

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

13 FEBRUARY 2014

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Regeneration and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Michael Smith

TOWN CENTRES PROGRESS UPDATE

1. Summary

This report updates on the progress of regeneration, economic development and infrastructure projects across the Borough's town centres. The report contains details of infrastructure works on Stockton High Street, progress on initiatives to support retail and business growth, enhancements to Stockton's market offer, economic development projects and business support along with details of works in Yarm, Norton, Billingham and Thornaby, town centres.

2. Recommendations

1. Members note progress on infrastructure and economic development projects across town centres.
2. Members note the production of the Town Centre Prospectus and agree to its use in public.
3. Cabinet note the request for £530,000 to progress projects set out in paragraphs 42-45 and agree to consider the requested funding 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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RECOMMENDATIONS

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DETAIL

Background

1. Cabinet were presented with two reports (June 2012 and January 2013) which set out progress made on Stockton High Street public realm and infrastructure along with 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. Since the last update to Cabinet in January 2013, 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.
3. During this time, significant progress has also been made on the regeneration of Billingham town centre and continued development at Thornaby town centre, and Yarm and Norton High Streets.

Stockton Town Centre

Infrastructure Works

1. The main infrastructure and paving works on the High Street began on the southern section of the High Street in September 2012. All paving and infrastructure works from the south end of the High Street up to the Town Hall were completed in October 2013. This work includes a new road layout, provision of 45 car parking spaces, realigned public transport, relocation of Dodshons fountain and new lighting columns.
2. The CPO of leasehold interests in Lindsay House was approved at Cabinet in April 2013 with vacant possession of the building secured in August 2013. Demolition began in September 2013 and work is now underway on the construction of a car park and associated public realm in line with the agreed design for the site and wider north section of the High Street. Once complete, in summer 2014, this site will link directly into Bishop Street car park providing 98 car parking spaces on the north end of the High Street.
3. Paving and infrastructure works began on north High Street in September 2013. This section of the High Street, including realigned highway, paving, lighting and street furniture will be complete in late 2014. Paving works on Dovecot Street/High Street interface and Prince Regent Street began at the same time and are due to be complete in Spring 2014
4. During this time, service diversions have been undertaken on the central section of the High Street in advance of work beginning on the focal point of the High Street scheme which will incorporate greenery, state of the art lighting and a water feature. Work on the central section of the High Street will begin in January 2014 and will be complete by early 2015. Completion of the central section of the High Street will signal the end of the main infrastructure and paving works on the High Street.
5. The realignment of St Johns Crossing was completed on time and budget with an official opening in October 2013. The realigned junction allows for easier vehicle movements across three main arterial roads, reduces public transport travel times and provides easier access for visitors to the town centre.
6. State of the art street lighting columns have been installed which use advanced controllable LED technology to provide a high level lighting solution that contributes to the important strategy of reducing street clutter. The light nodes on the side of the columns can be controlled and coordinated with the riverside lighting scheme to support the year round events programme and to reinforce the connectivity between the High Street and Riverside area.
7. The design of new street furniture began with the aim of creating a unique suite of furniture. The furniture aims to be both contemporary and functional in design, whilst reflecting the heritage of Stockton. The main seating for the scheme designed by Studio Weave, used famous Stockton born furniture designer Thomas Sheraton as inspiration. They have incorporated surface pattern in a way which mirrors the Sheraton technique of combining styles and motifs from other periods and places. The main elements of the street furniture, including the seating will begin to be installed in April 2014

Artistic Influence

8. As previously reported to Cabinet in January 2013 and June 2012, artists have been involved throughout the development process. A number of proposals have been progressed which combine heritage references with confident statements about our expectations for the future.
9. Detailed development work on the **Stockton Flyer** automaton has been underway throughout 2013. Three automaton artists were approached to produce designs for the automaton, the models were put on display in the Rediscover Shop and visitors were invited to vote for their favourite.
10. The Stockton Flyer which reflects the style of Locomotion No 1 was the winning design. The automaton will rise once a day from the stone plinth it is housed in, creating a fun daily event on the High Street. The automaton is currently being fabricated and will be installed in autumn 2014 alongside infrastructure works on north High Street.
11. **Stellar**, a floorscape lighting installation designed by artist Simon Watkinson references the stars who performed at The Globe in an artwork inspired by the cosmos and the trajectory of stars as they move through space. The work, which will be installed on the paved area in front of the Globe features arcs of different moving coloured lights punctuated with stars, each a spotlight with the face of a famous Globe performer.
12. Residents will be consulted on the selection of which bands/acts to highlight on the stars with people invited to nominate a star with their reasons why. Consultation will take place during spring 2014 with installation summer 2014.
13. In recent months, high profile pieces of public art have been completed and unveiled across the town centre. In September, an illuminated sculpture representing the inaugural journey of Locomotion No.1 was unveiled alongside 1825 Way at the interface with Bridge Street at **St. Johns Crossing**, the name originally given to the crossing of the road and rail line in early the 1800s
14. October saw the culmination of many months research and engagement with local residents as part of a large scale photographic installation on the side of the Castlegate Centre. The 38 metre long installation, **Arripare** by artist Gayle Chong Kwan depicts a mythical island featuring landmarks and architecture from across the Borough identified as part of local engagement.
15. The artwork launches the REFOCUS Castlegate Mima Photography Prize which will commission a new artwork to be installed in 2015. The project is a partnership between Lathe Investments, (owners of Castlegate shopping centre) Stockton Council and Mima art gallery.
16. A Mural on **West Row Arts Centre** was completed in September. The artist, Zak Newton, unfortunately passed away before the work was completed and has been commemorated with a memorial plaque on the building.
17. **Instant Light**, a story by Sara Maitland was published in August with a launch during SIRF. The magical story is accompanied by beautiful illustrations by Robert Dunn. The book is now due to be transformed into an outdoor theatre production commissioned for SIRF 2015. Work continues on the promotion of the book with a supporting exhibition and development of an education resource pack for schools.

Economic Development & Business Support

18. Despite a period of physical disruption on the High Street, clear signs of growth in terms of increasing investor confidence, opportunities for business expansion and relocation along with an increase in enterprise and entrepreneurs in the town centre are emerging.
19. Throughout 2013, work has been undertaken on securing funding through Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the refurbishment of the **Globe**. Approval of the stage one application for £4million was granted in September, giving the green light for a more detailed stage 2 application to be submitted. Stage 2 is a more detailed application and approval process but officers are working alongside HLF and JOMAST to submit all relevant documentation as early as possible to bring forward a funding decision and start on site at the earliest possible opportunity.
20. The refurbishment of **62 Dovecot St** as a creative and digital business facility was successfully completed on site in Spring 2013. 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. The facility is now fully operational with six new businesses in occupation and successful links developed with partner organisations across the region to help signpost additional businesses to the facility in the future.
22. **Stockton Enterprise Arcade** continues to be a successful means of developing and supporting new businesses to test trade in a High Street retail environment before moving on to commercial premises in the town centre.
23. The Arcade is currently fully let with five businesses in occupation meaning that since opening in February 2011, the Arcade has accommodated 22 start up businesses. Of those 22, 7 businesses have gone on to trade on a stand alone basis, taking up previously vacant units in Stockton town centre. 4 businesses have opted to trade from premises in other town centres nearby, 2 businesses are trading online and four businesses did not prove viable and are no longer trading
24. The above figure equates to a 76% success rate for businesses who began trading from the Enterprise Arcade and subsequently went on to trade independently, which is a hugely positive figure given the current economic climate and pressure on the retail sector.
25. Throughout 2013, external organisation Enterprise Made Simple (EMS) have worked alongside the Council's Business Support team with the remit of providing support for growth in enterprise and supporting existing independent businesses across the town centre.
26. EMS expertise in the retail field and access to independent business networks means that there is now a substantial waiting list for businesses to locate in the Arcade. This growing demand has prompted a move to acquire 35-37 High Street to be refurbished and operated as an Enterprise Arcade, which will provide three times more floorspace than the current facility and provide security of tenure which we currently do not have.
27. The increase in demand for space in the Enterprise Arcade and 100% occupancy in recent months is indicative of a wider sense of growing confidence from investors and businesses across the town centre. This is reflected in the fact that during 2013, 56 businesses opened or expanded in Stockton town centre and almost of all of the 56 businesses are independents.

28. Further evidence of growing confidence is evidenced by £3m investment by the owners of the Castlegate centre to improve the car parking and external appearance of the centre. An additional £1.5m has been invested in the refurbishment of Spencer Market Hall to accommodate more market style kiosks and food outlets, providing more opportunities for independent businesses to locate in the town centre.
29. Despite the ongoing work on the High Street, 11 **specialist markets** across 26 days were held in the town centre and High Street during 2013, attracting a significant number of visitors to the town centre.
30. Two Chic Vintique markets attracted 3000 visitors each time they were held, 1500 attended the World Market, 800 at the Food Fun and Fitness market along with 600 students at the inaugural Silver Street Student Market delivered alongside Stockton Town Team. Plans are in place to increase the number of specialist market days from the 26 days held in 2013 to 36 in 2014. Once work is complete on the High Street it is anticipated that this figure will increase to more than 50 days in 2015.
31. The regular weekly **market** remains an asset to the High Street, adding to the vibrancy and retail offer. The market has now relocated to the dedicated space south of the Town Hall and continues to trade well. New canopies which will improve the appearance and attractiveness of stalls and the market in general will be provided to traders in Spring 2014.
32. Stockton **Town Team** continue to champion the town centre leading on several independent press releases and articles along with the popular Smile and Piano events on the High Street which attracted a high level of interest from the public. Representatives of Town Team have also been integral in supporting events and specialist markets throughout the year.
33. Town Team led on the delivery of the Silver Street Student Market which was the first phase of a six month long plan to engage with University of Durham students to attract them into the town centre. A number of events are planned in the coming months which aim to improve relationships and dialogue with students living in the borough to the benefit of the town centre, retail and leisure economy.
34. Work has progressed alongside Stockton Learning Disability Partnership Board to develop a Safe Place Scheme in the Borough. A launch event for the scheme was held at Arc in October 2013 with a view to identifying venues and organisations across the Borough to participate in the scheme. Since then a number of prominent businesses in the town centre have signed up to the scheme along with all Council buildings, providing a number of safe places for the more vulnerable members of society to use if needed.

Rediscover Stockton

35. A wide range of work has been undertaken to promote activities and events, support businesses and the public through a period of extensive change on the High Street and to attract new visitors to the town centre under the banner of Rediscover Stockton.
36. Promotional material including directional signage and information throughout the High Street is regularly produced, installed and update to ensure members of the public can move around the High Street with the minimal amount of disruption. This work has been supported by the production of regular newsletters and information leaflets detailing progress on High street works, upcoming events and initiatives to support businesses.
37. A dedicated website www.rediscoverstockton.co.uk was launched in November 2012, providing an online facility for information, promotion of events and progress of works on

the High Street. The number of users of the website has grown steadily with 300 visitors in the first month compared to 3000 visitors in the corresponding month in 2013.

38. Rediscover Stockton promotional activities have also been prominent in supporting major events and activities throughout 2013 including SIRF, regular and specialist markets, Smile, and the Piano and continues to provide a point of contact for visitors and business seeking information and help throughout the ongoing works on the High Street.

Town Centre Prospectus

39. In March 2011, a prospectus setting out regeneration and infrastructure proposals for the High Street was launched as part of a wider public consultation exercise. Since then, High Street design proposals have evolved and changed, work has begun on site and a number of economic development and artistic projects have been delivered as described above.
40. An updated version of the prospectus which captures this progress on delivery and future design along with progress across a range of initiatives has been produced. The document acts a means of showcasing the quality and diversity of infrastructure, public realm, artistic influence and economic development across the town centre and will be a key document in promoting the town centre to prospective investors, business and the public.
41. The prospectus is accompanied by three appendices which set out, in more detail, work undertaken on artistic influence on design and art features, lighting throughout the town centre and riverside and transition of the market. A copy of the Prospectus is available in the Members Library or can be viewed at www.stockton.gov.uk/stocktontowncentre

Ongoing Investment

42. Given the clear success of a number of initiatives and interventions across the High Street, the opportunity exists to build upon the positive impact made through further support for the growth of existing and new businesses, improved communications with businesses and the public and to ensure aspirations for delivering a high quality environment are met.
43. The successful marketing and engagement work undertaken through Rediscover Stockton as described in paragraph 35-38, including a dedicated officer, needs to be maintained throughout the duration of the infrastructure works and beyond into early 2015 to ensure the public and businesses are fully supported through a period of intense change on the High Street and that opportunities to attract visitors and businesses to the town centre are maximised.
44. Given the ongoing success of the current Enterprise Arcade, increased demand for start up business space and significant waiting list for space in the existing arcade, additional support is required to refurbish and fit out the recently acquired 35-37 High Street property, which will provide space for up to twenty start-up businesses in the heart of the town centre in an expanded Enterprise Arcade as referenced in paragraph 26-27.
45. The Central Area will be the landmark feature on the High Street providing a focal point for activity, and will incorporate high quality design, water and grass features as well as high tech lighting. Additional support is required to ensure the highest quality of materials and technological infrastructure are installed enabling the greatest amount of flexibility to

support the range of activities on the High Street throughout the year and to ensure the aspirations for both design and function of the focal point of the High Street are met.

46. The projects identified in paragraphs 42-45 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.

Billingham Town Centre

47. The £1.7m **paving and public realm scheme** in Billingham town centre is now complete. The works include new paving, lighting, seating and tree planting throughout the town centre along with a strengthened section to accommodate the weekly market.
48. Paving works complement the circa £600,000 invested in new public toilets, CCTV, repainting, stairway repairs, new glazing and brickwork repairs throughout the town centre in late 2012 and early 2013.
49. Construction of a new £2.7m **Integrated Library and Customer Service Centre** began in January 2014. The facility will provide access to Council services, advice and support, office space and a modern library in the heart of Billingham town centre.
50. Investment in the town centre is supplemented by proposals for a £3.5m Care Ready Retirement Housing development as reported to Cabinet in October 2013 along with the delivery of a BMX and skate facility in John Whitehead Park.

Thornaby Town Centre

51. Work began on the construction of a petrol station and McDonalds restaurant on the former **Neasham site** in September 2013 the redevelopment will be complete in January 2014 creating employment opportunities and adding to the offer in Thornaby town centre.
52. Infrastructure improvements in the form of a **link road** between Allensway and Trenchard Avenue aimed at improving circulation and reducing public transport travel times was completed in December 2013.

Yarm High Street

53. Yarm High Street continues to prove to be a popular location for a wide range of businesses and will benefit from new street lighting, which will be fitted in March 2014 along with a new CCTV system, which will help minimise anti-social behaviour and car crime.
54. Officers have been working alongside Yarm Town Council on proposals for a new public realm scheme in the area around the Town Hall with a view to beginning work on site in March 2014. The scheme, subject to approval by Yarm Town Council, will include feature lighting for the Town Hall along with a smoother surface to aid access for visually impaired and disabled users of the High Street.
55. Work has been underway to identify sites for long stay parking provision in Yarm. Two sites, one to the rear of Barclays Bank and the other to the rear of the Blue Bell pub have been identified for the provision of 80 long stay spaces with planning applications for both sites submitted in early February 2014. This additional parking will complement the short-stay pay and display parking arrangements that are due to be introduced on Yarm High Street after Easter.

Norton High Street

56. Work on new paving for sections of North High Street will begin in April 2014. This will be supplemented by improvements to current parking arrangements identified in a recent parking survey, with recommendations for the introduction of some additional short stay parking and mitigating action to reduce obstructive parking currently out for consultation.
57. Businesses on Norton High Street continue to trade well and the evening economy was boosted by the opening of the Wetherspoons operated, Highland Laddie pub in October 2013.

Financial Summary

58. The delivery of the next activity and interventions described in paragraphs 42-45 requires approval in principle to earmark one off resources of £530,000 to be considered as part of the MTFP budget setting process

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

59. The schemes identified in paragraphs 42-45 will require £530,000. Therefore this amount is required from one off resources. This will be considered as part of the MTFP report to Cabinet in February 2014.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

RISK ASSESSMENT

61. 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

62. 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.
63. **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. This also supports the aspiration to provide *improved transport networks* by providing people with better access to services and facilities across the town boroughs town centres.
64. **Environment and Housing** – the implementation of 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.

65. **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.
66. **Healthier Communities and Adults** – the implementation of 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.
67. **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.
68. **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.
69. **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

70. 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

Name of Contact Officer: Richard Poundford
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Education related? No

Background Papers
Report to Cabinet 8/12/11, 14/06/12 & 10/01/13

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Norton North Ward – Cllr Steve Nelson
Yarm Ward – Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Mark Chatburn & Cllr Ben Houchen
Previously Consulted - Stockton Town Centre Ward - Cllr David Coleman & Cllr Paul Kirton

All Billingham Members - Cllr Michael Womphrey, Cllr Mary Womphrey, Cllr Barry Woodhouse, Cllr Ann McCoy, Cllr Ray McCall, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Colin Leckonby, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Lynne Apedale & Cllr Jean O'Donnell. Mandale & Victoria Ward - Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Tracy Stott, Cllr Steve Walmsley. Stainsby Hill Ward - Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley. Village Ward - Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Mick Moore.