

**Report to the Darlaston Local Neighbourhood Partnership
Meeting to be held 10th January 2007
Bentley Centre Regeneration Project**

Report Purpose: To update Darlaston LNP on the progress of the Bentley Centre Regeneration project.

Report Background: The Bentley Centre Regeneration Project forms part of the Council's Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) Programme being delivered across the Borough's District and Local Centres.

The Darlaston LNP had previously been presented with a concept idea for a regeneration project in Bentley. This regeneration concept formed the basis of a consultants brief to deliver a regeneration masterplan for Bentley. The masterplan is due to produce guidance and advice on the use and transformation of development sites (including the location and procurement of a new library for Bentley), design guidance for new development (and for the improvement of the public realm), and a financial indication of the likely costs involved in realising the regeneration vision for Bentley. At a meeting of the LNP, members were invited to be represented on the Project Reference Group (PRG) - the steering group for the Bentley Centre Regeneration Project.

Progress to Date:

The Bentley Centre Regeneration Project is being delivered in a number of phases, with the delivery of the final masterplan being the first phase. The final masterplan has too being delivered in stages and at the time of writing this report a draft masterplan is being prepared by the consultancy team. The following details the stages undertaken to date.

- Stage One: Mobilisation

The appointment of consultancy team 'Derek Latham & Company Ltd' was made in July 2006. Following the appointment Latham's began to scope out the key regeneration issues within Bentley by working in close partnership with the Council and the PRG.

- Stage Two: Scoping

The scoping stage involved a particular focus upon community consultation and the concept of 'Building a Better Bentley'. A large consultation event that took place on Saturday 30th September 2006, at the Emanuel Church (and the Cairn) with every household in Bentley being invited to attend. The purpose of the event was to capture the community's views on Bentley's present and its potential future. The community took part in consultation activities relating specifically to the masterplan and also discovered more about Bentley's past through the archaeological dig on Bentley Cairn, told us their thoughts through the use of a vox pop video (this was used to interview the community leading up to the event on the 30th), and involved local school children in art workshops to produce an exhibit of their memories of Bentley and their hopes for its future. The consultation event was attended by over 200 residents whose input proved invaluable to informing the next stage of the masterplan.

- Stage Three: Masterplan Options:

Having listened to the community in September the consultancy team interpreted the community's feedback into a Draft Vision for Bentley, a series of Ten Commitments

and three Strategic Options for delivering the recently formed vision. At a meeting of the PRG in November the group 'signed up' to the draft vision and commitments for change; forming the foundation for the final masterplan. (See appendix 1)

The Strategic Options (A, B, C) were consulted upon with the Bentley community at an event held on Saturday 2nd December 2006. The options featured key redevelopment sites alongside those areas of the local centre that the community thought required improvement e.g. improvements to the shopping parade. Each option built upon the previous; with A being the baseline and C being the most intensive form of intervention. The community completed questionnaires, informing the consultancy team of those elements preferred before being asked to select a preferred option. Early feedback from the consultancy team suggests that over 40 residents completed questionnaires of which the quality of responses was particularly good. Members of the PRG and the Bentley Project Team (formed of officers from a range of departments) also provided important feedback on the Strategic Options.

Next Stages:

- Stage Four: Draft

The consultancy team are currently forming a draft masterplan based upon the community consultation, the preferred Strategic Option and other deciding factors such as deliverability. The draft masterplan will be presented to the PRG on Thursday 18th January 2007. At this time the PRG and others (partners and council departments) will be asked to provide final feedback on the content of the plan before it is formed into the formal masterplan.

- Stage Five: Final

We anticipate that the final masterplan will be available to the community, partners and developers before the end of the financial year. The LNP may wish to request for information regarding this at a future meeting.

- On-going

Officers involved in the project continue to meet regularly to monitor progress of the regeneration project. Key elements of the on-going work include discussions with interested developers for those sites requiring redevelopment, work to complete the specification for the new library, further investigation into site conditions and the archaeological nature of sites such as the Cairn, and work with partners to look at regeneration issues that extend beyond the physical transformation of Bentley e.g. neighbourhood management related matters.

Key Dates:

Project Reference Group Meeting Thursday 18th January 2007
Production of the final masterplan before 31st March 2007

Contact Details:

For further information regarding the Bentley Centre Regeneration Project please contact Jo Nugent, Senior Regeneration Officer 01922 652483

Appendix 1: Bentley Draft Vision and Ten Commitments for Change.

Vision

Through an exciting masterplan and unfolding new investment Bentley will become a more desirable and attractive place for all members of the community to live in, with a thriving local centre at its heart, offering a range of well designed, good quality facilities; set within a distinctive and well cared for environment of streets and landscaped green spaces.

Building a Better Bentley - Ten Commitments for Change

The draft vision is supported by the following commitments for change which represent the priorities for action over the next three to five years:

One

A 21st century community library that sets the quality standard for the regeneration of Bentley in terms of design, facilities and resources; and creates a landmark building that the people of Bentley can be proud of;

Two

Improvements to the shopping parade and it's immediate surroundings, including environmental and traffic management improvements to address access and parking difficulties, and making the area more secure and attractive to shoppers;

Three

Improvements to the local environment, beginning with greater cleanliness and maintenance of streets and spaces;

Four

Tackling under used and derelict buildings and sites;

Five

Improvements to valued open green spaces, providing better designed, managed and maintained play and recreation areas; and a greater range of activities to suit all age groups;

Six

Provision of new housing to meet the needs of local people and to enable the community to grow in a planned way;

Seven

More and/or better managed facilities and services to support the development of children and young people through play, education, information and guidance;

Eight

More and/or better managed leisure and social facilities for adults and families;

Nine

Better intervention to deal with anti social behaviour; and

Ten

Taking forward the regeneration of Bentley through a creative process of continuing community involvement and dialogue.