

OVERVIEW

Town centre development and enhancement has been recognised as one of the five key council priorities over the next five years. The purpose of this report is to provide a broad overview of current town centre activity, to introduce emerging legislation that can potentially provide a measure of sustainable funding for town centre projects, and to make recommendations about the broad strategic direction to be followed in furtherance of the Council's aims.

Council Priorities

The District Council, in May 2004¹ confirmed a set of five 'Category A' priorities that will provide the primary focus of activities over the coming years;

- Anti-social behaviour
- Street scene
- Town centres and the development of Grantham as a sub-regional centre
- Recycling
- Access to services

Additionally, a number of secondary 'category B' priorities were identified. These include business development, planning and conservation and car parks².

This report specifically focuses upon the town centre priority. It does however, also contribute to other Category A priorities (anti-social behaviour and street scene) and Category B priorities (business development, planning & conservation & car parks).

Local Strategic Partnership priorities

The Local Strategic Partnership is in the process of identifying its own priorities, which in due course will frame its review of the Community Strategy. At the time of preparation of this report a number of key themes have emerged from consultations, although these will doubtless require some condensing to a shorter list of priority actions. Emerging themes to date are;

- Crime and disorder
- Public facilities
- Public transport
- Affordable housing
- Protecting the environment
- Developing business
- Support to vulnerable persons
- Health

¹ District Council; 27th May 2004. Report CEX.234. Conclusions of the Consultation Programme and approval of Council's Corporate Planning arrangements

² Added District Council 28/10/2004. Minute No.8

This action plan contributes in whole or part to some of these ambitions; particularly in respect of environmental protection, public facilities, public transport and business development.

Relationship to the Economic & Community Development Strategy

An Economic & Community Development Strategy has been prepared, covering all aspects of Economic and Community Development. This document is currently the subject of consultation. This Town Centre Action Plan arises out of the Action Plan contained within the Strategy.

The current situation

Town Centre Management Partnerships (TCMP's) were established by the District Council in 2000. The terms of reference used to establish the Partnerships are enclosed at **Appendix One**. District Council's are represented on each of the partnerships and provide varying levels of executive support. Financial contributions are made for each specific TCMP as listed below, in addition to which there is a general provision for TCMP activity of £20,000. In recognition of the emergence of Town Centres as one of the key priorities for the Council, budget provisions have increased in the financial year 2005/2006.

The composition of each Partnership varies, reflecting the nature of each settlement, and the manner in which each has evolved since their inception.

Town Centre Management Partnership Composition				
	Total	SKDC	Private	Other
Grantham	23	6	8	9
Stamford	12	2	6	4
Bourne	16	4	5	7
Deepings	17	2	8	7

The District Council supports Town Centre / Partnership Co- Ordinator positions in Grantham, Stamford and Bourne. Contractually, these posts are to SKDC. The posts are generally responsible to the Partnerships that they serve, although, in practice the working relationship between each TCMP, and the District Council, and the Co-Ordinator is close.

Town Centre Co-Ordinators	
Grantham	Recruitment in progress. 50% funding of post from SKDC. Balance of funding provided by Lincolnshire Enterprise for 3 years, and from private sector contributions (financial and in-kind). Full time post.
Stamford	50% funding of post from SKDC. Balance provided (to-date) by a single private sector contributor. Future match-funding anticipated from Welland SSP. 30 hours per week.
Bourne	50% funding of post from SKDC. Balance provide to date by Welland SSP. Welland funding ends during 2005. Private sector funding being sought. Potential future funding from planning gain contributions. ** hours per week
Deepings	No Co-Ordinator post at present. Under investigation. Potential funding from planning gain contributions.

Masterplan or Action Plan documents have been produced in respect of Grantham, Stamford and Bourne, and, a Town Centre Health Check has been produced for Market Deeping, together with a general public survey. These documents adopt varying formats, and range from a broad strategic vision document, in respect of Stamford, to a more detailed project specific Action Plan in relation to Bourne. Town Centre Managers / Co-ordinators are in post in Stamford and Bourne, and recruitment is under way for a similar post in Grantham.

Masterplanning / Action Plans	
Grantham	Grantham Town Centre Masterplan produced in 2002 by DTZ Pida, following production of the Grantham Town Centre Health Check. Proposals to review and roll forward Masterplan during 2005
Stamford	Stamford Vision 2015 strategy document, produced in conjunction with WS Atkins sets out long-term vision for the town. Supplemented by detailed project plans (eg. Welland Quarter)
Bourne	Bourne Town Centre Action Plan produced by Roger Evans Associates in 2002. Supplementary Planning Guidance approved for core area redevelopment site.
Deepings	The Deepings Survey commissioned in 2001. Market Deeping Healthcheck commissioned by Town Council with Countryside Agency in 2003. Arts Centre feasibility report produced with TCMP support in 2003. Consultants presently working with TCMP to develop priorities

The Partnerships have evolved in quite different ways, according to their composition, ambitions and individuals involved, and identified priorities. Some have performed better than others. It is worthwhile at this juncture to review the performance of the Partnerships, and to establish a framework that will enable them to develop further and respond positively to emerging issues.