

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

8 DECEMBER 2011

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET/COUNCIL DECISION

Regeneration and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Michael Smith

STOCKTON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

1. Summary

This report provides an update on progress of regeneration proposals for Stockton High Street since public consultation in March 2011 and sets out revised designs for infrastructure improvements and public realm. The report also references associated works adjacent to the High Street that include Stockton Riverside.

The report also seeks delegated authority from Council to allocate approved funds to individual elements within the agreed scheme as well seeking approval for the use of Compulsory Purchase Powers (CPO) to acquire any outstanding interests that will enable a key element of the proposals to go ahead.

Since the launch of the prospectus in March 2011 all the projects that were listed for completion in 2011 are on programme, these include Globe Theatre refurbishment on site, North Shore Homezone on site, Stockton Central Library refurbishment complete, improvements to Heritage properties underway and adoption of the Town Centre Urban Design Guide.

2. Recommendations

1. Cabinet approve the proposals for infrastructure improvements and public realm on the southern section of Stockton High Street (illustrated at **Appendix 1**).
2. Cabinet approve the proposals for infrastructure improvements and public realm on the northern section of Stockton High Street (illustrated at **Appendix 2**).
3. Cabinet accept the design principles envisaged for Central Square (illustrated at **Appendix 3**)
4. Cabinet accept the design principles envisaged for Stockton Riverside improvements as detailed in the report.
5. Cabinet agree that the acquisition of the interests referred to in this report will facilitate the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement on or in relation to land in their area and Cabinet agree that the development, redevelopment or improvement of the land is likely to contribute to the achievement of the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area.

6. Cabinet note use the need to utilise up to £7.5m to fund schemes identified in this report from the Council's share of the VAT shelter, which will be considered as part of the budget report to Cabinet in February.
7. Cabinet approve the use of the Council's Compulsory Purchase powers under section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by section 99 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) to acquire all necessary interests in Lindsay House and the adjacent area required for the implementation of the redevelopment of the Lindsay House site. in line with the plan attached to this report at Appendix 2.
8. Cabinet approve the use of all actions necessary in accordance with the serving of Requisitions for Information, the making of the CPO, the representation of the Council in relation to any Inquiry, the confirmation of the CPO, the actions necessary following the confirmation of the CPO either by the authority or the Secretary of State, and consequent orders or actions including the service of Notices to Treat or the making of a General Vesting Declaration , and all other notices, orders or actions required to give effect to the authorisation to acquire the land compulsorily.
9. Cabinet approve the processing of Traffic Regulation Orders associated with the infrastructure and public realm improvements by the Corporate Director of Law & Democracy with any objections considered by the Head of Technical Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport.
10. Cabinet note that further detailed design work and liaison with key stakeholders is required to finalise individual elements of the scheme and that the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services be authorised in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport to approve alterations and implement works.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

Improving the economic performance of Stockton town centre is a key priority for the Council. Large scale improvements to infrastructure and public realm play a key role in achieving improved economic performance through the creation of a high quality environment. Approval of the above recommendations will enable this physical change to go ahead.

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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RECOMMENDATIONS

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DETAIL

High Street

1. Stockton High Street plays a key role in supporting and developing economic growth in Stockton town centre. The High Street acts as a transport hub for public transport, is home to the regular and specialist markets, provides a safe environment for pedestrians, is the setting for events and festivals and is key to shaping opinions and perceptions of visitors and businesses in Stockton
2. For some years there has been recognition from Council officers, Members and indeed members of the public that the physical appearance and functionality Stockton High Street needs to be improved to support meaningful economic growth in Stockton town centre.
3. Following a period of feasibility work throughout 2010, a series of principles for the redesign of the High Street were established and subsequently illustrated in the Stockton Town Centre Prospectus, published in March 2011. The prospectus contained, amongst other things, design concepts for the High Street which incorporated new paving, re-introduction of parking on the High Street, changes to public transport facilities, a central square and dedicated space for the regular market.
4. Design concepts for the High Street, proposals for enhancements to historic buildings and refurbishment of the Globe were presented for public and stakeholder consultation throughout March 2011. Broadly speaking, the proposals were met with support from both the public and stakeholders although there were some concerns on points of detail from bus and taxi operators as well as concern around the future of the regular market all of which have been, or are in the process of being addressed as part of the final detailed design of the scheme.

Lindsay House

5. Lindsay House is a 1970's building located on the High Street at the intersection with Bishop Street and Knowles Street. The property was acquired by the Council in March 2009 using Single Programme grant funding, with the aim of demolishing the property to open up physical and visual linkages between the High Street and riverside although no firm timescale for this was ever specified.
6. The principle of opening up views physical and visual linkages to the riverside from the High Street has long been accepted through various iterations of designs for the High Street and professional advice received.
7. There are six businesses trading from Lindsay House, Ransu Cash Generator Ltd, Toni & Guy Stockton Ltd, Thomas Cook Retail Ltd, Arriva Teesside Ltd Instant Cash Loans Ltd & Sequence (UK) Ltd (Manners & Harrison) with leases of varying length, and there is also an electricity substation located in the rear service yard on a lease to NEDL.
8. Throughout the design and consultation process, Council officers have been in discussion with business tenants in Lindsay House to keep them informed of proposals for potential future uses of the site.
9. A key element of the design concepts presented for public and stakeholder consultation focussed around the potential future use of the Lindsay House site and the possibility of opening up views towards the River Tees and Infinity Bridge. This concept has been taken forward as part of the revised design for the High Street.

Stockton Riverside

10. Within the overall Town Centre programme, if approved by Cabinet, there will be resources identified towards investment in the Riverside area. The River Tees at Stockton is well renowned for its picturesque urban landscape and water based major events, such as Take to the Tees, Triathlon and The Rat Race.
11. There are a number of interventions that will occur along the riverside varying in type, scale and effect. Existing feature lighting on the riverside will be used as a foundation from which to introduce a number of flexible lighting solutions. These will include the lighting of two bridges central to Stockton to compliment other existing bridge lighting along the river. The proposed feature lighting on Millennium and Princess of Wales Bridge will be lit with colour wash lighting which maybe programmed to be a specific colour during a major event or celebration being held in the town around that time. The bridge lighting could be complemented with a potential lighting scheme along the river wall which will provide a colour wash across the water for example.
12. Two other potential animation interventions will seek to utilise the riverside's natural asset; water. Examples of interventions being explored are to use water pumps and jet systems to create a cascade of water from the Millennium Bridge. This could be complimented with a light projection scheme which will display imagery onto the cascade of water. The second intervention could provide a series of large scale fountains within the river or additional bridge based water cascades. This again can be controlled to have varying effects during events. It is proposed that the final elements of Riverside enhancement scheme will be delegated to the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services in Consultation with the Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Transport and Arts and Culture.

Stockton High Street

13. Since the public and stakeholder consultation, design work, incorporating comments and feedback has been undertaken. The design process has seen the original concepts for the High Street evolve into a revised scheme that sees the principles of new paving, improved bus and taxi facilities, parking on the High Street, a pedestrian friendly environment, principles of design Central Square established and dedicated space for the market retained, but in a different arrangement than that which was previously shown.
14. In summary, the key changes to the design from that shown in the prospectus are;
 - High Street parking at both ends provided in dedicated car parks as opposed to on street parking in the centre of a road loop
 - Use of the Lindsay House site and Knowles Street for flexible car park and events space
 - Car park to the south of the High Street that will accommodate the regular market on Wednesday and Saturday
 - Creation of taxi ranks at both ends of the High Street
 - Relocation of bus stops at both ends of the High Street to simplify bus movements and reduce conflict between people waiting at bus stops and users of public houses at the southern end of the High Street

complemented

15. Throughout the development of the High Street proposals engagement with a range of key stakeholders has taken place, which has raised many issues, ideas and opportunities. Among those stakeholders were the market traders, taxi trade and bus operators. As part of the process a number of meetings have taken place with these representatives to ensure that their concerns and ideas have been given due consideration.
16. Representatives from the taxi trade raised concerns about the location and size of taxi ranks. These concerns have been addressed through a number of meetings with taxi representatives, providing an opportunity for input into the infrastructure designs that will enable an acceptable working practise for taxis on the High Street. Taxi representative comments have been taken on board as part of the design process and the current High Street layout reflects these discussions with taxi ranks now located in areas that are acceptable to taxi representatives.
17. Proposals for the location of market stalls for the regular market have been ongoing throughout 2011 via the Market Forum and latterly, a specialist working group attended by market trader representatives. Council officers will continue to work alongside market trader representatives to ensure that their views are heard when the final location and layout arrangements are developed.
18. Further positive developments have taken place in the town centre throughout 2011 with successful specialist markets being held and the reopening of the Stockton Enterprise Arcade, providing space for new businesses to step into High Street retailing. The reopening of the Enterprise Arcade has contributed towards the 45 businesses and organisations that have opened, expanded or relocated in Stockton town centre this year, which when considered alongside the fact that the Castlegate Centre is fully let shows some positive signs of growth.

Southern High Street

19. Appendix 1 shows a detailed layout of the new infrastructure layout that is proposed for the southern end of the High Street. The key features of this proposed arrangement are:
 - A dedicated 36 space car park (plus 2 disabled bays) accessed from the High Street, located south of the Shambles in a safe and secure location avoiding conflict with other

road users. This area can be used flexibly to accommodate other uses in the Town Centre as required.

- 10 ultra short stay parking spaces outside of the Post Office to allow frequent visitors easy access to key services.
- A 7 bay 24 hour taxi rank with pedestrian friendly access in the heart of the southern shopping and leisure economy.
- 9 consolidated multi-vehicle bus stops that allow bus operators to make the most of efficient high frequency routes to serve commuters and shoppers outside of key facilities.
- On an evening southbound bus stops convert into taxi ranks creating up to 30 additional rank spaces.
- On Bridge Road, a 24 hour feeder taxi rank will also be created for 4 vehicles.

Northern High Street

20. Appendix 2 shows a detailed layout of the new infrastructure layout that is proposed for the northern end of the High Street. The key features of this proposed arrangement are:

- A dedicated car park (approx. additional 20 spaces including 4 disabled bays) accessed from the High Street and Bishop Street, located on the site of the current Lindsay House in a safe and secure location avoiding conflict with other road users. This area can be used flexibly to accommodate other uses in the Town Centre as required, particularly major events and travelling markets.
- A 4 bay 24 hour taxi rank with pedestrian friendly access outside of the Royal Oak with an additional rank at the top of Church Road
- 9 consolidated multi-vehicle bus stops that allow bus operators to make the most of efficient high frequency routes to serve commuters and shoppers outside of key facilities.
- On an evening northbound bus stops convert into taxi ranks creating up to 20 additional rank spaces.
- Clear loading and service arrangements for local businesses.
- Wide clearly defined pedestrian areas with wide crossing points to ensure pedestrians have a clear sense of hierarchy with other road users.
- Removal of the contra flow bus lane on Bishopton Lane allowing easy egress north from the Town Centre for taxis.

The Principle of a Central Square

21. Appendix 3 sets out the conceptual ideas for a central square within the High Street. Final design details are not fully developed for the square, but agreement the principle on forming a focal point in the High Street is sought from approval of this report. The highway position is fixed to the east of the Town Hall, which leaves a large space. The Market does occupy this space in part currently, but the opportunity to use this space for enjoyment 365 days of the year is paramount. To support economic growth and encourage people to attend Stockton as an event Town needs to capture their intention to extend their visit. Creating a flexible space that introduces seating, greenspace, water features and artwork provides the platform to create such an opportunity. The space must provide flexibility to allow it to be used in many different ways. Cabinet are asked to approve this principle and a further detailed design work will be undertaken to finalise the arrangements once the needs of all stakeholders are balanced and have been fully explored.

22. Details of the revised High Street design were presented to the public and stakeholders throughout October and into November, giving members of the public an opportunity to view proposals and discuss any issues and questions with Council officers. On the whole, proposals were well received.

Current Position - Lindsay House

23. Revised proposals for High Street infrastructure see new parking facilities provided on the Lindsay House site creating a flexible space that will be predominantly used for parking but which can cater for specialist markets, festivals and events and will create a physical and visual link to the riverside. The principle of using this space for opening up physical and visual linkages towards the River Tees from the High Street has long been accepted and the creation of a flexible parking space in this area supports the delivery of more parking on the High Street, events and specialist markets.
24. Since spring 2011, Council officers have been in discussion with tenants and have sought to renegotiate the terms of existing leases and offer help relocate businesses in the town centre, should tenants choose to leave Lindsay House by agreement. None of the tenants approached were prepared to renegotiate the terms of their contract although under the terms of Ransu Cash Generators existing lease, the Council was able to serve notice to break meaning that their lease will expire in October 2012.
25. In October 2011, Council officers met with representatives for all tenants in Lindsay House to inform them the Council would like to acquire their interest and would seek to negotiate (under the shadow of CPO) the acquisition of their interest in advance of using CPO powers should negotiations to acquire by agreement fail. Throughout these discussions, the offer to assist businesses find, and relocate to, alternative premises was reiterated.
26. Thomas Cook, (parent company for Going Places), took the decision, as part of a national policy to close many stores nationwide, not to renew their existing lease at Lindsay House and therefore their tenancy will expire January 2012. Toni & Guy (Stockton) Limited has recently gone into liquidation and therefore the Council expect to receive a notice from them shortly terminating their lease earlier than October 2012.
27. Therefore there are three outstanding interests to be acquired (Arriva Teesside Ltd, Sequence (UK) Ltd & Instant Cash Loans Ltd) along with the previously mentioned, subterranean electricity sub station located in the footprint of the service area to the rear of the property. The sub station can be retained below ground with access provided and integrated into design for the car parking area. A solution to maintaining access has been found and officers are currently awaiting agreement on the proposals from NEDL. If a solution to access cannot be agreed, the sub station may need to be included as part of a CPO.
28. Whilst no firm timescale can be given to the CPO process, it is anticipated that the likely time from Cabinet approving the use of CPO powers to gaining vacant possession of the property is likely to be in the order of 12-18 months.

Way Forward – Design and Implementation

29. The Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services will oversee the final elements of detailed design as part of an officer board and will provide regular updates to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport.
30. The current programme for delivery of the High Street infrastructure and public realm anticipates that work will begin on south High Street in Spring 2012 followed by north High Street in early 2013. Procurement of works will begin in early 2012
31. Council officers have already began talking to businesses in the town centre to inform them of periods of disruption and to provide all available support to prepare businesses for disruption and support them throughout the period that they may be inconvenienced.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

32. The schemes identified in this report (North High Street, Lindsay House and South High Street) will require approximately up to £11.4m of which £3.9m is already approved. Therefore up to £7.5m is required to be drawn down from the Council's share of the VAT Shelter and this will be considered as part of the budget report to February Cabinet. As further projects within the Town Centre Regeneration emerge and evolve, additional funds will be required and future reports will be brought to Cabinet as required.
33. Some of the approved expenditure for individual projects previously identified has now been subsumed into wider proposals for the High Street as individual elements of the High Street infrastructure project have evolved throughout the feasibility and design process.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

34. The Council will continue to try to acquire the remaining leases or property by agreement, but if agreement cannot be reached a compulsory purchase order may become necessary to achieve the required outcome.
35. Section 226(1)(a) provides that a local authority shall have power to acquire compulsorily any land in their area if the authority think that the acquisition will facilitate the carrying out of the development, redevelopment or improvement on or in relation to the land. The authority must also think that the development, redevelopment or improvement is likely to contribute to the achievement of the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area.
36. Any person whose property or lease etc may be acquired under the CPO has 21 days to object to the order. If objections are received the Secretary of State will hold a public inquiry giving those affected a chance to challenge the CPO and the land can then only be acquired if the Secretary of State confirms the order. Compensation is payable to those persons whose interests are acquired by CPO, at open market value

RISK ASSESSMENT

37. The Stockton Town Centre Regeneration project is categorised as medium to high risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce the majority of risks. A Risk Register has been developed for the project as part of the Document Control suite and will be monitored and reviewed by the Workstream Steering Groups. Major risks will be reported, on a regular basis, to the Project Board who will have overall control of the Risk Register. Each individual infrastructure scheme will also be subject to appropriate Risk Assessments.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Regeneration and Transport

38. Contributes towards the creation of vibrant town centres, supports businesses, entrepreneurial activity, improves public transport and access into the boroughs main town centre and will also contribute towards the creation of city scale facilities within the Borough

Safer Communities

39. Scheme designed, where possible and relevant with the reduction of crime and anti social behaviour in mind and will support the drive to reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

Children and Young People

40. Scheme designed and delivered with people of all ages in mind, providing a safe high quality environment that people of all ages can use and enjoy

Healthier Communities and Adults

41. Scheme designed and delivered with people of all ages in mind, providing a safe high quality environment that people of all ages can use and enjoy

Environment and Housing

42. The project contained within the report support the desire to create a high quality built and natural environment to act a driver for economic change.

Stronger Communities

43. The detail of the report supports this theme through increasing community participation as part of the consultation process and will seek to create a greater sense of pride in the area through the delivery of proposals within the report.

Older Adults

44. Older Adults and Adult groups were specifically included as part of the consultation process

Arts Leisure and Culture

45. Proposals within the report place festivals and events at the heart of what is planned for Stockton town centre and supports the recognition of the importance of performing and visual arts and year round festivals. Artistic features will be critical to the success of the proposed High Street layout.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

46. This report has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment and has been judged to have a positive impact. The total impact score is + 83.
47. As a result of the Stockton High Street Regeneration proposals no direct prejudice occurs against any of the 6 equality groups. The policy seeks to improve the physical appearance and functionality of Stockton High Street whilst improving accessibility for all town centre users. Consultation with town centre stakeholders will be maintained throughout the delivery of the schemes to ensure that the revised High Street infrastructure and public realm schemes are acceptable for all users of the town centre.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

Public and Stakeholder consultation March 2011
Public and Stakeholder update October/November 2011
Ward Member briefing November 2011
Cabinet Member briefing November 2011

Name of Contact Officer: Richard McGuckin
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Education related?

No

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet July 2011
Report to Cabinet June 2011
Report to Cabinet August 2010

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Stockton Town Centre Ward - Cllr David Coleman & Cllr Paul Kirton