

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

### AGENDA ITEM

### REPORT TO CABINET

10 JANUARY 2013

### REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

## KEY DECISION

Regeneration and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Michael Smith

### STOCKTON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE

1. Summary

This report updates on progress of projects delivering the regeneration vision for Stockton Town Centre. The report contains details of infrastructure works to the High Street, initiatives to support retail and business growth, progress on enhancements to Stockton's market offer, economic development projects; and business support along with details of projects and interventions which have reached a point in their development where further financial approvals are required to support the next phase of delivery.

2. Recommendations

1. Cabinet note progress made on projects and activities across the High Street and town centre funded within the final phase of financial approvals as set out in paragraphs 3-33
2. Cabinet note the request for funding to support the next phase of £4,690,000 to progress projects set out in paragraphs 34-45 and agree to consider final approvals as part of the MTFP process

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

Improving the economic performance of Stockton Town Centre is a key priority for the Council. Delivery of the projects and interventions identified within this report will play a key role in achieving improved economic performance and changed perceptions of Stockton town centre.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, 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 and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

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**SUMMARY**

This report updates on progress of projects delivering the regeneration vision for Stockton Town Centre. The report contains details of infrastructure works to the High Street, initiatives to support retail and business growth, progress on enhancements to Stockton's market offer, economic development projects; and business support along with details of projects and interventions which have reached a point in their development where further financial approvals are required to support the next phase of delivery.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**DETAIL**

**Background**

1. Cabinet were presented with two reports (December 2011 and June 2012,) which set out progress made on initial designs for the new High Street layout, public and stakeholder consultation along with subsequent alterations to design and a broad range of projects, aimed at improving the economic performance of the town centre, supporting new and existing business growth, improvements to the market offer and support for a growing programme of events.
2. The MTFP report to Cabinet in February 2012 approved the initial allocation of resources to support the delivery of identified works and projects across the first phases of works in the town centre.

## Progress Update

### Infrastructure Works

3. Since the last update to Cabinet in June 2012, significant progress has been made on the development and delivery of infrastructure works on the High Street, business support and development initiatives along with major projects to support economic growth and development of markets and events on the High Street.
4. **High Street Works** - The work on the High Street, public realm and junction layout improvements at Maxwells Corner, a key gateway to the Town Centre was completed in October 2012.
5. Work on the first phase of the main High Street works commenced in September 2012 at the south end of the High Street. This work is progressing well and disruption is being kept to a minimum. This element of the scheme is on track to be complete by summer 2013.
6. Detailed design work on the remaining areas of the High Street continues to progress with the main focus on the area between the Shambles and the Town Hall with work due to begin on site in February 2013 and substantially complete in summer of that year and on finalising detailed design of the central area of the High Street including Dovecot Street and the area currently occupied by Lindsay House. This work will start to be delivered in summer 2013 and be complete Summer/Autumn of 2014.
7. Finally the area to the north end of the High Street including the area around The Globe will start in summer 2014.
8. **Riverside Lighting** - Improvements to the Riverside area are now complete. High quality, dynamic LED lighting has been installed on the river walls and on both the Princess of Wales and the Millennium bridges.
9. **St Johns Crossing** - Work on St Johns Crossing commenced in July 2012 This scheme will create a gateway to the Town Centre that will allow future developments to progress without being stifled by infrastructure operating at, or over, capacity. Works of this scale will inevitably cause a degree of traffic disruption however at this stage; traffic movement has been managed well with disruption kept to a minimum. Work is on programme and is expected to be complete by autumn 2014

### Artistic Influence

10. As reported to Cabinet in June 2012, the involvement of artists in the development process is underway. The intention is to combine heritage references with confident statements about our expectations for the future.
11. **High Street Plinth** - Proposals are in place for the creation of a plinth on the High Street. The plinth would house a hidden mechanical sculpture or automaton which would emerge at a specific time each day, creating a daily mini event. The most experienced and skilled automata artists in the UK have been invited to produce designs for the piece. The 3 models shortlisted are currently on display in the Rediscover Stockton shop and the public are invited to vote for their favourite. The plinth will also be used as a podium for presentations or small performances, and provide a platform for temporary sculpture commissions.

12. **Historical Interpretation** - Work is progressing to design a 3D map of the High Street and River Tees docks. The work will show how the area would have been in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century including consideration of historic images for the interior of Castlegate Centre and Spencer Hall. A mural depicting the imagined shadow of the façade of the old fire station is planned, for the gable of the new West Row Arts building. Painting will begin in early Spring 2013, following completion of the refurbishment of the building by the owner, St John's Crossing as has previously been reported will be home to a tribute to the 1825 Stockton Darlington Railway inauguration.
13. **Street Furniture and Lighting** - New, high quality street furniture will be installed throughout the High Street including , seating and street lighting. Street furniture is being designed in collaboration with artist design company Studio Weave with the aim of creating a distinctive suite of furniture unique to Stockton. A prototype set of images of the seat will be displayed in the town centre shop to gauge public opinion.
14. **Stockton Creative Writing** - An original piece of writing has been commissioned by short story writer Sarah Maitland. Called 'Instant Light', it tells the imaginary tale of how John Walker came to create the friction match. The fable weaves historic fact together with fiction to create a plausible myth, showing how the world changing invention benefited from a chance encounter with a member of the Circus that wintered in the Town in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It is envisaged that Instant Light will be published as an illustrated book for general sale, promoting a romantic history of the Town. It could also serve as a basis for a new street theatre commission in a future Stockton International Riverside Festival.

#### **Economic Development and Business Support -**

15. **Lindsay House** - The demolition of Lindsay House and redevelopment of the site is a key element of the new High Street layout with this site providing High Street parking and a flexible space for holding events and markets as well as improving pedestrian links to the riverside.
16. Following the decision to approve the use of Compulsory Purchase Powers (CPO) to acquire leasehold interests in Lindsay House at Cabinet in December 2011 officers have been seeking to acquire interests alongside the CPO process. Manners & Harrison and Cash Generator have successfully relocated to alternative premises on the High Street and continue to trade. Arriva and Money Shop remain but they are both in discussion with landlords to secure alternative units on the High Street
17. Assuming a successful decision at CPO inquiry on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013, it is anticipated that the building can be demolished in April 2013 allowing work to begin immediately on the new parking and paving works.
18. **Globe Theatre** - Work has continued on making the Globe Theatre weather tight and addressing the flooding issues in the basement area of the building. Discussions with Heritage Lottery (HLF) have led to a position where a funding application to secure the delivery of a full refurbishment of the building will be submitted to HLF's Heritage Enterprise Programme in February 2013.
19. This is a new round of funding with criteria for approval which fits in with the aspirations for the refurbishment of the Globe and the positive impact it will have on the surrounding properties and businesses. A decision on the application will be made in July 2013 with a view to completing works and opening the refurbished Globe in autumn 2015.
20. **62 Dovecot Street** - £500,000 ERDF funding has been secured for the redevelopment of 62 Dovecot Street. The building will provide space for digital and creative businesses linked to the existing, successful Digital City brand. Work began on the refurbishment in

September and will be complete in early January 2013 with the first businesses expected to take up units shortly thereafter. The building provides permanent space for 13 businesses and space for up to a further 50 people to use flexible office space, hot desk and networking space.

21. **Business and Enterprise Support** - Support for start up businesses in the town centre continues through the successful Enterprise Arcade initiative and through the provision of retail space in the Shambles Market Hall which will have eight businesses occupying all available units in the Shambles by early December 2012.
22. Business support initiatives in the form of loans to town centre businesses for improvements to properties, one to one advice and retail workshops have been implemented over the last 10 months with several businesses applying for loans to support improvements to their premises.
23. **Heritage** - Further support for property owners in the form of grants to redevelop targeted properties is provided through the Stockton Heritage in Partnership scheme (SHiP) and Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage in partnership with the Council. .
24. £700,000 grant funding has been invested to repair and restore the historic fabric of four buildings (127 & 128 High Street, 110 High Street, 14/16 West Row) and three pedestrian Yards. Works to 14/16 West Row are of particular interest as the scheme will see the conversion, including restoration of historic features, of a former industrial property into a hub for community artists and participation in arts activities through the provision of production space for pottery, ceramics and glass engraving, painting and gallery space.
25. A further £2million grant funding is available for works to historic buildings located within the central section of Stockton Town Centre's Conservation Area. To date, external repairs to the Georgian Theatre have been completed and a significant programme of works to 42 High Street is due to start imminently.
26. **Public and Stakeholder Engagement** - The Rediscover Stockton shop at 134b High Street opened to the public on 16<sup>th</sup> October. The shop has been established to provide a focal point for information relating to activity on the High Street, engaging with the public, businesses, community groups and stakeholders, and for any services that relate to the regeneration plans, forthcoming events and/or activities in and around the Town Centre.
27. **Town Team** – Following the announcement in May 2012 that Stockton was successful in being one of the first 12 towns to be recognised as a 'Portas Pilot' town, a 'town team' made up of a number of individuals from a community and business background who are committed to making the town a successful and vibrant place has been established. The Portas Pilot status brings an allocation of £92,000 to be spent by the town team and high profile publicity for the town's regeneration plans in national and local media. ,
28. An example of the success achieved is the 'street food' provision at SIRF where existing businesses were encouraged to trade away from their normal bases and benefit from the visitors to the festival. This was measured in an increase of new regular customers for two of the businesses and one business buying equipment to enable them to trade regularly on markets and at other events.

### **Ongoing Investment and Support**

29. The significant progress made on infrastructure works and projects to support economic growth has already started to have a positive impact on the town centre and has led to further opportunities to support development and growth through a range of initiatives.

30. Examples of this positive impact can be seen through the level of private sector investment in the town centre in recent months. Work is progressing on the refurbishment of Spencer Hall Market in Castlegate Centre which is due to be fully open in February 2013. Works to improve the external appearance of the Castlegate Centre have also progressed in recent months to the point where they are now almost complete.
31. Hewitts Solicitors have invested circa £1million in the acquisition and refurbishment of 122 High Street, enabling the business to relocate and expand onto the High Street bringing a prominent vacant property back into use and supporting an increase in footfall on the High Street
32. The Storytellers Public House opened on Dovecot Street in September adding to and improving the evening economy offer in the town centre. The Lambton Castle Public House has also recently been acquired for refurbishment, again adding to the diversity of the evening economy offer.
33. The opportunity exists to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from existing committed resources through further investment in the expansion and development of elements of the agreed infrastructure works and initiatives that will help attract and secure private investment, support the development and growth of the market offer and support business growth and new investment in the town centre.

### **The Next Phase of Infrastructure Works**

34. **High Street Design** As detailed in paragraph 6 & 7, further detailed design work is required for the future phases of work on the High Street. A key element of the High Street in the future will be the function of the dedicated events and markets space on the north High Street. Options are being explored to ensure that this area can accommodate a range of markets and events and also provide a focal point for activity on days when events and markets are not taking place. The final design for this area will be critical in achieving the necessary flexibility and high-quality space to attract specialist markets and retain the flexibility for a wide variety of events and festivals. The current specification and design will require enhancing, to ensure this key space on the High Street is utilised to its full potential.
35. **Access For All** As reported to Cabinet in June, a key element of the High Street design process has been to ensure that public spaces can be accessed and used by all. The specification and design for the High Street has been informed by discussions with the Disability Advisory Group (DAG) and through advice from specialist, Burdus Access.
36. An independent audit of access for all has demonstrated a need to improve ramp access from both sides on the western curved stepped area. The design of Central Area has been modified to include these recommendations along with the ramped access points around the rest of the radial feature, ensuring the area provides access for all. Furthermore, as a direct result of feedback from DAG and the Guide Dogs Association, a controlled crossing point adjacent to Silver Street has now been included within the scheme.
37. **Public Realm** Both the THI project and 62 Dovecot Street include plans to improve the public realm to the frontage of their project areas. However, under current plans a length of Dovecot Street between the two schemes would not be addressed. Given that this length includes a key gateway to the town centre at Prince Regent Street and one of the Town Centre's key destinations, The Arc, it is proposed to extend the public realm improvements on Dovecot Street from the THI scheme boundary to meet the scheme at 62 Dovecot Street.
38. **Car Parking** - A key objective of the infrastructure improvement works is the re-introduction of short stay car parking on to the High Street. In order to maximise the effectiveness of these additional spaces, and those already present in the Town Centre, the ability to alter

the parking tariffs quickly and efficiently to create the necessary flexibility to implement parking incentives is essential. However, the majority of ticket machines currently used in the town centre do not include the technology required to easily alter tariffs. It is therefore proposed to upgrade or replace on and off street ticket machines where necessary to provide the ability to alter tariffs more readily thereby allowing the introduction of more parking incentive schemes to support initiatives to attract visitors and support businesses during and after construction work.

39. **Feature Lighting and Animation** - As stated in paragraph 8 works to install feature lighting on the riverside have been undertaken. It is proposed that the specification of the lighting scheme be increased to maximise the impact of the existing lighting works through additional lighting to the north face of the Princess of Wales bridge, additional lighting on to the trees alongside the river and to allow for opportunities to animate buildings and spaces within the High Street through lighting, providing an attraction and focal point on the High Street and riverside as complementing the new lighting system as part of the public realm works.
40. **Business Support** - Members will recall the approval (subject to approval of MTFP in February 2013) of support for businesses through the Business Rate Discount Scheme for new businesses in the town centre. This scheme was developed in recent months as part of the relaxing of restrictions on Business Rate administration as part of the Localism Agenda and is a key element of the integrated package of support available to support business growth in the town centre.
41. **Acquisition of the Courtyard Hotel** – Acquisition of this property will help support aspirations for the Green Dragon Yard area by bringing a property of detrimental use and poor condition back into use to support business growth. Negotiations have begun on acquiring the property with a sale price agreed.
42. **Markets** – The growth of a quality market offer is central to the vision for a vibrant, successful High Street. Resources are required to support this aspiration and to ensure that markets on the High Street have a high quality appearance, continue to attract visitors and that the market offer is sustained throughout the period of transition through construction phases on the High Street to developing and growing the offer once infrastructure works are complete.
43. The provision of specialist markets as part of the overall market offer is a key element of the regeneration proposals for the High Street. Six specialist markets have been held in 2012 across 19 days with a large number of visitors recorded at the world market in September followed by the Chic Vintique market in Parish Gardens in October attracting over 3500 visitors in one day.
44. A market activity programme has been drawn up with 10 specialist markets across 28 days planned for 2013 growing to 69 days of specialist markets in 2016.
45. **Public Engagement** - A key strand of the regeneration of the town centre is the need to ensure proper levels of communication and engagement with the public, businesses and stakeholders. Promotion and communication of our vision for the town centre, progress of works and successes is key to ensuring that all parties are fully aware of how, why, where and when activity is taking place. A dedicated officer is in place to undertake and manage these activities for the Town Centre with a budget identified to support delivery.

### **Future Phase of Investment**

46. The opportunity exists to bring forward a number of planned projects and interventions that will support existing and new business growth, develop the evening and leisure economy and address issues with vacant properties.



47. Project proposals would give support to aspirations for introducing a higher level of housing into the town centre, utilising vacant space across the High Street. Dedicated space for creative business linked to existing business and leisure facilities would be provided along with additional start up and follow on space for new businesses in the town centre.
48. Proposals would also see greater flexibility to work with existing landlords and property owners to address issues with properties across the High Street, improving their appearance and bringing vacant space back into use.
49. The projects identified are all linked to existing activities and will act as a further stage in the regeneration of the town centre. These projects require an additional level of resource to that currently allocated and requested and would therefore need to be considered in more detail alongside other budget pressures at a later date as part of the council's medium-term financial planning approach.

### **Financial Summary**

50. The delivery of the next stage of the projects and interventions described in paragraphs 34-43 requires approval in principle to earmark resources from the VAT shelter and one off resources of £4,690,000 to be considered as part of the MTFP budget setting process.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

51. The schemes identified in paragraphs 34-45 will require £4,690,000. Therefore this amount is required from one off resources and the Council's share of the VAT Shelter. This will be considered as part of the MTFP report to Cabinet in February 2013.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

52. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

53. 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**

54. 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.
55. **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.

56. **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.
57. **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.
58. **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.
59. **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.
60. **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.
61. **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

62. This report is not subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment as it is an update on existing schemes and is not seeking approval for a new policy.

## CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

Public and Stakeholder consultation March 2011  
Public and Stakeholder update October/November 2011  
Ward Member briefing December 2012

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Education related? No

### Background Papers

Reports to Cabinet on 14.06.12 (Town Centre Regeneration Update), 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>

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

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

Property

Some of the projects covered in this report relate to Council-owned land and property, others relate to privately owned properties