

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**17 MARCH 2011**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**Regeneration and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Cook**

#### **STOCKTON TOWN CENTRE URBAN DESIGN GUIDE**

1. Summary

This report provides a summary of the draft Stockton-on-Tees Town Centre Urban Design Guide, which aims to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre by providing design guidance for any party involved in the regeneration of the town centre, on areas undergoing change or where change needs to be promoted and managed. The draft Guide sets a framework for establishing a strong network of buildings, streets and spaces that delivers both quality and meets the needs of the town centre and its users; whilst protecting and reinforcing the distinctive historic character of the town centre.

It is the intention for the document to fit within Local Development Framework, as a Supplementary Planning Document within the Regeneration DPD. It provides the context of the town centre's historic evolution and detailed urban design analysis of the centre's land uses, scale, urban grain, frontages, landmarks, public realm, movement and parking has been used to appraise the town centre's five distinct character areas and inform the vision for the central area as well as a masterplan for the whole Town Centre using urban design principles of best practice. The document builds on the detail set out by the 2011 Stockton Town Centre Prospectus and is a tool that will enable the vision of the prospectus to be delivered over time. A full copy of the draft Urban Design Guide is available in the Members' Library.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet endorse the principles for the regeneration of Stockton Town Centre as set out in the draft Urban Design Guide, and the Head of Technical Services proceeds with the programme of consultation detailed in **Appendix 3**.
2. The Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Head of Regeneration & Economic Development and Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport consult on and develop the Urban Design Guide through to its final draft, with a further report to be brought to Cabinet for approval as part of the Local Development Framework work programme.
3. Members note the Stockton Town Centre Prospectus and its relationship to the draft Stockton Town Centre Urban Design Guide.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

In order to guide future development, to ensure the continued and improved vitality and viability of Stockton-on-Tees town centre.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

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**SUMMARY**

This report provides a summary of the draft Stockton-on-Tees Town Centre Urban Design Guide, which aims to revitalise the central area by providing design guidance for any party involved in the regeneration of the town centre, on areas undergoing change and identifying where growth or change needs to be promoted and managed within the centre. Detailed urban design analysis has been used to inform the vision for the town centre and a masterplan of key projects incorporating urban design principles of best practice. Five key projects have been selected from the masterplan to be a priority for delivery on the basis of their impact to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet endorse the principles for the regeneration of Stockton Town Centre as set out in the draft Urban Design Guide, and the Head of Technical Services proceeds with the programme of consultation detailed in **Appendix 3**.
2. The Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Head of Regeneration & Economic Development and Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport consult on and develop the Urban Design Guide through to its final draft, with a further report to be brought to Cabinet for approval as part of the Local Development Framework work programme.
3. Members note the Stockton Town Centre Prospectus and its relationship to the draft Stockton Town Centre Urban Design Guide.

**DETAIL**

1. The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, in line with the current national economic picture is in a challenging period for economic growth. However Stockton Town Centre remains a focus for retail, business, and leisure for many. As the economy begins to recover, the assets within the Town Centre must be built upon to ensure that a new and exciting era of positive change brings growth. There is real potential to attract new investment, businesses, residents and visitors through a strategic and integrated approach to the town centre's regeneration. Although already obvious to many, the future needs were identified and evidenced in both the Stockton Town Centre Study (Nathaniel Litchfield & Partners 2008) and Stockton Central Area Investment Strategy (Genecon 2010). This work suggested the need for a planning policy to be developed ensure that the authority has the power to guide development into the most appropriate locations, resist applications that do not benefit or support the key development priorities for the town centre and give potential investors comfort that the council

has a robust strategic vision for the Stockton Central Area. It was recommended that the most appropriate way forward in planning terms was to produce detailed guidance for this area through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2. The draft Stockton Town Centre Urban Design Guide has been designed to be used by any party involved in the ongoing regeneration of Stockton town centre, and will ultimately form part of the planning framework. It creates a sound basis of understanding of the built form and how this can be preserved and enhanced by providing design guidance for areas undergoing change and identifying areas where growth or change needs to be promoted and managed within the centre.
3. The Guide aims to deliver positive change that will revitalise the central area by establishing a strong network of buildings, streets and spaces that delivers both quality and meets the needs of the town centre and its users; whilst protecting and reinforcing the distinctive historic character of the town centre. It provides detailed analysis of the town centre's current situation including a health check; land uses; scale; urban grain; frontages; landmarks and visual structure; pedestrian circulation, public realm and green space; and movement and parking. The conclusions of this analysis are used to summarise the constraints and assets of the town centre, which inform the framework and urban design principles for the town centre.
4. The document sets out ten urban design principles that all town centre developments should follow including investing in *quality* to secure the right design team to deliver quality design and materials; that developments create a sense of *identity* that enhances the town centre's historic character, creates an impact and sense of arrival; have clear *legibility* to ensure they are welcoming, easy to use and orientate; and provide good *connectivity* by creating visual and physical links to the surrounding buildings, spaces and transport corridors.
5. Central Stockton comprises a number of sub areas that reflect different historical, land use and physical characteristics. Gaining an understanding of the centre's Character Areas ensures a clear identity emerges in each area and clear connections between individual areas. The town centre is comprised of five character areas the Norton Road area; Church Road to the east linking with North Shore; The Riverside; Southern Gateway; and the Central High Street area. The components of the character for each area is considered in terms of urban grain, heritage significance, open spaces and built form, which are used to assess the area's role in the urban design framework and townscape opportunities in order to deliver the vision for the town centre.
6. The historic context, urban design analysis and character area guidelines have been used as the foundations for a concept plan and vision for a sustainable and attractive town centre. These have subsequently formed the basis for a more detailed masterplan for the whole of the town centre, with public realm schemes worked up to traffic regulation standards; and scale and massing indicated for new developments shown in **Appendix 1**.
7. The first step in delivering the masterplan has been the prioritisation of key projects that will stimulate retention and early investment. Recognising that the guide will follow a timely due process with regard to its status as a planning document, it is important to recognise the need to capture the ambition and vision for the Town Centre, whilst not forgetting the context and principles of the guide. To this, the Stockton Town Centre Prospectus was developed, that could be used as a public facing document that captures the investment already planned in the Town Centre area.
8. The Prospectus outlines a number of proposed projects and developments across Stockton Town Centre coming out of the Urban Design Guide. The prospectus has been produced to be used as a means of promoting current, planned and future projects across the town centre and is aimed at existing and future businesses and partners who have an interest in the future development and growth of the town centre. Members and Officers will use the

prospectus to create confidence amongst investors as to the Council's vision for the town centre. In parallel, work to develop the draft Urban Design Guide will continue and the process of adoption will follow, building on the work of the Prospectus, to ensure a long term strategy is in place for the regeneration of Stockton Town Centre.

## **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

9. It is intended that the Guide will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as it builds on the policies of the emerging Local Development Framework, in particular the Regeneration Development Plan Document (DPD). The legitimacy of the Urban Design Guide is dependent on the parent document, the Regeneration DPD, and the statutory process for the delivery of this document is lengthy and involves many distinct stages. Upon completion, the Submission version of the Regeneration DPD and the evidence base are submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination. Thereafter, if at Examination the document is found 'sound', the Council can move forward to adopt the document. The Regeneration DPD is mid-way through this process, with Issues and Options consulted on in September 2007. Consultation on the Preferred Options document is due in November 2010, and adoption is anticipated for February 2013. It is likely that the Urban Design Guide will follow shortly afterwards, but will have to remain in draft format in the interim.
10. Developer contributions towards public realm improvements are detailed in the Local Development Framework SPD 6: Planning Obligations. It sets out the Council's approach to planning obligations (secured via Section 106 agreements) and guidance on contributing towards the cost of improved infrastructure and public realm works as a result of increased demand from a development.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. The Urban Design Guide Masterplan will require a multi-million pound investment over a considerable period. The funding for the Tees Valley Major Bus Scheme has been secured, which together with the £1million Council contribution approved by Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2010 will enable the delivery of the Globe & Northern Loop project. Officers will work to secure funding opportunities in order to facilitate a phased approach to the delivery of the other aspects of the design guide.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

12. There will be a range of planning and highway legislative implications associated with the implementation of the five key projects. These could include use of the Council's powers for traffic regulation orders for alterations to the highway network, planning or listed building consent for alterations to properties, or Section 106 Agreements to secure monies towards proposed public realm works.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

13. The endorsement of the draft Urban Design Guide and its further development can be categorised as low risk with a low financial impact (>£1.5 million) and a high (50-80%) likelihood of occurring. As such, existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

14. The Stockton Town Centre Urban Design Guide will impact on many of the thematic areas of the Sustainable Community Strategy, supporting achievement of the Council's vision and ambitions for an enhanced quality of place and renewed town centres.

15. **Economic Regeneration and Transport** - the implementation of the Urban Design Guide will assist in achieving the key ambitions to create *vibrant and successful town centres* through creating a modern and vibrant Stockton town centre, improved gateways and links to the Riverside. This also supports the aspiration to provide *improved transport networks* by reconfiguring the bus and road links into the town centre to enable people to better access the services and facilities in the town centre. The Guide supports the ambition to provide *improved city-scale facilities* and *making better use of the River Tees* in line with the Tees Valley City-Region aspirations, by improving the urban environment of the town centre and riverside.
16. **Environment and Housing** – the implementation of the Urban Design Guide will also assist in achieving the key ambition to *deliver design quality* through improvement of the built environment at the site, which is a recognised economic driver through the influence on people’s perceptions of the area, increasing the liveability of the area and increasing investor confidence.
17. **Safer Communities** - the public realm improvements recommended in the Urban Design Guide will assist in achieving the key ambition to *reduce crime and fear of crime* through designing out crime with improved lighting and CCTV where necessary.
18. **Healthier Communities and Adults** – the implementation of the Urban Design Guide will contribute to the achievement of the ambition to *promote healthy living* by developing and improving the town centre environment to encourage residents to maximise the opportunities provided by the built and natural environment of the town centre and riverside to improve their physical and mental health.
19. **Stronger Communities** – when the vision of the Urban Design Guide is realised it will help to achieve the ambition to generate *increased community pride*, with the radically transformed town centre which will encourage pride in the local area.
20. **Older Adults** – the Urban Design Guide will assist in achieving the ambition to create a *welcoming community* for older adults, by improving the physical environment to ease access to and use of the town centre, through the provision of seating areas and on-street car parking at the heart of the town centre.
21. **Art, Leisure and Culture** – the public realm improvements recommended in the Urban Design Guide will assist in the achievement of the ambitions to *promote our festivals* and *promote the performing and visual arts* by providing a specially designed area of public realm to be used for performances at the heart of the town centre.

## EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

22. A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed, with a total impact score of +85. There were no negative impacts as a result of this decision. No direct prejudice occurs against any of the 7 equality groups as a result of the Stockton Town Centre Urban Design Guide, as the Guide’s recommendations for the regeneration of the town centre do not discriminate it’s users by age group, whether they have a disability, their faith or belief, gender, race, or sexual orientation. There were no recommended actions to alter the Guide to address potential negative impacts. A copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment is available if required.

## CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

23. Proposals detailed within the Urban Design Guide have been included in previous consultation events relating to the Stockton Town Centre Study and proposals for Stockton Riverside. Members should note that the proposed interventions are strategic in nature at present and further detailed consultation with key stakeholders and town centre users. The

Town Centre Prospectus is one example of an early method to seek the views of the local community. Further meetings with appropriate stakeholders will continue to be held as proposals are progressed further, such as bus and taxi operators, shopping centre owners, landowners, Retail Forum, Markets Forum, Disability Advisory Group, Central Area Partnership Board, English Heritage, Cleveland Police and Emergency Services, University of Durham Stockton Campus and Stockton Riverside College.

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Education related:

No

Background Papers

- Stockton Town Centre Prospectus (March 2011)
- Stockton Town Centre Study (2009) available in Members Library
- Reports to Cabinet on 05.08.10 (Stockton Central Area Update), 14.05.09 (Stockton Town Centre & Riverside Sites Update), 25.10.07 (Stockton Town Centre), 31.08.07 (Stockton Town Centre & Riverside Sites Action Plan), and 30.11.06 (Stockton Town Centre & Riverside Sites Masterplan & Action Plan), all available from <http://www.stockton.gov.uk/egenda>
- Stockton Riversides Sites Master Plan (2006) available in Members Library
- Stockton Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan (2004) available in Members Library
- Looking After Our Town Centres, DCLG Paper available from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/towncentres>
- Stockton on Tees Borough Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Adopted 24 March 2010 available from <http://www.stockton.gov.uk/resources/planning/CoreStrategy>
- Stockton on Tees Borough Council Regeneration Development Plan Document: Issues and Options September 2007 available from [http://www.stockton.gov.uk/citizenservices/planningdepartment/dev\\_plans/ldfhome/regendpdmmain/](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/citizenservices/planningdepartment/dev_plans/ldfhome/regendpdmmain/)

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Stockton Town Centre Ward: - Councillors Coleman & Kirton

Property:

Some of the key projects set out in the Urban Design Guide to be developed relate to Council owned land and property. The Guide also makes recommendations and provides guidance for private sector developments.

# Development Vision

## We are delivering...

- ① North High Street
- ② Central High Street
- ③ South High Street
- ④ Globe Theatre
- ⑤ Stockton Central Library
- ⑥ Historic Quarter Investment

▲ Artist led design & animation of Public Space

## We are working on...

- ⑦ Church Road Boulevard
- ⑧ Event Space
- ⑨ Castlegate Enhancements
- ⑩ Cultural Quarter
- ⑪ Creative Business Centre

## We are working towards...

- ⑫ Improvements to Norton Road
- ⑬ Redevelopment of Victoria Estate
- ⑭ Investment in Church Road
- ⑮ Development on North Shore Gateway
- ⑯ Delivery of Infinity View
- ⑰ Re-use of Swallow Hotel
- ⑱ Development of West Row Gap Sites
- ⑲ Development of Southern Gateway

▲ Provision of a Food Store





## Appendix 2 – Central Square Concept Visuals



# Appendix 3 – Forward Plan

