

BRIEFING NOTE: STOCKTON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION & THE ROLE OF THE MARKET

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Prepared for: Planning Committee Meeting 4/4/07

Supporting documentation for agenda item No ##

Rationale

On 9 December 2004, Cabinet approved the Action Plan for the regeneration of Stockton Town Centre, which arose from the recommendations of the Drivers Jonas Report (August 2004). (Minute Ref: 751). In the report, it is recognised that Stockton Town Centre should be a key focus for regeneration under the Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative (SMi) and that this is key to the revitalisation of the retail offer and thus the survival of Stockton as a shopping destination in the face of competition from out of town centres and other, larger centres nearby. In addition, this revitalisation is seen to be closely linked to developing the cultural offer and the evening economy thereby widening the appeal of Stockton town centre as a destination.

Specifically, Cabinet approved a table of actions, as follows:

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| Retail/market | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve the quality of the market in terms of offer and appearance – to make it deserving of the name 'Queen of the North'. (RM1)• Improve the quality and variety of the retail offer within the Town Centre. (RM2)• Introduce food retail to the heart of the town centre (author's italics) (RM3) |
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Further, P.7 para 14 of the report to Cabinet of 9 December 2004 specifically states that :

“Any improvement to the market would need to be linked to establishing a hierarchy of spaces in the town centre. Based on the historic High Street, these spaces need to have clearly identifiable purposes and overall help enhance its retail function, and lead people between the retail cores at the Castlegate Centre to the south, and Wellington Square to the north.”

As a result of a further recommendation of the Drivers Jonas report, a Markets Improvement Plan was recommended and drawn up. Action 8 of the Plan states:

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| 8. | Stalls on Stockton Market to be reconfigured so as to make use of the additional space available following demolition of the public toilets and alleviate congestion around the bus stops adjacent to the Castlegate Centre. A full consultation exercise will be undertaken with traders in order to achieve a layout which meets the requirements of both the Council and Traders so far as it is practicable to do so. |
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This exercise was undertaken during 2005/6, but failure to agree on the type of stalls proposed has meant that a further exercise was required to reach agreement with stallholders on the type of stalls and covers, and a layout. The first has been achieved and is out to tender; the layout proposals have been drawn up and are out to consultation with traders in terms of their individual locations within that layout. This exercise commenced on 21 March and ends on 11 April 2007; therefore the results will not be known until after the date of this Committee meeting. A plan of the proposed layout is attached which clearly shows that, regardless of the success or otherwise of the café kiosk proposal, a flexible space would be

created in the area formerly occupied by the public toilets; furthermore, traders currently sited in front of the Castlegate centre have been accommodated within the new layout without encroaching on that area. Finally, it is of note that with the exception of the Castlegate traders, no trader has been displaced significantly from his/her current trading position under the new proposals.

Role of the Markets Forum

The Markets Forum was established to replace the Markets Sub-Committee, following approval at Cabinet on 27th January 2000. (Item 2037). Its Terms of Reference state that its purpose is "to discuss and consider issues relating to Market Trading in the Borough of Stockton." Its formation was supported by Members, officers and representatives from the Market Traders.

Rights of Market Traders

1. Market Charter

Stockton's Market Charter was granted in 1310 by Bishop Bec, Prince Bishop of Durham. It continues now by virtue of the Teesside Corporation Act 1971, Local Government Act 1972 and County of Cleveland Act 1987 and is a franchise market. The Saturday market is also a 'Franchise' market pursuant to these Acts. The Council is not obliged to hold markets on these days but is permitted to hold them.

2. Open Market Regulations 2003 (for the control and governance of Stockton's markets).

These regulations are provided to every market trader on Stockton's markets. By purchasing a daily licence to trade on one of our markets, the trader agrees to be bound by these regulations, which cover conduct, terms of trading, pitch allocation, sale and purchase of businesses etc. The salient points are listed below:

- a. The licence gives the stallholder a right to a pitch "or such other stall or pitches as the Council (in this case, the Town Centre Manager, Markets Manager or his deputy) in their absolute discretion determine;
- b. The licence to trade is a daily licence valid for the day of issue only upon payment of the appropriate pitch fee;
- c. The Authority is not obliged to licence any trader for more than their daily licence;
- d. Under the County of Cleveland Act 1987 the Authority may at its discretion alter the place where the market is held but has to give notice to do so.

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