

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

5TH OCTOBER 2006

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

INFORMATION ITEM

STOCKTON MARKETS REDEVELOPMENT

REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT - COUNCILLOR R COOK

SUMMARY

Following the Drivers Jonas Report (2004) on the regeneration of Stockton town centre, and a subsequent report into the viability of the market by Quarterbridge (2005), Stockton Borough Council resolved to support a Markets Improvement Plan (Oct 05, Cabinet Key Decision 3 Nov 05) to redevelop and regenerate Stockton's market, in order to maintain and enhance its viability and its contribution to the economic success of the town centre.

The Markets Improvement Plan set out the steps to be taken to achieve this regeneration, and the Markets Service is audited against this to monitor progress.

This report sets out the progress to date against that plan and specifically, provides information on the proposed redesign of market stalls and their layout.

BACKGROUND

1. The Drivers Jonas Report (2004) set out the importance of the market to the economic vitality of Stockton Town Centre and highlights the need to revitalise and upgrade the appearance of Stockton's statutory markets. The subsequent Markets Improvement Plan adopted by the Markets Forum on 26 October 2005 (Cabinet Key Decision 3 Nov 05) set out a number of key milestones namely:
 - Design, commission and purchase of new stalls.
 - Redesign layout of market to improve appearance, visibility, accessibility and ease of servicing.
 - Revision of licences to improve the Council's ability to control use of High Street and enforcement of conditions of trading.

DETAIL

CONSULTATION

2. Over the past 18 months market traders, officers and members have been working on developing the plan for the revitalised market. Detailed consultation has taken place on the following:
 - Design, materials and construction of new stalls and covers:
 - Waste collection and cleansing;
 - Layout of new stalls.

3. Three different variations on one stall design were chosen based around the traditional, sectional square market stall but with improvements to the materials, construction and fastening mechanisms. Diagrams will be placed in the Members Library for reference purposes.
4. It is believed that these will accommodate the majority of stallholders' requirements, the only exceptions being meat, fish and burger vans. The interiors are fully adaptable to accommodate the wide range of goods on sale.
5. In addition, from the three weights of stall cover available, for practicality a medium weight, UPVC covered material canopy material has been chosen for trial.
6. Consultation with the traders has taken the form of:
 - Discussion at Market Forum meetings which take place approximately every two months and which are open to all stallholders;
 - Feedback via the Association of Market Traders' representatives;
 - Detailed discussion at a special seminar convened for all Forum members to discuss the three aspects of the project detailed above, at the Swallow Hotel in April 2006. This was not well attended by traders, however, the discussion was productive and enabled a new design specification to be produced and discussed with the Association of Market Traders representatives;
 - A newsletter to all market traders keeping them informed of progress;
 - Informal discussions between officers and traders, which are ongoing
7. The views of market traders have been actively sought and suggestions incorporated wherever possible within the process. Although initially supportive of the proposed changes, some concerns have recently been expressed that the project will in fact lead to the demise of the market. These concerns are based largely on the impact of nearby settlements' market redevelopment programmes which bear little resemblance to Stockton's proposals.

NEXT STEPS

8. In order to maintain the momentum of this project further consultation has been set, to overcome the concerns of the Market Traders. This will include:
 - Stalls erected in Dovecot Street for one week on market days to allow all traders to view them;
 - Volunteers will be sought to trial the new stalls on a market day and provide feedback to the markets team and to other traders
 - Changes and amendments to the design identified through this process will be reported back to the prototype manufacturer and specifications altered.
9. In addition to the capital purchase, there is a requirement for some minor works to be carried out to the High Street area as follows:
 - Remove majority of existing redundant bollards, originally installed to supply mains power to the market stalls. This option was found to be too expensive by stallholders in the past and those stallholders who require power now have their own silent running generators;
 - Insert locking mechanisms at key points which will anchor each row of stalls in place, thereby controlling layout and preventing 'stall creep'.

STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

10. How the new stalls are stored and distributed for Market is crucial to the success of the project. Proposals for distribution and erection of the stalls are still the subject of consultation and negotiation with traders and this will be reported once the matter has been resolved satisfactorily. Officers are currently investigating the feasibility of bringing back into use Corporation Hall to provide a store. A detailed proposal will be submitted through the appropriate channels for consideration in due course.

TIMESCALE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

11. The timescale for implementation is at **Annex A** to this report.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

12. A specialist company was commissioned to design and construct prototypes. However due to the level of spend involved a full procurement exercise will be conducted for the actual purchase of stalls and canopies. Interested parties will be invited to an open day to view the stalls, obtain copies of the specification and ask questions; these companies will be asked to submit a tender under the formal tendering procedures for the Council
13. A capital allocation of £175,000 was agreed for this project, principally for the purchase of new stalls and accessories. At this time it is not anticipated that the project will exceed that allocation and therefore no further financial implications are expected. It is likely that spend will be achieved in Quarter 4 of 2006/7.

Legal

14. The redevelopment of the market will include changes to the Terms and Conditions of the issue of a daily licence to trade to enable tighter and more effective management of the market.

RISK ASSESSMENT

15. This market redevelopment programme is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Environment

16. The redevelopment of the market will constitute a significant improvement to the environment of the town centre on market days. Pedestrian access, sight lines and cleanliness as well as general perception of the market will be improved as a result of this project.

Community Safety and Well-Being

17.
 - Pedestrian access within the market will be improved.
 - Clutter and hazards will be reduced.
 - The Council will maintain the new stalls thereby ensuring safety standards are adhered to.

Health

18. Stockton market provides a vital source of fresh food for those on low incomes. This project will help to ensure the viability and continuation of that resource.

Economic Regeneration

19. This project is integral to the Council's stated objectives for the regeneration of Stockton town centre

Education and Lifelong Learning

20. No direct impact.

Arts and Culture

21. Stockton's market has long been part of the cultural offer of the town for which it is rightly famous. This project seeks to halt the decline of that cultural asset and raise its profile as a local, sub-regional and regional shopping destination.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

As detailed in the main body of report, and

Cllr R Cook
Cllr Mrs S Fletcher
Cllr W Noble
Cllr Mrs J Beaumont
Cllr Narroway
Central Area Partnership Board of Renaissance Partnership

Name of Contact Officer	Sue Burgess
Post Title	Town Centre Manager
Telephone No.	01642 527569
Email Address:	sue.burgess@stockton.gov.uk

Background Papers

Drivers Jonas Report (2004)
Markets Improvement Plan (Oct 2005)

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Cllr P Kirton (Ward Councillor)
Cllr D Coleman (Ward Councillor)

Property

The new stalls will be the property of the Council. Some minor works to the pedestrian area of Stockton High Street will be required to accommodate locking mechanisms for end stalls.

Timescale for completion of markets redevelopment project

The timescale for this project is currently predicted as follows:

First week October 06

- Delivery of prototypes

October & November 06

- Prototype stalls trialled by stallholders
- Feedback obtained

November 06

- Amendments to design
- Procurement open day
- Bollards removed from High Street

December 06

- Tenders received
- Stalls commissioned

January/February 07

- New infrastructure works carried out
- Stores made ready to receive stalls

March 07

- Stalls received

April 07

- Launch/completion of project