Walsall Beacon Gateways
2nd Phase of Consultation with the LNP's

Aldridge South & Streetly

Information on the Concept of the Beacon Gateways

The Beacon Gateway Project is part of Walsall's Strategic Corridors & Gateways Regeneration Initiative. The concept of gateway projects is recognised as a part of the infrastructure necessary to support a sustained programme of economic, social and environmental regeneration. This infrastructure will create the impetus for the creation of new jobs, improving transport connections, attracting new investment to develop brown field sites, strengthening existing communities and attracting new residential development.

Walsall is to create a network of 'beacons gateways' to demarcate the road entry points to the Borough, promote the town centres and railway stations, as well as reflecting the diverse and distinctive qualities of its communities. In summary, Walsall Beacon Gateways aim to:

- **Improve the visual quality of the main gateway entry points to the Borough**
- **Development of a distinctive "brand" for Walsall which promotes the Borough's major assets**
- **Creation of quality environments in key locations that support existing businesses and residential communities, and attract people into the borough of Walsall**
- **Development of local district themes, which help to strengthen local identity and have strong local support**

The themes for gateways have been developed through a programme of public consultation meetings focusing on the LNP (Local Neighbourhood Partnerships) in which local communities have developed ideas for the features that reflect the aspirations of their local areas and the wider Walsall Metropolitan Borough.

There will be approximately 19No. Boundary Gateway Signs at key road entry points and junctions in the Borough. They will relate to the LNP areas in which they located and will have the text, for example; 'Welcome to Brownhills in the Borough of Walsall'. Each feature will have its own bespoke section dedicated to images, e.g. landmarks, symbols of heritage and culture, local aspirations relevant to each individual area. These Gateways will be located in all nine LNP areas:

- **Aldridge South and Streetly, Blakenall and Bloxwich, Brownhills Aldridge North, Darlaston, Palfrey and Pleck, Pelsall and Rushall-Shelfield, Pheasey and Paddock, St. Matthews and Birchills Leamore, Willenhall**

4No Features will be located in three railway stations located within the Borough:

- **Bloxwich, Walsall, Bescot**

Gateway Features will be also be located in the six town centres within the Borough which are:

- **Brownhills, Aldridge, Walsall, Bloxwich, Willenhall, Darlaston**

In total, their will be approximately 29No. Gateway Features located at the boundary entry points, railway stations and town centres.

Notes taken at the last LNP Meeting attended by the Community Arts Team

Aldridge South & Streetly

Date of Meeting: 14th June 2005
Venue for Meeting: Aldridge Comprehensive School
Interviewees:
Keith Harvey Streetly Assn, Bill Rees Aldridge P,S; Bill Rees Aldridge P.S; Mat Minton, Helen Turnbull, Inspector Gwen Bevan, Safer Walsall Borough Partnership; Lynn Bevan, Tracy Work, Susannah Green, Jane Harvey, Melissa Slater, Richard Slater Ian Nash ;Hundred Acre Playgroup, Michael Garrney, Walsall MBC; Colleen Knight; John Knight; Paul Underwood; Neighbourhood Watch; Ron Urseli; Brian Husselbee; Arthur Lee, Walcat; Tim German ED Walsall; Jean Pinketh Streetly Health Watch; Colin Boswell; Roy Knight

The following are keynotes taken from the meeting:

Potential Locations of Boundary, Station & Town Centre Signs

- Town centre sign should be located on the high street where people can see it and read the information, i.e. text about the town and possible map
- The town centre sign not to be located on the traffic island
- The location of the boundary signs can be discussed at a further meeting with the Highways Task Group of the LNP

Potential Themes for Signs

- Local Church – which is beautiful
- Brick making is a key aspect of the local heritage. Brick used to create parts of the harbour in Sydney, Australia
- The park should feature located in Streetly
- There is a sailing club in Aldridge
- Steam train
- There is a Roman road in the area
- The airport was important during the war

Local people are involved is researching the local history, for example:

- The Aldridge Women's Guild has produced banners that reflect the history of the area
- Jean Penketh – a local resident has researched the history of Aldridge and Streetly. She is willing to share this information if it would be useful

Other Community Comments

- Lighting should be used to illuminate the signs
- Town twinning which European partners is important to many towns within Walsall. Possibly this information could be incorporated in the signs
- Need clear dominant images, particularly for the boundary signs because most people viewing the signs will be drivers who will not have the time to look at detailed imagery.
- However, the above is different for the town centre signs where people can get closer to the signs to read the information and view the images
- Rather than 'Return to Walsall Soon' it would be preferable to have, for example 'Thank you for Visiting Walsall'

Transcript of the text for the Town Centre Feature

The name 'Aldridge' comes from a Saxon word, 'Alrewic' which means 'the Alder Village'. It is believed there had been settlements in the area since the Middle Stone age; flints have been found at Bourne Pool along with ancient earthworks. Aldridge is mentioned in the Doomsday Book and is valued at 15 shillings. It is likely that Aldridge began as a small agricultural settlement and the census of 1841 shows the most common occupation to still be that of farmer together with agricultural labourers.

In the 19th century the area was transformed into an industrial community. The underlying seams of coal and clay gave rise to the opening of several collieries and brickworks. The clay extracted in Aldridge is particularly suited to the manufacture of blue bricks from which excellent tiles, quoins, and bricks were made, and sent to all parts. For example, Aldridge bricks were used in the construction of the harbour in Sydney, Australia. The development of these industries initially saw the construction of canals and railways into the area. The population expanded rapidly as people moved into Aldridge to work in all of these industries

The 1960's saw the evolution of 'The Village', as residents call Aldridge, into a town. All of the buildings in the High Street were demolished over a period of time to make way for modern shop units. The council offices made way for a shopping precinct and the cutback in rail services resulted in the closure of the railway station. The core of historic Aldridge remains, preserved in a Conservation Area, which includes notable buildings such as St Mary's church, which dates from 1250, the Moot House, and the Croft. Other fine Victorian and Edwardian houses also survive which serve as a reminder of how Aldridge used to look.

Welcome to Streetly in the borough of Walsall

www.walsall.gov.uk

Walsall
Council

Thank you for visiting Walsall

Streetly

Walsall
Council

GATEWAY BEACON FEATURES Scale 1:10 (A3)
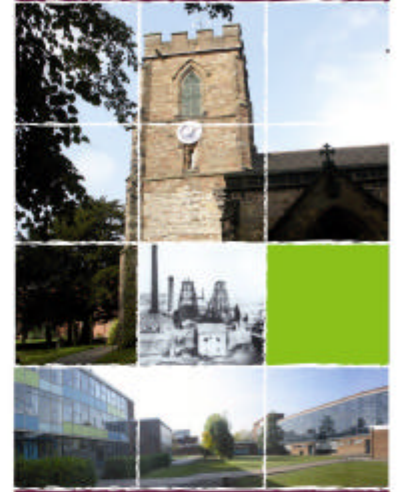**Boundary Gateways - Streetly**

Artwork by Tim Ward of Circling the Square
for Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Photographic Images

Trees in Streetly Park, local church, sections from the community
banner - horticultural club, bus, Streetly Youth Orchestra, rugby club
logo, views of Streetly - Hardwick Arms, local streets, heritage - brick
making & Christmas dinner for the elderly

Welcome to Aldridge in the borough of Walsall

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Walsall Council

Thank you for visiting Walsall

Aldridge

Walsall Council

GATEWAY BEACON FEATURES   Scale 1:10 (A3)
Boundary Gateways - Aldridge

Artwork by Tim Ward of Circling the Square
for Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Photographic Images

Aldridge sailing club, St Mary's Church, stained glass window, horse
by the lake, heritage - brick making, Orion building & railway, Aldridge
School & logo,

Aldridge

Town
Centre

www.walsall.gov.uk

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Council

Aldridge

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GATEWAY BEACON FEATURES   Scale 1:10 (A3)
Town Centre Gateways - Aldridge

Artwork by Tim Ward of Circling the Square
for Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Photographic Images

The local church & stained glass window, Aldridge sailing club, Aldridge School - building, logo & pupils artwork, heritage - brick making, railway, manor house & Avion building, Streetly Youth Orchestra performing in the shopping centre, Streetly Park, Hardwick Arm and a horse by the lake.