

**Halesowen Area Committee – Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

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

**Halesowen Town Centre Development**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Members and residents on progress with regard to physical developments taking place in Halesowen town centre.

**Background**

2. As reported to 14 March 2007 Area Committee, a progress report will be presented to forthcoming Committees updating Elected Members and members of the public on progress with regard to the development of the Cornbow shopping centre, bus station and town centre management issues. Since the previous report representatives from Dudley MBC, Vale Retail, CENTRO/WMPTA and the Police have met on two occasions; 13<sup>th</sup> June and 13<sup>th</sup> August. 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 communicated to the public in the most efficient and effective way. The Town Centre Working Group of members and officers met on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2007 to consider the issues raised by the partners. The current situation is detailed below.
3. At its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007 the Halesowen Area Committee received a petition requesting additional stops for 9 and 139 services on the Queensway between St John the Baptist Church and bus station redevelopment. The request was considered by the Group Engineer for Traffic and Road Safety who has responsibility for such matters. On consideration Dudley Council could not support the introduction of impediments, such as bus stops, at this location due to the proximity to the construction works and relationship to the associated temporary traffic management which necessarily has to change with the ongoing improvement works. However, in order to improve access to this side of the town centre it has been proposed that a free Shuttle Bus Service be investigated, possibly for a three month trial period with costs equally met by the developer (Vale Retail), Centro and the Council.
4. The Working Group has considered this issue and recommended the Area Committee should support the initiative for the trial period subject to the following:
5. “It was considered that the routes on Bromsgrove Road and particularly Church Croft would detract from the objective of the service i.e. to attract and improve foot fall on High Street/Queensway. The service should therefore use the revised route on Birmingham Street and in particular High Street/Queensway and, following the

concerns of the Traffic Manager, require the problem of picking up from the current designated "Drop Off" adjacent to High Street car park to be resolved by Centro and the bus operators. Further stops beyond the current drop off point would not be considered."

6. The Council's contribution to the trial (£5,000) would be provided with funding from the Section 106 agreement the Council has in place with Vale Retail.
7. Other issues considered by the Working Group were;
8. **Shop Mobility:** This should be a longer term objective for the Town Centre and should relate also to car users as last year's consultation exercise shows this to be potentially the main source of demand;
9. **The steps at Summer Hill:** Were not supported and this proposal should be replaced with better signage of the appropriate route through Pool Road car park and a warning to pedestrians attempting to use the Queensway verge as an alternative;
10. **Land Train (Golf cart):** It was perceived that it would be dangerous to introduce a train service during peak days such as Saturday, however, it was agreed that further investigation should be made into providing this service during week days;
11. **Cornbow 'Top Notch Tuesdays':** Throughout the development period Vale Retail are proposing a schedule of entertainment activity for every Tuesday. The suggested activities range from book signing to children's entertainment. A request has been made to the Council to provide free town centre parking on Tuesday afternoons. Working Group members felt that this proposal requires further consideration and justification before any commitment can be made.
12. **Town Centre Access Study:** The Working Group has been developing a number of transport and access proposals for the town centre. These proposals result from the finding of last year's Town Centre consultation exercise and will be available for public consultation from October through to the end of December 2007. A full report on this issue will be considered by the Area Committee at its next meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

### **Cornbow Shopping Centre**

13. The Cornbow development is progressing well. Demolition of the multi storey car park has been hampered by recent weather conditions. By the end of August the demolition of the car park and properties fronting onto Queensway, removal of the glazed link to Cornbow from the car park and commencement of pilling / level adjustments will be complete. The alternative public toilets in No. 10 Queensway Mall are now complete and operating well.
14. The temporary entrance to the Cornbow Shopping Centre is now complete and operating well. Tenant Forums will continue to take place in order to keep tenants in the Cornbow advised on an ongoing basis of the development programme. Officers of Dudley MBC now meet fortnightly with the Chairman of the Chamber of Trade and Cornbow Centre Manager (Vice-Chair of Chamber of Trade); this will continue until

the end of the development period. Vale Retail has proposed a '*Shoppers Panel*' in order to engage with local residents on their shopping experience during the construction period and assess how best to address their concerns. Any persons interested in becoming a member of the Shoppers Panel should contact the Cornbow Shopping Centre Manager directly.

### Halesowen Bus Station

15. Planning approval was granted by Development Control Committee for the amendments to the original planning application on 25th June 2007. Images have been produced to reflect this approval and are being used in new information provision.
16. There has been an initial interface meeting between B&K and Carillion where it appears that both contractors can work with each other to maintain their respective programmes, and by allowing Vale to occupy the bus station site for a further 6 weeks until 15<sup>th</sup> October 2007 reducing the Health and Safety interface between the two schemes. The proposed programme by Carillion for the bus station and associated highway works is 12 months therefore, if there are no significant risks, it is essential that Carillion's works commence mid-October to ensure that the bus station is complete to complement the redevelopment by Vale Retail and the scheduled opening of the Asda store in November 2008.

### Town Centre Management

17. Repainting and, where necessary, replacement of bollards in the town centre (Hagley Road, High Street, Great Cornbow and the Queensway) has commenced and is expected to be completed by September.
18. A series of successful events have taken place in Halesowen town centre since June 2007.

Date	Event
<b>Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June</b>	Victorian Street Fayre  Hosted by the Hasbury and Cradley Rotary Club
<b>Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June</b>	Halesowen Parish Church's Tercentenary Celebration of the Church Bells installed in St John the Baptist Church  A mobile belfry was bought into Somers Square to demonstrate the art of bell ringing
<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June</b>	A Grand Arts Week  Organised by the Halesowen Networked Learning Community, funded by the Black Country School Improvement 'Creative Partnerships Project' with Town Centre Management.  A programme of activities to celebrate a range of arts activities took place developed by local schools for the entertainment of

	<p>shoppers and residents. The week concluded with Friday's event which included the following acts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bollywood dancing led by Colley Lane Primary School with support from Howley Grange and Olive Hill</li> <li>• Circus Skills from children at Halesowen Church of England, Our Lady &amp; St Kenelm, Manor Way, Tenterfields and Howley Grange</li> <li>• Maypole dancing by pupils from Hasbury</li> <li>• Irish dancing by pupils from Our Lady &amp; St. Kenelm</li> <li>• Tudor dancing by pupils from Halesowen C of E</li> <li>• Salsa dancing by Howley Grange, Colley Lane, Tenterfields and Manor Way. Drama from pupils at Tenterfields and Newfield Park</li> <li>• Theme dancing by pupils from Our Lady &amp; St Kenelm</li> <li>• Poetry, readings and drama by pupils from Olive Hill</li> <li>• A trash band drawn from Newfield Park, Halesbury Special School and Our Lady &amp; St Kenelm. During the afternoon, Lutley played a CD they had created during Creative Partnership Workshops</li> </ul> <p>The entertainment concluded with Newfield Park, Our Lady &amp; St Kenelm and Halesbury Special School gathering in a Grand Finale Trash Band</p>
<b>Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July</b>	West Midlands Police Community Safety Day The event featured demonstration vehicles from the emergency services.
<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July</b>	Climbing wall in Somers Square
<b>Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July</b>	Mini Fair in Somers Square
<b>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> August</b>	Rumple's Circus Workshop in Somers Square
<b>Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<p>Halesowen by the Sea</p> <p>The centre of Halesowen was transformed into a seaside town for the day. Bunting ran throughout the town where youngsters enjoyed donkey rides, face painting, sand pits and Punch and Judy shows. Halesowen sticks of rock were also given out to shoppers while more entertainment was provided by Dave Dee's mobile disco and seaside-themed street entertainers.</p> <p>The event also featured an Atlantic 21 lifeboat; courtesy of the RNLi. Halesowen Leisure Centre also offered free entry for children accompanied by a paying adult.</p>
<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July</b>	Climbing wall in Somers Square

<b>Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July</b>	Mini fair in Somers Square
<b>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> August</b>	Rumple's Circus Workshop in Somers Square
<b>Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August</b>	Play trailer / games arena in Somers Square
<b>Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August</b>	Climbing wall in Somers Square
<b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August</b>	Mini fair rides, face painting and balloon modelling in Somers Square
<b>Friday 17<sup>th</sup> August</b>	Play trailer / games arena in Somers Square
<b>Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> August</b>	The Heart of England Jazz Band

19. At the time of writing this report, forthcoming events include the following:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> August</b>	Bouncy castle, face painting and balloon modelling in Somers Square
<b>Friday 24<sup>th</sup> August</b>	Crazy Golf in Somers Square
<b>Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August</b>	Rumple's Circus Workshop
<b>Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Proposed date for Halesowen's celebrated annual Christmas Lights switch-on.

## **Finance**

20. 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 the Economic Regeneration Division.

## **Law**

21. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of any part of the Borough. The council will carry out highway improvement/ maintenance work under the Highways Act 1980.

## **Equality Impact**

22. A primary role of the Town Centre Management Service is to encourage inclusivity amongst 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.

23. 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.

### **Recommendation**

24. That the Committee notes the progress of development in Halesowen town centre and seeks the approval of the Cabinet Member for Transportation to use some of the Section 106 monies to contribute to the trial of the shuttle bus.

*Bernard Meade*

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for J. B. MILLAR – DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

Halesowen Area Committee Report (July 2007) *Halesowen Town Centre Development*

<http://cmis/CMISWebPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=8959>