

Stourbridge Area Committee 20 November 2006

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Lye District Centre Action Plan Update

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Stourbridge Area Committee on the progress of the Lye District Centre Action Plan.

Background

2. The Lye District Centre Action Plan, produced in 2004, was subject to massive community consultation. It is currently the only Regeneration Plan for a local or district centre in Dudley Borough. A review of implementation has resulted in a dedicated resource for such matters.
3. The Council has recently appointed a Project Development Officer to focus on the regeneration of the district and local centres in the borough, initially concentrating on the five centres identified in the 'District and Local Centres Review 2005' as a priority for regeneration. This priority was agreed by Cabinet on the 13th September 2006. The centres that will be the priority for investment and resources over the next two years will be Shell Corner, Lye, Cradley, Quarry Bank and Pensnett. The aim is to produce a Regeneration Plan for each of the five priority centres, apart from Lye which already has a Plan.
4. The aim of this report is to summarise the position of the Action Plan highlighting the actions that have already been achieved, listing the projects that are still to be implemented but are still relevant and also highlighting the actions that were originally identified in the plan but after more recent consultation with officers and members are now considered no longer appropriate due to changed circumstances. For a more detailed analysis of the position of each action listed in the Plan, please see the attached report, entitled 'Lye District Centre Position Statement, September 2006.'
5. The actions identified in the Lye District Centre Action Plan that have already been achieved are listed below:-

Achievements to Date

- Pocket Park revamp

- Design and construction of Public Park behind Christ Church Park.
- Sir Cedric Hardwicke memorial has been completed and is located at Lye Cross.
- Railway station improvements, including upgrading the footbridge, resurfacing the car park, new vandal proof shelter and the introduction of CCTV and lighting.
- Development of a Surestart Family Centre and Lye Cross Shop conversion.
- A healthy eating initiative called Healthy Take Away Award 2004 was run with a small number of establishments.

6. The following actions are being progressed with a view to implementation within the next two years:-

Action Significant Progress Made

Christ Church Park Phase 2	An application is being submitted to the Big Lottery for Phase 2 of Christ Church which includes lighting, a dwarf wall and railings along the bypass boundary and gateways to the park.
Design and construction of Food Store	The Council are in negotiations with a retail developer.
Community Safety Strategy	Development through the Lye Community Safety Group.
Improvements to the local environment	Lye and Wollescote Partnership have recently secured money for environmental enhancements which has enabled them to buy gardening tools for the community to use and with the remainder of the money they are hoping to fund community groups that come forward with environmental improvement projects.
Bring forward sites for housing development	Law and Property are now in a position to take certain identified residential sites forward for marketing
Multipurpose Community Facility	The original intention of a one-stop multi-purpose community facility will not take place due to lack of resources from partners to fund the construction

and ongoing revenue costs. Many of the original interested parties have now found alternative accommodation. The Council is now in negotiations with a developer about locating a LIFT scheme on this site.

7. Some of the actions identified in the Implementation Plan within the Lye Action Plan are still under discussion as to whether they are still relevant and/or whether resources can be identified to deliver them. These actions include:-

Actions Under Discussion/Development

- Public Art Strategy for Lye
 - Shop frontage improvements
 - Improvements to the pedestrian route from the Railway Station to the High Street
 - Support the development of healthy eating initiatives with local eating establishments.
 - Improvements to Lye Sports Ground. Lye town Football Club have recently applied to the National Lottery for funding towards a training pitch for youngsters, creation of a multi-purpose stand for disabled fans, resurfacing of the car park and new changing rooms. The Club recently were granted £5,000 from the Stourbridge Area Committee to assist with the costs of resurfacing the car park.
8. The remainder of the actions are either yet to be delivered, being reviewed or now not considered appropriate due to changed circumstances. The Action Plan will be reviewed and revised to provide a rolled forward 3 year programme. Please see Appendix 1 for detail.
9. Progress has been and is continuing to be made in the delivery of the Plan. External funding has been attracted to deliver environmental and safety projects and there is private sector interest in developing vacant sites in the centre. Neighbourhood Management have also assigned a member of staff whose role is to focus on the development of the Lye and Wollescote Partnership which includes members from voluntary and community groups, education providers, health providers, local traders, local residents, Ward Members, Council Officers, local service providers, faith groups and the Police. Projects that the Lye and Wollescote Partnership have delivered recently include the publication of the Lye and Wollescote newsletter and the community litter pick.

Finance

10. The activities that have been achieved to date have been funded from within existing budgets. Ongoing and future activities will be considered individually in terms of affordability and reported through to Cabinet appropriately.

Law

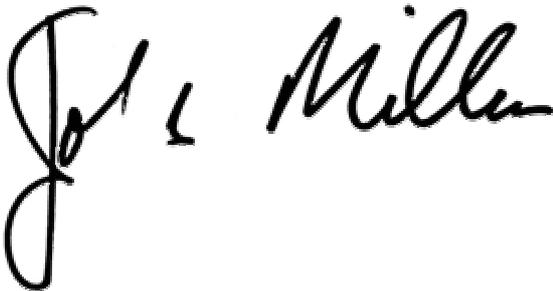
- 11 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, allows the Council to dispose of its interests in land at the best price reasonably obtainable.
- 12 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well being of its area.

Equality Impact

13. The proposals contained in this report are in full accordance with the Councils equal opportunities policies and should in no way have any prejudicial impact on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and/or other relevant groups. The actions within the Implementation Plan seek to regenerate the District Centre for adults, children and young people alike, hence promoting equal opportunities for all.

Recommendation

14. It is recommended that the Committee note progress on delivering the Action Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Millar'. The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial 'J' and a cursive 'Millar'.

J. Millar
Director of the Urban Environment

Contact Officer: Hannah Mossom
Telephone: 01384 818139
Email: hannahmossom@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers

1. Lye District Centre Action Plan.

Appendix 1 Lye District Centre Position Statement, September 2006.

Theme/Plan Reference	Objective	Action	Lead Section/Agency	Progress made up to July 2006
PUBLIC SPACES - PS1	To enhance the function and aesthetics of existing public spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pocket park revamp/redevelopment 	Design & Projects, DMBC/Private Sector.	<p>The improvements to the Pocket Park have been completed and include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The erection of an ornamental fence and gates at the rear of the site. Replacement of old seating with new larger seats. The planting of a specimen tree towards the rear of the site. New minor pavement improvements and repairs to existing paving. Repainting the existing clock and murals. Providing new bins.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Park: Design Implementation 	Design & Projects, DMBC/Church/Groundworks	<p>The construction of the public park at the back of Christ Church finished.. The park includes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small amount of tree and hedge clearance. New footpath route across the site. New ornamental fencing between the Church and the park. Cultivation and resurfacing of park area. Planting of new specimen trees to the rear of the site, along the Bypass boundary. A new paved route linking the park to the Bypass. Planting of low maintenance shrubs. <p>The funding for community safety improvements has not yet been secured but the Council intends to submit an application to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund to finance this work. It is expected that this application will be submitted in December 2006. Community safety improvements to the park will include dwarf walling and railings along the by-pass boundary, gating of the park and lighting.</p>
		High Street Enhancements	Street Care	<p>The High Street enhancements referred to in the Action Plan include pavement resurfacing and improved street lighting. The pavements and lighting on Lye High Street are considered to be in good condition and street lighting was recently upgraded with the introduction of the by-pass. There is currently no identified budget within the Council to further deliver these improvements.</p>

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CREATING AN IDENTITY - CI1	To create an attractive environment through the use of public art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Arts Strategy 	Design & Projects DMBC	There isn't a Public Art Strategy for <i>Lye</i> specifically; however there is just a very general <i>Public Art Strategy (1999) for Dudley Borough</i> as a whole setting out very general "principles" of public/community art. A public art strategy specifically for Lye could be produced but resources would need to be found to commission this work.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sir Cedric Harwicke Sculpture 	Borough Artist	The Sir Cedric Harwicke Memorial is complete.
DIVERSITY THROUGH DESIGN - DD1	To promote innovative and sustainable building form that demonstrates the principles of urban design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Briefs 	Design & Projects, DMBC	Each Planning Application is subject to an assessment of urban design. Further proactive work on Urban Design will take place on the recruitment of staff to fill existing vacancies.
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT -HE1	To protect areas of local distinctiveness and character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Heritage Policy Guidance (specific sites and properties) 	Planning and Development Services DMBC	DMBC are in the process of producing a supplementary planning document on the historic environment entitled 'The Dudley Borough Landscape and Townscape Character Study'. Although this is not specific to Lye this document does offer the necessary policy guidance.

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-HE2	To ensure the conservation of locally listed buildings and structure by encouraging their retention, maintenance, appropriate use and restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact all owner/occupiers of locally listed buildings and advise on relevant policy 	Planning and Development Services DMBC	The Historic Environment Team actively monitor listed building consents and have a programme of conservation assessments and management plans which will include Lye.
-HE3	To protect archaeological remains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply of information for development proposals and mitigation of impacts arising 	Development Services DMBC	The Historic Environment Team comments on relevant Planning Applications when submitted

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District Centre Facilities -DF1	To provide a range of District Centre amenities & facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Store -Design/PP -Construction 	Urban Policy, DMBC/Private sector	DMBC Law and Property are in negotiations with a retail developer and Layout Plans for a proposed public house/residential development, food retail unit and associated car parking provision has been submitted to the Council for comment. The progress of this development has been delayed because of a number of issues which have prevented the release of the land needed for the scheme. These legal issues have now been resolved and Law and Property intend to take this issue to Area Committee later this year.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multipurpose community facility - feasibility study - Detailed design/PP -Construction 	Resources & partnerships, DMBC/varied public agencies	<p>There is a lack of support for a one-stop-shop Multipurpose Community Facility because the original intentions of DMBC Directorates and other organisations wanting to locate their offices in this building have now changed and community facilities planned for this Centre are provided in other buildings based in Lye. The funding source that was identified for this project has also changed its priorities and this type of scheme would no longer meet the criteria. A regeneration concern is that many community facilities are located on the High Street and the relocation of these to a multipurpose centre would result in a number of vacant buildings.</p> <p>A developer interested in building a LIFT scheme on this site has approached the Council and negotiations are currently taking place.</p>
-DF2	To protect existing retail uses within the High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop frontage improvements - Survey/design - Construction 	Resources & partnerships, DMBC/AWM/Private sector/local traders & businesses	Not taken place- difficulties identifying funding sources that will support shop front improvements. A lot of money has been spent in the past on shop front upgrades in Lye and other retail centres and they have not been sustained in the long term. Further work will be carried out identifying sources of funding for shop front improvements and research will look at similar initiatives in other areas that have built in successful sustainability measures to use as best practice.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail Core Policy 	Development Services DMBC	Ongoing monitoring by Planning Policy and enforcement through Development Control

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-DF3	To attract and sustain new uses to the High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Strategy 	Resources & Partnerships, DMBC,AWM/traders	No progress to date. The resources originally identified to fund this Marketing Strategy are no longer available and there are no alternative sources of funding to support this initiative. DMBC has recently appointed a Business Development Manager based at Lye Business Centre to support new businesses start ups.
ACCESS & MOVEMENT -AM1	To manage traffic effectively within the District Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway improvements (linked to new food store) Car parking provision (linked to new food store) Taxi Rank within the High Street 	<p>Traffic & Road Safety</p> <p>Traffic & Road Safety</p> <p>Street Care Traffic & Road Safety</p>	<p>-DMBC working with retail developer to look at solutions to traffic issues associated with potential food store development.</p> <p>DMBC in discussion with retail developer regarding associated parking provision.</p> <p>There are no plans for a taxi rank in Lye High Street; however funds might be available within 2011-20012 financial years to consider improvements to the whole of Lye Town Centre, in terms of bus access, the evening economy and on-street parking.</p>
AM2	To encourage alternative modes of travel to car uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements to the pedestrian environment (linked with new food store) Railway Station 	Traffic & Road Safety	DMBC working with the retail developer designing the food store to ensure that the pedestrian environment is enhanced within design proposals.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements 	Street Care	<p>During 2005/06 Centro have made the following improvements to Lye Train Station:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the footbridge • The car park has been resurfaced • New vandal proof shelter • CCTV and lighting has been installed <p>There are no plans to make any other upgrades to the Station apart from revamping the customer information but this is a long term plan.</p> <p>Improvements along the pedestrian route to the Railway Station have not taken place. The Local and District Centres Officers Group have recently met on site to look at improving this pedestrian route and an Access Strategy will be produced shortly.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle parking facilities • Park and Ride policy review 	Street Care	Will be incorporated into the design of the parking area for the proposed food store and other future developments that require parking provision.
			Traffic & Road Safety (with Centro) All DMBC	<p>A Park and Ride policy is no longer considered appropriate for a number of reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It brings commuters too far into the conurbation prior to mode switch. • The expanded facilities at Stourbridge already provide a better solution and there still remains some spare capacity there. • There may be a loss of some of the publicly available car parks at Lye in the medium term, due to future development aspirations.
DESIGN FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY -DC1	To increase community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety Strategy Development Implementation 	Design & Projects DMBC/police/local partnerships	Neighbourhood Management are leading on the Community Safety Strategy and working closely with the Lye Community Safety Group, DMBC Community Safety Team and the Regeneration Projects Team. The aim of this initiative will be to write a strategy for Lye that reflects the Borough Community Safety Strategy and the Lye District Centre Action Plan.
EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMY -EE1	To support the development of the local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Strategy • Comprehensive 	Resources & Partnerships, DMBC	A meeting has been scheduled with Dudley Future Skills to discuss the potential for developing an Employment Strategy for Lye.
			DMBC/private	A meeting has been scheduled with Traffic to establish whether the

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> redevelopment, north of Stourbridge Road • -Brief/Design • Implementation 	sector/AWM	comprehensive redevelopment of the land north of Stourbridge Road is still a priority and if so work up a plan to take this forward.
LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY -LS1	To enhance and sustain the local environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the local environment -identify priorities -Programme of improvements 	Urban Policy DMBC/Groundworks/Local groups	.The Lye and Wollescote Partnership have an Environmental Subgroup are in the process of identifying projects to enhance the local environment. Recently the Partnership has secured funding from the Lottery to support local community group in planting projects to improve public spaces in Lye.
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES -HC1	To support the development of local health and social care provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of the Sure Start programme Family centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design - Construction - Lye Cross Shop conversion • Support the development of health initiatives with local eating establishments 	Resources & Partnerships, DMBC/Sure Start Development & Environmental Protection DMBC/traders	The construction of the Sure Start Family Centre began in January 2006. The facilities planned for this Centre include a day-care nursery, community room which in the future will be rented out to community groups and training providers, a drop-in centre, public café and information point. The conversion of the Lye Cross Shop by Sure Start has also taken place. A number of eating establishments in Lye took place in the Healthy Take Away Award 2004. Further work could be carried out to try and promote the Dudley Food for Health Award run through DMBC Environmental Health Officers with food and drink establishments in Lye.
-HC2	To support the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lye Sports Ground Improvements 	Sport & Recreation DMBC/sports	Lye Town Football Club have recently applied to the National Lottery for funding towards a training pitch for youngsters, creation of a multipurpose stand for disabled fans, resurfacing of the car park and new changing rooms. The Club

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	enhancement of existing recreation provision	-Development plan -Proposals	club/funding agencies inc. Lottery	recently were granted £5,000 from the Stourbridge Area Committee to assist with the costs of resurfacing the car park.
URBAN HOUSING -UH1	To develop new sites for quality housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring forward sites for housing redevelopment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Valley Road - Brief/Plans - Development ➤ Vicarage Road - Development 	Design & Projects, DMBC	DMBC Engineers have agreed that the proposed residential sites on Valley Road and the Lye bypass can be brought forward to Area Committee to be declared as surplus because all work to the bypass is complete. Sure Start were originally interested in using the site on Lye bypass for temporary accommodation while the Children's Centre was being built but they have confirmed that they no longer require this land. Legal and Property are now in a position where they can take these sites forward for marketing.
-UH2		Marketing Strategy and property assessment Conversion programme	Resources & Partnership/Housing/DMBC	Not taken place. This action was to be incorporated into the marketing strategy mentioned under DF3 which is unlikely to go ahead because the funding source originally identified to deliver this project is no longer available.