

Report to Willenhall LNP, 8th November 2006

Regeneration of Central Willenhall

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Willenhall LNP on the Council's plans – in conjunction with Walsall Housing Group for the regeneration of Central Willenhall and to seek the assistance of the LNP in establishing a project reference group to engage the local community and stakeholders.

2.0 Recommendations

The LNP is recommended to:

- (1) Note the contents of this report;
- (2) Support the establishment of a project reference group to oversee the Central Willenhall masterplan and regeneration project.
- (3) Nominate up to five of its members to join the project reference group and to suggest up to five local organisations from which representatives should also be drawn.
- (4) Receive regular reports from the reference group on progress on the regeneration project.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Central Willenhall has been identified as a key regeneration project within the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for the Borough approved by Cabinet on 22nd March 2006. Cabinet has also agreed, at its meeting on 18th October 2006, that Willenhall should be one of the first priorities in this programme.
- 3.2 To take the project forward The Council, with its partner Walsall Housing Group (whg) intend to appoint consultants to prepare a comprehensive masterplan for the area. The broad aim of the masterplan is to devise a strategy for the regeneration of, and investment in, Central Willenhall, to create a mixed use urban village, and will:
- Focus on the delivery and implementation of change;
 - Set the overall context for future housing investment in the area;
 - Establish ways to create a sustainable community through improving access and improvements to the environment, particularly the market place and conservation area;
 - Consider key non-housing existing land uses, including the Assa Abloy site and other former employment sites around the centre;
- 3.3 A project team, comprising the consultants, and officers of the council and whg will be established to manage the delivery of the project on a day-to-day basis. The team will

be led by a project officer specifically appointed – and funded through the local Authority Business Growth Incentive – to manage the Central Willenhall regeneration scheme, a reflection of the priority that is being attached to this project.

4.0 Masterplan

- 4.1 Previous work in Willenhall centre has identified a range of development and environmental improvement opportunities, and a number of improvements have been delivered through the HERS project in particular. The proposed THI scheme will also build on these initiatives. The masterplan for central Willenhall will widen the regeneration area and develop this work, by providing an overall framework to guide and stimulate future investment in the area from both the public and private sectors. It is intended that the masterplan will fundamentally set out a realistic vision for the area concentrating on enhancement of and investment in the centre, implementation of housing led initiatives, community, open space, employment land, transportation and other physical improvements
- 4.2 The masterplan will identify the needs and aspirations of the local community (e.g. residents, organisations and businesses) and how these can be incorporated in the regeneration of the area. There will be full consultation on the stages leading to the draft masterplan and the community will subsequently have the opportunity to comment on individual proposals in the form of planning applications submitted by developers, in line with the agreed masterplan.
- 4.3 It is envisaged that the reference group will need to participate in the selection process for the appointment of the consultants to produce the masterplan and in agreeing the consultants brief.

5.0 Project Reference Group

- 5.1 The Council is seeking to engage the local community and key stakeholders throughout the regeneration project by setting up a reference group, made up of representatives from the LNP and relevant local organisations. The reference group will have up to 10 members, with five being members of the LNP and the remaining five members being drawn from local representative organisations in Willenhall. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Enterprise, or his nominee, will also attend the meetings to provide a strategic overview on Walsall – wide regeneration matters.
- 5.2 The purpose of the reference group is to essentially drive the project and ensure ongoing communication with the project team. In practice this will involve receiving reports from the project team, commenting on emerging plans and strategies, advising on community consultation and providing feedback to the local community.
- 5.3 The reference group will meet every two months, prior to the LNP meeting, to enable regular reports to be given to the LNP. The project officer will be responsible for organising and servicing meetings and detailed terms of reference will be prepared by the Council for consideration at the first meeting.

5.4 The LNP is asked to nominate up to five of its members to join the project reference group and to suggest up to five local organisations from which representatives can be drawn. The LNP is also asked to receive reports from the reference group on a regular basis.

Annex 1: Draft Terms of Reference

WILLENHALL CENTRE PROJECT – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference

The draft terms of reference set out the proposed purpose, composition and working arrangements for the Willenhall project reference group.

Purpose of the group

The reference group will advise the project team on the development of the project, which will involve:

- a) Receiving reports from the project team
- b) Commenting on emerging plans and strategies
- c) Advising on how to consult the local community
- d) Providing feedback to the local community

Subject to the agreement of the group, members may also be involved in other activities which contribute to the overall delivery of the project.

Composition

The reference group will have up to 10 members, with five being members of the LNP and the remaining five members being drawn from local representative organisations in Willenhall.

The reference group will select a chair who will be responsible for agreeing the agenda with the project team leader and chairing individual meetings. The chair should be a member of the LNP and will also report back to the LNP on a regular basis.

If members are unable to attend a meeting they may send a deputy in their place but they should notify the project team leader (the secretary) in advance of the meeting. Members intending to resign should notify the chair and if possible should nominate a replacement.

Secretariat

The project team leader will organise and service meetings, including the preparation and circulation of agendas, reports and notes of meetings.

Frequency of meetings

The reference group will meet every two months, prior to the LNP meeting, to enable regular reporting to the LNP. Meeting dates will be agreed in advance and circulated to members of the group.

Location of meetings

Meetings will be held at suitable local venues in Willenhall.