

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

14 JUNE 2012

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Regeneration and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Smith

STOCKTON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE

1. Summary

Cabinet will recall the report of 8th December 2011, where approval was given for changes to Stockton High Street infrastructure, parking provision and public transport. This report updates on progress of regeneration projects delivering the regeneration vision for Stockton Town Centre. The report contains details of design evolution for streetscape improvements to Stockton High Street stemming from the Stockton-on-Tees Town Centre Urban Design Guide; proposals for the Central Area of the redesigned High Street; improvement plans for the enhancement of Stockton markets; economic development projects; and business support.

2. Recommendations

1. Cabinet adopt the Stockton-on-Tees Town Centre Urban Design Guide for guidance purposes;
2. Cabinet approve the preferred design for Central Area;
3. Cabinet note the progress of improvement works to Maxwell's Corner and agree the programme for delivery of infrastructure works on the High Street.
4. Cabinet approve the development and operation of the markets in the High Street and agree the principles of temporary operational arrangements during construction, noting the inevitable disruption that will result from the scale of investment agreed within the town centre.
5. Cabinet authorise the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services, the Director of Law and Democracy and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport to enter into negotiations and complete the necessary concessionary lease documentation for 62 Dovecot Street.
6. Cabinet note progress on:
 - gaining vacant possession of Lindsay House;
 - the development and growth of new business in the town centre;
 - progress on Castlegate Centre refurbishment work;
 - success of the Enterprise Arcade initiative;
 - successful bid for £500,000 ERDF funding to support 62 Dovecot St project;
 - progress made on Heritage improvements through the SHiP and THI schemes;
 - progress in analysis of development opportunities in Stockton Cultural Quarter;

- role and importance of artwork and lighting throughout the town centre and riverside area;
- the improved communication and marketing arrangements;
- the development of the 'town shop' concept to increase communication and public awareness of activity in the town centre;

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 along with support for businesses and economic development initiatives. Approval of the above recommendations will support physical and economic change in Stockton 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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RECOMMENDATIONS

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 - progress made on Heritage improvements through the SHiP and THI schemes;
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 - role and importance of artwork and lighting throughout the town centre and riverside area;
 - the improved communication and marketing arrangements;
 - the development of the 'town shop' concept to increase communication and public awareness of activity in the town centre;

DETAIL

Background

1. In March 2011, Stockton Town Centre Prospectus was presented for public consultation. The prospectus contained proposals for improvements to the High Street infrastructure, opportunities to re-organise the existing market to support expansion of the markets and events offer, and initiatives to support the growth of businesses and retail, and the evening and leisure economy. We also acknowledge the importance of supporting the use of the town centre as a residential location, which in turn helps to reinforce usage and footfall. We have plans underway to regenerate the Victoria housing estate and Parkfield areas as well as through the Heritage schemes, to encourage 'living over the shop' opportunities.
2. Throughout the consultation, views were sought from the public, stakeholders and businesses on the redevelopment proposals and the growing focus on diversifying the offer in Stockton town centre. Results of the consultation were reported to Cabinet in June 2011 and since then officers have been working on refining the design of the High Street, working with businesses to continue to grow and locate in the town centre, worked with market trader representatives to find a solution to the location of the regular market and have sought to continue to develop the leisure offer in the town centre.

Progress Update

3. **Urban Design Guide** - Underpinning the vision for the transformation of the town centre is the Stockton-on-Tees Town Centre Urban Design Guide, from which the Town Centre Prospectus and public realm schemes have been developed. In 2008 the need was identified for a planning policy to 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.
4. In response, the Urban Design Guide has been developed to form part of the planning policy framework, and 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 Guide sets a framework for establishing a strong network of buildings, streets and spaces that delivers 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 sets a standard that will raise the bar in design terms, improve perceptions of Stockton and meet the aspirations of new businesses, retailers, visitors and residents of the Borough. Whilst the Guide cannot yet be adopted as part of the Local Development Framework due to the statutory consultation process, adoption of the Guide as Council policy, at this time, will allow the Guide to have some limited weight in the planning decision making process.
5. **Central Area Design** – The design of the new High Street layout has been underway since summer 2011. This has been an incredibly complex piece of work which gave regard and consideration to comments received at consultation and the needs of all stakeholders, businesses and users of the High Street whilst maintaining functionality and high quality design.
6. A range of options for the layout of the High Street were considered, with the final design of the High Street maintaining the principles set out in the Town Centre Prospectus, delivering approximately 75 new car parking spaces on the High Street, realigned bus stops, dedicated taxi ranks at both ends of the High Street, high quality pedestrian areas and a focal point for activity in the form of the Central Area.

7. The final design of the Central Area has focussed on creating a space that can be used as a focal point for the majority of the time but also have the capability to hold events. The feasibility work into this section of the scheme has produced several different options all based on certain key principles and objectives. These included the desire to incorporate greenery, seating, a water feature and the need for the space to be flexible.
8. Ultimately, three designs were taken forward for further development and analysis. Following this process two of the options were dismissed for technical reasons with a clear preferred option emerging. The preferred option, shown in **Appendix 1**, will deliver the desired features as well as being flexible enough to accommodate events and provide a real focal point for the High Street.
9. **Delivery of High Street Works** - In April 2012 the Council's Direct Services (CFYA) Team started work on the delivery of improvements to Maxwell's Corner at the northern end of the High Street. This scheme has been designed to complement the regeneration of the rest of the High street and act as a gateway to the Town Centre.
10. The main High Street works will be delivered by Birse Civils Ltd who were successful in being awarded the contract following a very stringent procurement process. Due to the level of investment, the procurement process was undertaken at a European level and therefore attracted interest from a wide number of organisations. In order to get the most value out of the contractor it was decided that a period of Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) would precede the delivery of the works. This allows the contractor to use their expertise and experience to advise on the design and highlight any risks or issues that may be discovered during construction. This process started in April 2012 for the Southern Area of the High Street with further rounds of ECI planned as the entire scheme progresses. Birse Civils Ltd has also been appointed to undertake the St Johns Crossing scheme which will be the gateway in to the Town Centre from the South.
11. **Current Programme** - The current programme for the infrastructure works on the High Street will see construction start on the Southern Area in August 2012 for approximately 9 - 12 months. Focus will then move to the Northern Area which is expected to start on site in summer 2013 for approximately 9 -12 months. Finally, works to the Central Area will commence in early 2014 and be completed approximately 12 months later meaning that all work on the High Street infrastructure will be complete in early 2015.
12. **Market Offer** –The importance of a vibrant and successful market within Stockton can not be underestimated. A successful market will be a key driver in achieving a successful town centre. The vision for extending the markets offer is therefore at the heart of these regeneration proposals for the town centre. The support for the market and its importance to local residents was clearly evidenced in the numbers signing the petition received by the Council. Representatives of the market traders have been working with officers on the improvement plans for the regular market, to allow traders opportunities to capitalise on footfall whilst maintaining the design principles for the Central Area and allowing the space north of the Town Hall to be used for supporting activities and events. A range of options and layouts for accommodating stalls have been explored as well as different models for operating the market service in Stockton.
13. A proposed option for the general market is presented in **Appendix 2**. This involves retaining the current self build approach to the erection of stalls and locating the bulk of the market both adjacent to and south of the Town Hall with some traders in front of Castlegate Centre and others located to the west of Central Area on Dovecot Street. In order to accommodate this layout it will be necessary to work with traders to best configure the existing pitches and to minimise the impact of the unavoidable disruption to traders during the construction period. Consideration is also being given to the position of food and non-food stalls, with an aspiration to create a more vibrant atmosphere, give the visitor easier access and movement within the market, and greater convenience when searching out specific goods. A new

procedure is to be developed to enable the selection of traders to be accommodated in each location based on product lines, quality of offer, and size and appearance of stall. A comprehensive business support package will also be made available, similar to the arrangements in place within the retail arcade. It is proposed that these stalls forming the general market to the south of the Town Hall will continue to be self-erect stalls as currently used, in line with the desires of the existing traders. The new location proposed in Dovecot Street will be purpose-built gazebo style to complement and service the new public spaces and will be erected by the markets team. It is proposed to consider this area to further enhance and diversify the market offer. These new arrangements will be offered to existing traders in the first instance. New canopies will be provided throughout the market by the Council, as well as a comprehensive support package during the phased works to be undertaken on the High Street.

14. The scale of works proposed within the High Street over the next few years will inevitably lead to movement of the market. Unfortunately, it is inevitable that more than one move will be necessary for many traders. It is anticipated that those traders who currently trade on the south end of the High Street will be accommodated elsewhere on the High Street when work begins in August 2012. Once the first phase of works is complete, traders will be relocated across the High Street to accommodate works to the north and central section of the High Street before being moved into their permanent trading location. Further discussions and consultation will be held with the market traders to inform individuals of exactly how they will be affected as soon as the extent of works in each phase is understood with the main contractor Birse.
15. It is proposed that the space north of the Town Hall becomes a dedicated space for diversifying the market offer and for holding small/medium sized events and activities in the future. **Appendix 2** shows how it is intended to design this space for flexible use in the future, with semi-permanent canopy structures providing protection from inclement weather, when needed, as well as an attractive setting. The space will also incorporate an external coffee shop to serve visitors in Central Area. This trading opportunity will need to be offered in accordance with the Councils procurement policies.
16. As part of the diversification of the market offer a programme of specialist markets has been drawn up for 2012. Four of these markets have already taken place;
 - i) The craft fair, which is now a well established event with stall holders always asking to be involved, was well attended in April, with the next one planned for July 14th; This fair saw around 18 stall holders and 1200 visitors.
 - ii) Chic Vintique - this vintage and collectables event, which recently saw in excess of 3000 people through the doors, is proving very popular with traders and the general public and is fully booked with traders for the July and October fairs;
 - iii) Farmers Market – the first market of the season enjoyed a busy day on 28th April. Now in its third year, this Market has proved a big hit with shoppers and stallholders at the town's Wellington Square, with the market growing from 12 stalls in 2010 to currently hosting 18 stalls at each market with a waiting list for traders wanting to have a stall at future markets; and
 - iv) Creative Expo - this pilot event, which it is hoped will run annually, was held in the Parish Gardens and played host to 34 businesses from the creative sector including, Digital City, Enterprise made Simple, West Row Arts, SRC and Iron Guidance, local artists, jewellery and textile makers, local food producers and photographer; as well as a ceramic workshops for visitors to attend.
17. The specialist programme will continue with a farmers market on the last Saturday of the spring and autumn months, other markets will continue in July.

18. **Lindsay House** – Cabinet approved the use of the Council’s compulsory purchase powers in December 2011 in order to deliver the Infinity View regeneration vision, centred on the Lindsay House area of the High Street. The Council has sought to acquire the six leasehold interests in the property by negotiation. To this end, we have been successful in securing three of the interests and also retained one of the businesses within the High Street. Negotiations will continue to try to secure the final three interests by negotiation rather than use of CPO powers. Retaining these businesses on the High Street remains a priority and officers will continue to seek to support these businesses in relocating elsewhere on the High Street.
19. In order to maintain momentum of the scheme the CPO will be served on all interested parties in June 2012. If there are no objections to the CPO, it is considered that vacant possession of the building could be complete by December, however, should objections be made and an inquiry held to hear them, vacant possession is unlikely to be obtained until July/August 2013.
20. **New Businesses to the Town** – There are currently many live and interesting enquiries relating to businesses wishing to relocate to vacant town centre properties, some of which are in very prominent locations on the High Street. Some of these enquiries are more advanced than others, with several properties under offer, and planning consents being explored on others. Local businesses have enquired about the possibility of extending their offer to add to our café culture aspiration, whilst others have worked up external improvement schemes which are being finalised. The Lambton Castle public house has recently been purchased by a local developer and is due to be extensively refurbished. Ethel Austin have taken up a lease in the former Bon Marche unit in Castlegate Centre, occupying a prominent retail space in the town centre. Debenhams have committed to refurbishing the High Street frontage of their store with work expected to begin in the coming months.
21. **Gloucester House** - Local digital media firm Visual Soft have recently purchased the freehold for Gloucester House, vacated by the Council. This development supports the aims of the Council’s Asset Review, and supports growth in economic activity for the locality, with 90 office workers located within a two minute walk of the town centre’s primary retail area.
22. **Castlegate Centre Refurbishment** - The market hall in Stockton’s Castlegate Centre is being increased in size as part of a multi-million-pound redevelopment in the shopping centre by new Anglo-American owner AG Lathe. The project will increase the size of the Spencer Market Hall from 5,000sq ft to 8,000sq ft and will create new retail units available for lease by new businesses. The refurbished market will deliver huge benefits for the town including expansion opportunities for local businesses, a better retail offering to visitors, and an improved experience for both retailers and shoppers, whilst complementing the Council’s plans to extend the Town Centre markets offer.
23. AG Lathe has already committed £1.4 million on a refurbishment for the multi-storey car park. The first phase to the upper levels was finished in October 2011, with phase two commenced in early spring 2012. Plans also include improvement works to the public toilets along with internal mall works and a full re-brand of the centre. Work started in spring 2012 and will be mostly undertaken outside normal centre opening hours. The expansion is due to be completed in time for the hall’s 40th anniversary in 2013.
24. **Enterprise Arcade** – This hugely successful project is now in its third round and has helped to support 8 business start-ups, facilitated 3 businesses to relocate to premises elsewhere in the town centre including Chocs Away, Hobbies R Uz and The Black Box. Two new traders will shortly join the arcade adding a jewellery designer/maker and Skateboard, Scooter and accessories supplier to the offer.

25. **62 Dovecot Street** – Plans for the £1 million refurbishment and restoration of 62 Dovecot Street were given the huge boost recently when the application for £500,000 of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funds was approved. All funding is now in place, with the Council providing the match funding, enabling works to start on site in July, for approximately 22 weeks. On completion the building will provide a supportive environment for creative industries with both workspace and sector support for business activities and research. DigitalCity Business will provide specialist service support and management of the building. Due to the conditions associated with ERDF funding, the operation of the building must be that of not-for-profit and for DigitalCity purpose, therefore, it is proposed that the building be leased to DigitalCity Business through a concessionary or peppercorn lease over a 15 to 25 year period.
26. **Heritage** – The Council is committed to making the most of the town's built and cultural heritage by improving the appearance and condition of historic buildings through focused investment. The Stockton Heritage in Partnership (SHiP) scheme has invested £700,000 over the last three years to improve the condition of historic buildings within the town centre. A further £3.3 million is being invested through the delivery of a Central Stockton Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), targeting 12 properties of historic importance for investment over the next five years, to bring vacant floorspace into use and deliver improvements to buildings and shop fronts.
27. All funding for the SHiP scheme is now committed and physical works have been completed to three building projects. Public realm improvements have also been completed in Blue Post Yard, Ship Inn Yard and Hambletonian Yard to provide a pleasant and safe pedestrian environment for building users and owners. The THI scheme is progressing with Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) approval for two grant applications; firstly for repair works to the exterior of the Georgian Theatre to be complete in July 2012, and secondly for refurbishment works to the upper floors of 42 High Street scheduled to complete in summer 2013. Further grant applications are being worked up for three further building projects and public realm works, as well as ongoing negotiations with the owners of other potential projects. Images of identified properties, public realm area and renovated buildings are included at **Appendix 3**
28. **Stockton Cultural Quarter** - An in-depth analysis has begun of potential options for the consolidation and improvement of the offer at Stockton Cultural Quarter, the historic area of the town centre centred on Green Dragon Yard. Opportunities for further development include the potential to acquire further property and land, reconfigure existing building space and diversify the cultural offer available with live/work units and more accessible creative workspace. In order to move forward, an options appraisal and economic impact assessment will determine the most appropriate course of action, indicating the most realistic option to take forward, inform funding applications and potentially form a substantial piece of evidence to support the use of compulsory purchase powers if necessary. The study is due to complete in July.
29. **Globe Theatre** - Work has continued in stripping out damaged and irreparable parts of the interior, as well as producing a more detailed development plan and designs, including access for sets, power supply etc. David Wilmore has been engaged on the project to provide expert and detailed support on the necessary work. He has an acknowledged and successful track record delivering similar complex heritage theatre based projects including City Varieties in Leeds and Theatre Royal in Newcastle. Positive discussions with Heritage Lottery Fund have led to support for a bid to the national panel to seek additional funds to support the project. The application is being prepared and will be submitted during this financial year, which will lead to construction work gaining pace in 2013.
30. **Town Centre Artwork** – As set out in the Town Centre Prospectus, the design and fabric of the spaces will reflect the important role of culture in the life and signature of the Town. Artists will be involved in the design of the street furniture, permanent artwork will be commissioned and installed in the public area, and temporary installations will be used to animate the space.

A number of options are being explored including small scale works and a large scale work linking the High Street to the River.

31. **1825 Way Artwork** - As part of the road re-alignment works at St Johns Crossing there is an opportunity to highlight the heritage of the site and create a visual representation to celebrate Stockton's role in the birth of passenger railways. St Johns Crossing is the point at which the Stockton and Darlington Railway line crossed Bridge Road. The first rail of the Stockton and Darlington Railway was laid on 13th May 1822 near St John's Crossing. The proposed artwork depicts the inaugural journey and the legendary race between a stagecoach and the passenger train hauled by Locomotion No.1 which took place on Tuesday 27th September 1825. The proposed artwork is illustrated in **Appendix 4**.
32. **Riverside Lighting** - To complement the works on the High Street, initiatives to improve the frontage of both sides of the River Tees between the Princess of Wales and Millennium Bridges have been investigated. Two successful trials have been used to showcase a variety of options to illuminate both the Millennium and Princess of Wales Bridges and the river walls between these bridges. As a result, funding has been earmarked from the Town Centre regeneration budget to undertake improvements at the River. Permanent lighting features that change colour and pattern are currently being installed. These lighting features will play an important role in the town's vast programme of popular riverside events, whilst options for a water feature for the river continue to be investigated further.
33. All of the proposals above will help to enhance the cultural and leisure offer in the town centre building upon the increasingly popular facilities and events which are already established. Over the last twelve months, visitor numbers to ARC have significantly increased, a fact which is reinforced by nearby restaurants reporting an increase in visitors, particularly on weekends. The recently held "Stockton Calling" music weekend was a sell out, and Green Dragon Theatre has expanded its live entertainment offer, attracting new visitors to shows and performances
34. The Infinity Festival attracted a much higher than expected audience this year and it is anticipated that this will be repeated at the already popular Stockton Triathlon and Rat Race in August. This August the 25th anniversary of SIRF will be celebrated, with large crowds expected throughout the festival and Stockton Weekender music festival.
35. **The Portas Review** - The Portas Review made a number of key recommendations aimed at identifying what government, local authorities, businesses and communities could do together to promote the development of new models of prosperous and diverse high streets. In its response, the Government has accepted many of the report's recommendations as well as extending the opportunity for more towns to become 'Portas Pilots', to test the ideas in the Portas Review and provide an opportunity for local partnerships to develop and share knowledge about the effectiveness of various options for high street improvement.
36. It was announced on 26th May that Stockton has succeeded in becoming one of twelve towns to become a 'Portas Pilot', out of over 370 submissions from across the UK. As well as receiving around £100,000 to deliver Town Team ideas, we will also receive support from retail experts including the Portas team to support our activities.
37. As demonstrated throughout this report Stockton is already delivering or preparing to deliver many of the recommendations arising in the report, such as fostering entrepreneurialism in our events to mark National Market Day (23rd June) and the Love Your Local Market campaign (23rd June – 8th July). Plans are advanced for redesigning the High Street to create a more inviting, attractive shared space to ensure that it is more accessible, cleaner, and safe in order to encourage local shoppers back to the High Street. The plans already seek to reduce clutter by minimising the use of signage and barriers. We already have plans to grow our evening economy by hosting more events to encourage more socialising in the centre in the evenings.

38. Stockton has put in place a 'Town Team' as a central part of its successful Portas Pilot bid. Stockton Town Team is supported by Stockton Council and made up of local people from the private sector, community and voluntary organisations with proposed initiatives to include engaging the local community and promote enterprise, heritage, arts and culture in the High Street to form a key part of underpinning the Council's regeneration plans for the Town Centre.
39. **Communications** – A key strand to the regeneration of the town centre is communicating our vision, progress and successes. The Council has reviewed its marketing and communication capacity, to ensure that our regeneration message is most effectively and more widely communicated. To ensure that the public, businesses and stakeholders continue to be fully engaged and informed of key issues and developments, a dedicated resource in the form of a Stockton Town Centre Marketing and Engagement Officer has been appointed on a 2 year secondment along with a related apprenticeship role both of whom will be dedicated full-time to championing the town centre regeneration with wider community, investors and visitors.
40. This dedicated resource will work alongside Corporate Communications and key partners providing PR and marketing resources to promote the retail, leisure and market offer in the town centre, across the Tees Valley and beyond with the overarching aim of increasing footfall and visitors in the town centre.
41. Following Cabinet there will be a full programme of communication activity on the Town Centre regeneration, including the use of social media, Twitter and Facebook, a 'Town Shop' on the High Street to act as a focal point for delivering key regeneration messages and a point of contact for the general public. Whilst we have significantly increased our direct investment in communications support it is also important to note that a key feature of our approach to communications is to pull together and support a co-ordinated campaign of activity which can fully utilise a wide group of Town Centre champions and particularly the members of the Town Centre Marketing Group which includes private sector and third sector partners with an interest in the Town Centre.
42. The details of the programme of communications activity with the marketing group will be agreed by the group itself but will look at loyalty schemes, support schemes, promotions, ambassadors/spokespeople, and a campaign brand for the Town Centre. We will not be attempting to control or directly deliver all activity but to support and facilitate a clear message that supports the shared aims of all those with an interest in the success of the Town Centre.
43. **Access for All** – A key development of the High Street design has been to ensure that the public spaces can be accessed and used by all. Aside from the focus on who uses what spaces and when, the experience for pedestrians and particularly those with additional needs, such as wheelchair users and visually impaired, has undergone detailed consideration. Liaison with the local disability forum is part of the ongoing process and in addition, a specialist advisor, Burdus Access had been commissioned to test the design details. Burdus Access have a nationally renowned reputation for being leading advisors on how public spaces can best serve the needs of all pedestrians, particularly those with additional needs. The company have already completed an assessment of the design work done to date and their engagement will continue throughout the development and construction phases to ensure that all potential access issues in the proposed High Street layout have been considered.
44. **St John's Crossing** – This road improvement scheme previously carried the title of 'Southern Gateway' and forms part of the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements, approved by Cabinet in 2009. The scheme is planned for construction in this, the third year of the five year programme. Not only will the scheme significantly improve bus journey times, but also supports some of the regeneration aspirations for the southern end of the Town Centre.

Works will start on this project this summer, which sees a £4.5M investment to re-align the current road away from the existing roundabout and form a new traffic signal junction on the site of the former Glynn Webb building. The new road layout can be seen at **Appendix 5**

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

45. It is intended that the Urban Design Guide will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will add further detail to guidance in existing and emerging planning policy documents. These documents are the adopted Core Strategy (2010) and the emerging Regeneration and Environment DPD, which is scheduled for a period of consultation during summer 2012. The Regeneration and Environment DPD will not be adopted until the spring of 2014. The Regeneration & Economic Development team and Planning Services will develop a timetable for the preparation and adoption of the Urban Design Guide SPD. In the period until the SPD is adopted, the Urban Design Guide will be classed as adopted Council policy and will therefore be a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. However, until it is an adopted SPD the guide will only have limited weight in the decision making process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

46. **Central Area** – Indicative costs of £5.5 million for Central Area are currently included in the overall Town Centre Project. A further detailed financial appraisal will be required following approval of design together with input from Birse and will need Cabinet approval. Funding for the whole Town Centre regeneration project has been identified as part of the MTFP Cabinet Report in February with ear marked resources set aside to cover cashflow issues arising during delivery of scheme.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

47. **62 Dovecot Street** – Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 provides that a local authority shall not dispose of land for a consideration less than the best that can be reasonably obtained without the consent of the Secretary of State. The Local Government Act 1972 General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 grants consent for disposals of land where the disposal is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area and the difference between the unrestricted value of the land and the consideration for the disposal does not exceed £2 million. It is a condition of the ERDF grant funding that the building must be used for digital city purposes and must be used on a not-for-profit basis. These conditions will affect the consideration that would be offered.

RISK ASSESSMENT

48. 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

49. The holistic regeneration of Stockton Town Centre 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.

50. **Economic Regeneration and Transport** - the proposals support the key ambition 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* by improving the urban environment of the town centre and riverside.
51. **Environment and Housing** – the implementation of the Urban Design Guide and the regeneration schemes will also assist in achieving the key ambition to *deliver design quality* through improvement of the built environment, 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.
52. **Safer Communities** - the public realm improvements have been developed to design out crime, and will assist in achieving the key ambition to *reduce crime, fear of crime* and anti-social behaviour.
53. **Healthier Communities and Adults** – the implementation of the Urban Design Guide and the proposed regeneration schemes 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.
54. **Stronger Communities** – when the regeneration vision for town centre 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.
55. **Older Adults** – the town centre regeneration schemes 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.
56. **Art, Leisure and Culture** – the public realm improvements support 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

57. This report is not subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment because it is an update on an existing schemes and the Urban Design Guide, and is not seeking approval for a new policy.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

58. The town centre regeneration proposals coming forward, which are detailed in the Urban Design Guide, have been subject to consultation events with the general public, stakeholders and Members relating to the regeneration of Stockton Town Centre in March and November of 2011. The Urban Design Guide will be taken forward through the Local Development Framework process, which is subject to consultation as set out in the Local Development Scheme.

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Education related? No

Background Papers

- Reports to Cabinet on 08.12.11 (Stockton Town Centre Regeneration), 14.07.11 (Stockton Town Centre Progress Report), 17.03.11 (Stockton Town Centre Urban Design Guide), and 05.08.10 (Stockton Central Area Update), all available from <http://www.stockton.gov.uk/egenda>
- Stockton Town Centre Urban Design Guide, available in the Members' Library.
- The Portas Review, available in the Members' Library.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Stockton Town Centre Ward: - Councillors Coleman & Kirton

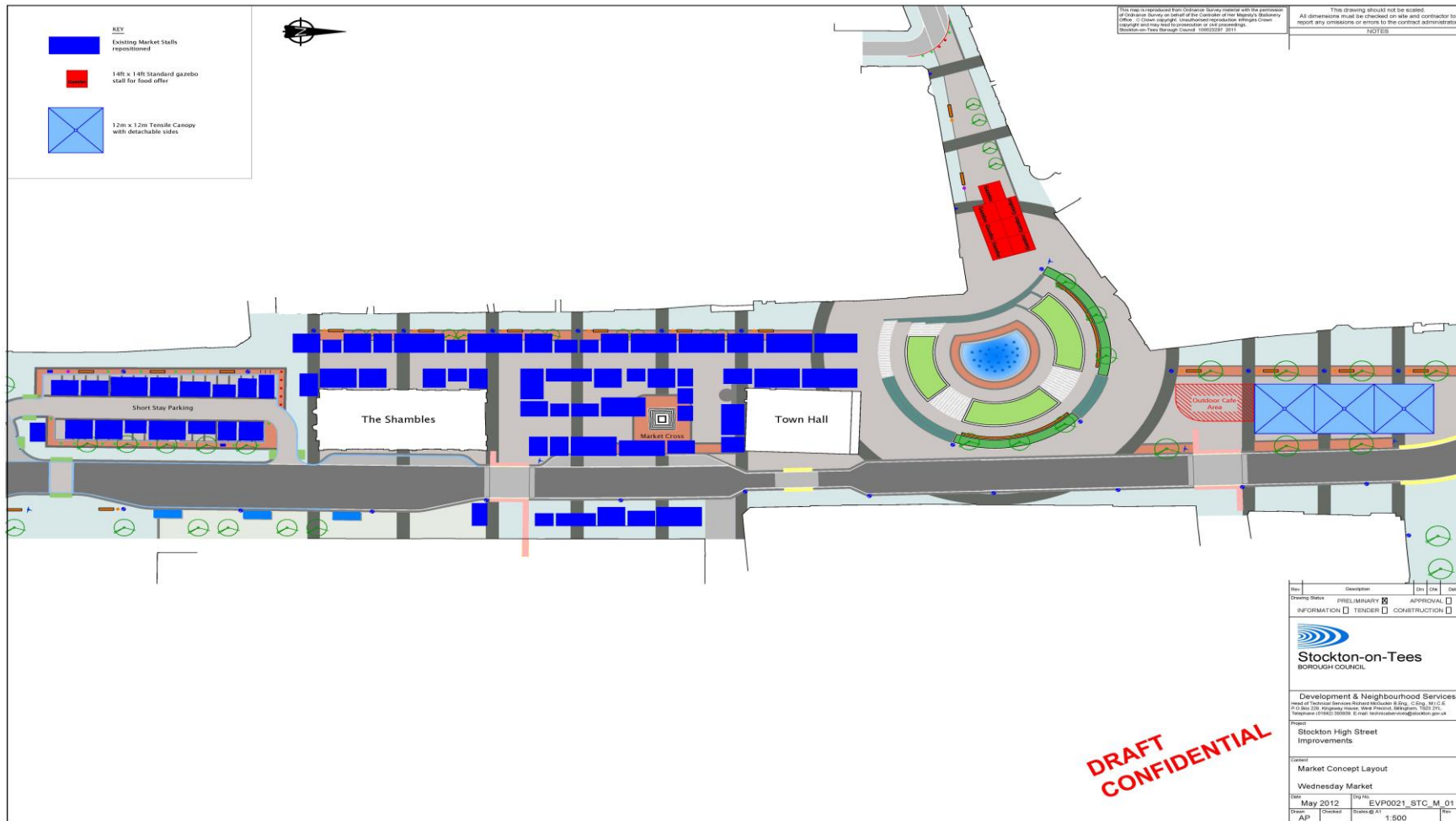
Property

Some of the projects covered in this report relate to Council-owned land and property, others relate to privately owned properties. The Urban Design Guide makes recommendations and provides guidance for private sector developments.

Appendix 1 – Central Area Design -



Appendix 2 – Market Offer Preferred Option



Appendix 3 – SHIP/THI

Properties Targeted for THI investment:



Initial design concept for Dovecot Street Public realm THI project:



	Before	After
127/128 High St		
110 High St		

Appendix 4 – St John Crossing Artwork Proposals



Appendix 5 – St Johns Crossing

