre of Brierley Hill. It is a direct response to national, regional and local economic strategies & will act as a catalyst for the implementation of the transformational economic, physical & community regeneration vision for the area. AWM support will ensure that significant public & private sector investment is secured which in turn will ensure the whole of the Implementation & Master Plan is achieved. This application will create the necessary conditions for growth by improving infrastructure, creating improved workspace & enhancing the environment. It will stimulate investment into the locality, thereby creating necessary employment opportunities.
49. The bid is composed of 7 'transformational' projects as follows:
 - Feasibility study assessing the current parking facilities in the area, consider future parking provision, investigate the business case & funding models for a Multi-Decked Car Park
 - Acquisition of 6 commercial properties on Brierley Hill High Street that are in poor structural condition & located in a key strategic position
 - Improvements to the High Street which will cultivate a new image that is clean, bright contemporary & urban. The enhancements will increase economic investment, create new businesses / jobs & increase usage by local residents
 - Conversion and connection of two buildings into a landmark Community Services Centre which will ensure that the Signpost Partnership can deliver its vital services in a key location in the heart of Brierley Hill.
 - Land acquisition & the building of new educational facilities to support the needs of local people & employers, leading to a multi-site occupied building drawing in Higher Education provision & local employers
 - Acquisition of 8 plots of land along the route of the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network
 - Ongoing funding to support BHRP after the current ERDF funding expires in December 2008

Town Centre Management

50. To support the increased activities for economic regeneration projects and proposed developments in the four principal town centres the Department has recently been restructured to meet increasing demands.
51. Two new Regeneration Officers have been appointed to assist with the development of town centre Masterplans, project implementation strategies and the project management of major schemes and developments as stated within this report. Regeneration Officers also assist with external funding applications and management of steering groups for major projects.
52. Since April 2006 there have been 4 Town Centre Managers in post covering the 4 principal town centres. Each Town Centre Manager is working with internal and external partners to deliver environmental enhancement and crime reduction schemes for each town centre and assisting with change management issues that are associated with major improvement and development schemes. Town centre managers are responsible for staging events which promote the town centres and increase footfalls. They also bring forward various environmental projects which without their intervention would probably never happen.
53. 13 events were held in Brierley Hill in the 2006/7 year including the Christmas lights switch-on and Brierley Hill Fun Day.
54. The following environmental improvements have been achieved:
 - The Brier Rose has been re-painted
 - Concrete planters have been re-planted
 - Railings, lamp posts and bollards have been re-painted
 - New benches have been installed
 - A shop front improvement scheme has been implemented
 - Shrubbed area cleared in Cottage Street
 - Trees along the high street have been lopped and topped

FINANCE

55. There are significant financial implications arising for the Council as a result of the various initiatives and programmes described above. A considerable amount of external funding has already been approved, or is being sought, with matching Council or other resources being applied where affordable.
56. Each individual strategy or development programme should be financially justifiable, and following project appraisal will be reported to Cabinet recommending inclusion in the Council's capital programme or revenue budget where appropriate.

LAW

57. The matters contained in the report cover a range of the Council's statutory powers, but generally rely on Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, which enables the Council to

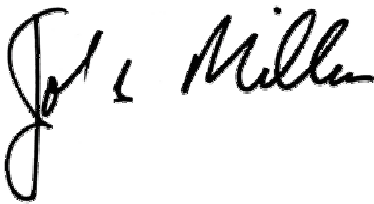
do anything which is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic social or environmental wellbeing of its area.

EQUAL IMPACT

58. This work has been conducted in full accordance with the Councils 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 needs of children and young people are considered in any planning and implementation activities.

RECOMMENDATION

59. It is recommended that the Committee note the significant progress made in regenerating Brierley Hill Town Centre



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Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

Draft Phase One Revision, The Black Country Study, Examination in Public, 9th to 18th January 2007, Report of the Panel (March 2007)

<http://www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk/page.asp?PageRef=88>

Economic Strategy for Dudley Borough 2007/08

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/business/regeneration/economic-strategy--intelligence>

Dudley Borough Community Strategy 2005-2020

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=2301>

Dudley Council Plan 2007

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=1630>