

## REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: M Sibthorp; Head of Planning Policy & Economic Regeneration

REPORT NO. PLA.525

DATE: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2005

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>STAMFORD GATEWAY PROJECT; REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTION</b>
<b>FORWARD PLAN ITEM:</b>	No
<b>DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:</b>	N/A
<b>KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:</b>	Key Decision

<b>COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b>	Cllr J Smith; Economic Portfolio
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY:</b>	Town Centres
<b>CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:</b>	No negative implications
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:</b>	None
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	None

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND SUMMARY**

**Stamford Vision, the Town Centre Management Partnership for Stamford, over the last four years has been developing a major public realm enhancement project focused around Sheepmarket and Red Lion Square (the 'Stamford Gateway' project).**

**The project to emerge, following a comprehensive design competition and extensive public consultation is due to commence early in the new year.**

**Stamford Vision is taking responsibility for managing the project, and has been successful in securing substantial funding from the Welland SSP. Core funding is also anticipated from Lincolnshire County Council, in their capacity as local highway authority. Total project costs are in the region of £1.4m. Stamford Vision have requested an SKDC contribution towards the project of £350,000.**

**The project is fully aligned with the Council's Town Centre priority. When appraised by the Property PMG alongside other capital projects in preparing the MTFS for 2005/6 – 2007/8 the project ranked highest amongst all candidate projects**

## **2. DETAILS OF REPORT**

The Stamford Gateway project has arisen from public consultation in 2000 and was taken forward through a national design competition completed in early 2004 by Stamford Vision. The need to improve the access, particularly for pedestrians, from the railway and bus stations as well as from two main car parks used by visitors and local residents / shoppers was identified. Sheep Market and Red Lion Square act as a gateway from these points into the town centre. The primary objective of the Stamford Gateway Project is the transformation of these two key spaces in the town centre to make them safer routes for all those coming into town.

At the time that the partnership was first set up the townspeople were asked their views as to how the town should develop over the next 15 years. From that came the *Vision 2015* document focusing a clear and ambitious agenda for subsequent efforts. One of the major projects identified was the transformation of the key spaces of Sheep Market and Red Lion Square in the heart of the town.

In order to achieve this, the partnership commissioned a transport study by Babtie in conjunction with Lincolnshire Highways. The results of the study were shared with the town in a major exhibition. The findings from this confirmed that there was a great deal of enthusiasm to create significant spaces in what were perceived as wasted areas in the town's core. There is a firm belief from both Stamford Vision and the wider town population, that this is a unique chance to develop a new heritage for the

town bringing together the goals of safer pedestrian spaces and rediscovered places which the townspeople and visitors can enjoy.

With advice from Cabe Space, Stamford Vision took the innovative step of deciding to seek out the best designers and architects by running a national competition. This was something which had not been done by a town of this size before and highlights the vision and determination locally to achieve excellence in the project. There were 37 entries received for the national competition which were shortlisted down to four by the ten strong judging panel, led by internationally renowned architect Ted Cullinan, and including representation at national level from English Heritage and Cabe Space and locally from the leader of SKDC, Lincolnshire Highways, the Mayor and local businesses and organisations.

The shortlisted designs were exhibited and the responses from the community fed into the selection process. The winning team was a new and dynamic, integrated team of architects and artists, Letts Wheeler and Wolfgang and Heron. Once the winning team was selected, it undertook extensive public consultation and a further exhibition was held to collect views to inform design decisions. The artist and architect team also consulted on a detailed one to one basis with thirty local businesses and the twenty five residents most immediately affected by the proposals, as well as specific groups such as the Civic Society and Town Council.

Stamford Vision has taken care to involve the community at all stages in the process to date and there have been four formal consultations;

- \* Transport Study September 2002 – 2 day exhibition with 450 attendees
- \* Shortlisted designs: January 2004 – 2 day exhibition with 600 attendees
- \* Community group and one to one Consultations: 2004
- \* Public exhibition of refined proposals: January 2005 – 2 day exhibition with 650 attendees.

The proposals were also displayed for one month in the Art Gallery in the Arts Centre and the model is permanently on display in St John's Church in Red Lion Square.

### **The proposed scheme**

Sheep Market and Red Lion Square will be redesigned to create high quality market town squares of national significance, whilst respecting local identity and history. The concepts have already been used by the Arts Council at a national conference to demonstrate designs which are sensitive to place and contribute to the development of thinking in how public realm can contribute to local amenity.

The Sheep Market area and Red Lion Square will be pedestrianised retaining their own character but linked through the use of quality materials such as York stone. In each space, seating will be provided along with original art work. Street furniture will be kept to a minimum in line with the English Heritage 'Streets for All' initiative to reduce street clutter as much as possible. The ramp to the bus station will be paved and a central high quality handrail will be provided. Following discussions with local disability groups the whole scheme has been designed with the range of impairments in mind; an example of this is the bus station access where it is proposed that the

existing ramp is split to provide a ramp and proposed shallow steps. There will also be a handrail installed in Horseshoe Lane with integral lighting.



The effect of the paving and associated lighting features in Sheep Market will be to lead pedestrians from the bus station, the train station and the town's main car parks up into the heart of the town. In the main area of Sheep Market a cascade of York stone paving will run from Horseshoe Lane down to the road, fanning out with increasing sized paving as it does so. This attractive simple space will include a central feature Maypole (which can incorporate a Christmas tree) with surrounding seating, in this sunny south facing spot. Access for the businesses will be provided but this will be a pedestrian dominated spaces rather like the High Street.

The area beside the bus station ramp will be enlarged to create a new urban space. The paving used here and on the ramp will unify this part of the square. The main feature will be a single, mature oak tree which will bring greenery right into the heart of the spaces, whilst the canopy will be high enough not to obscure the Parentline building. There will be a viewing platform created alongside this building at higher level where it will be possible to look down on the space. Below this platform there is a proposed artwork where particular emphasis is being placed on working with young people to give them the opportunity to learn about possible career options in stone masonry and fine art and practical hands-on experience.

The Gateway scheme builds on two recent initiatives, first the repaving in reclaimed York Stone slabs of Horseshoe Lane, which took place in 2004, to provide a level

and appropriate link between these two spaces. Second the removal of the 7 parking spaces in the centre of Sheep Market to provide a seating area which has provided a popular spot for people to meet on the way back to their bus or car.

In Red Lion Square the whole space will be paved in York stone, large slabs on the pavements and smaller sets in the road and delivery areas. The pavements will be increased by up to seven times their current width so that there will be more room for people to enjoy the square. The effect will also enhance the many fine buildings which surround the space. A central platform artwork relating to the importance of the road in the past when it was the Great North Road between London and Edinburgh will provide a focal point as well as some seating.

The intention is to make greater use of the spaces. The markets which take place in Red Lion Square on Fridays and Saturdays will be accommodated on the wider paving which will provide a safe space for shoppers to circulate between the stalls and the shops. In both spaces the annual Mid Lent Fair will still be accommodated. The current markets will be made more accessible and both Red Lion Square and Sheep Market will be natural hubs for a variety of new events such as Christmas trees and Christmas celebrations, May day performances, expanded markets on special occasions and Classic car shows and other displays.

Safety and security is a particular concern and the CCTV camera in Red Lion Square will be unaffected by the changes. In Sheep Market it is proposed that the current dominating camera will be moved to the end of the bus station ramp and installed on a lamppost so that clutter is reduced. However concern has been raised that the relocation of the camera to this position may result in obstruction of surveillance caused by the proposed mature oak tree proposed for Sheep Market. Further consideration should be given to the most appropriate location for the camera in view of the proposed oak tree. If it is found that there is no alternative location for the camera consideration may need to be given to the replacement of the oak tree with an alternative feature, which would not result in obstruction of surveillance.

The road width in Red Lion Square will be maintained and traffic will move freely in both directions. The use of paving will indicate that the driver is entering a special place which will encourage slower speeds. In Sheep Market the wide carriageway will be reduced in order to prevent speeding and safer and more secure crossing.

The final aspect of the scheme is the possible relocation of car parking spaces. Although there is spare capacity in Cattle Market car park for all but exceptional days, there was a feeling that the short stay car parking spaces close to the shops were important to trade. With this in mind we have looked at how to maintain the current number of on street parking by the creation of new spaces in nearby streets to replace those removed. The disabled car parking places will be located in easier to manoeuvre spots which will have level access to the shops. The implication of creating the new car parking spaces is that there will have to be a one way system to release roadway for parking. The one way route will run from East to West along All Saints' Street and West to East along the Western end of Sheep Market where the road runs adjacent to the bus station. There will still be two way traffic from the top of

Castle Dyke in an easterly direction so that the car parks in Bath Row can be accessed. There are no proposals to affect the two way traffic in Red Lion Square.

The works will be carried out in a phased approach as follows:-

Sheep Market	1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2006
Sheep Market South	1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2006
Red Lion Square	2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2006
Horseshoe Lane	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2006

Preliminary discussions took place with Stamford Vision during 2004, prior to the detailed costing of the scheme. At that time Stamford Vision sought a contribution of £150,000 spread over two financial years. Conceptually at that time, the proposition was that SKDC were being invited to fund the works on that part of the scheme within SKDC ownership (the south side of Sheepmarket including the bus station ramp).

Subsequent engagement of a quantity surveyor, and a more forensic examination of scheme cost has increased the overall cost estimate for the works. Based upon these detailed costings for the revised scheme, Stamford Vision have requested an SKDC contribution of £350,000 towards the whole scheme. A broadly similar level of contribution is being sought from LCC. At a meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005, LCC approved a scheme contribution of £360,000.

As the attached schedule illustrates, the total scheme cost is in the order of £1.4m. Funding for the core scheme is committed from Welland SSP and LCC. SKDC funding awaits confirmation. The balance of funding, if confirmed, is essentially value-adding grants that will enhance and develop the core scheme. In this regard, funding from these sources cannot be applied to the core scheme.

Stamford Vision readily acknowledge that the scheme cost has risen significantly from original estimates. Initial estimates were prepared by the scheme architects. Subsequent detailed costings by quantity surveyors have confirmed a significantly higher cost. This is largely a reflection of the need to incorporate high quality materials in these sensitive urban spaces and the higher craft and labour costs associated with the use of natural materials. The Council's own Quantity Surveyors have checked the costing information and plans and on the basis of the information provided are satisfied with their accuracy.

Cabinet are invited to consider whether they wish to contribute to the cost of this scheme, and if so, the level of that contribution.

Provision has been made within the Medium Term Financial Strategy for town centre capital projects, and this project can be accommodated within that budgetary allocation. As part of the preparation of the MTFS, all candidate capital projects have been assessed against a scoring framework that assesses alignment with priorities, needs, third party funding, outcomes, financial impact, risk and timescale certainty. Assessed against this framework the Stamford Gateway scheme scored highest of all the projects assessed.

The project is a high profile scheme that will deliver very significant public realm benefits. The level of contribution sought generates a high level of contribution from other sources. It is difficult to speculate upon the consequences of not contributing to the scheme, although there is a risk of the scheme not proceeding or the form and extent of the scheme might need to be revised. In reality, there are limited opportunities to compromise upon scheme quality in such a sensitive location.

### **3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND ASSESSED**

As discussed above, the level of funding sought from SKDC is £350,000 based upon estimates of total scheme costs and the levels of contribution sought / available from other parties. It should be noted that not all funding sought from other bodies has been confirmed at this stage.

It is also unclear at this stage whether Stamford Town Council has been asked to contribute to the overall cost of the scheme. If not it is felt that they should be approached to part fund the scheme which will be of benefit to the whole town. It may therefore be possible that the Town Council may make up any shortfall arising.

The Cabinet must consider whether it wishes to support the scheme by either providing the level of contribution sought (£350,000), or to offer a lesser sum, or indeed nothing at all.

It is unlikely that the scheme as proposed could be delivered in its entirety without the SKDC contribution. A reduced contribution may result in a lesser scheme and project delays if a scheme revision becomes necessary. It may even result in the abandonment of the project.

### **4. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND STRATEGIC RESOURCES**

As the report indicates there is provision within the MTFS for town centre capital projects. There is provision within the Council's programme to fund this particular project. When assessed against the Scoring Matrix for Capital Projects developed by the Property PMG this project scored highest of all the candidate projects. This project was initially assessed against a £150,000 SKDC scheme, albeit as a proportion of a scheme with an anticipated lower overall cost. Whilst the SKDC contribution requested is now higher, the overall scheme cost has also increased. The scheme has recently been re-evaluated in the light of further detailed information, and it continues to rank as the highest scoring capital project. Whilst a spending profile for all town centre projects using the capital provisions in the MTFS have yet to be agreed by Cabinet, there would appear to be capacity to resource this project.

If the Cabinet are minded to increase its contribution to this scheme and would advise that this contribution is capped and made dependant upon:

- Tangible project outcomes being defined;
- Certainty of other key partners contributions being forthcoming and any potential losses of contributions not impacting on outcomes.

## **5. COMMENTS OF CORPORATE MANAGER, DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES (MONITORING OFFICER)**

No issues raised

## **6. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICE MANAGER**

None

## **7. CONCLUSION OR SUMMARY**

The Stamford Gateway project is a significant and exciting public realm project that will deliver significant benefits to the town centre of Stamford. In regional terms it is a significant regeneration project, and one that will inevitably generate a national profile too given the importance of Stamford from a heritage and conservation perspective. It aligns well with the District Council's own priorities. Whilst this project has been led by Stamford Vision, SKDC have been closely involved in the project since its inception. Significant funds are being drawn down from external sources to realise the project. The scheme appears worthy of support, and members are invited to consider whether they wish to support the project to the level requested by Stamford Vision.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Cabinet are invited to consider whether they are minded to financially support the project, and if so, the level of contribution to be made.**

**If Cabinet do wish to support the scheme by making a financial contribution it is suggested that at this stage, approval is “given in principle” only. It is also recommended that level of funding provided by SKDC is capped and is dependant upon confirmation that the funding of other bodies such as the Welland SSP has been secured.**

## **9. CONTACT OFFICER**

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## STAMFORD GATEWAY SCHEME : Funding profile prepared by Stamford Vision

Funder	Status	Amount requested	% of overall costs
Welland SSP	This is a definite grant agreed in November 2004 over three financial years 2004-5, 2005-6 and 2006-7, currently £56,625 has been drawn down specifically related to fees. The grant is not limited to any particular part of the project. The funding is dependent of a range of economic targets being met.	£278,000	19.7
Lincolnshire County Council	Stamford Vision has been working with LCC on this project since Babtie undertook a joint transport study in 2002. The proposed funding is from the Community Travel Zone capital funding which aims to encourage people to walk or use alternative means of transport rather than their cars for journeys of less than 2 miles. The Capital Policy Development Group will consider the project on 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2005. The funding will be requested for 2005-6 and 2006-7.	£360,000	25.5
South Kesteven District Council	SKDC own part of the site for the proposed transformation in Sheep Market South and currently have town centres and street scene as their top priorities. They have been approached for capital funding for 2005-6 and 2006-7 for this part of the project. They have currently committed £150,000 from their capital resources and will consider a request to increase this following up-to-date QS figures at their committee meeting in September 2005. Part of the sum includes the relocation of the CCTV equipment in the centre of Sheep Market to a location at the end of the ramp to the bus station. LCC highways lighting department have agreed to relocate the camera on a lamppost in order to keep street clutter to a minimum. The total costs of taking down the existing CCTV and lighting columns, moving the CCTV camera, installing a new lighting column, and the new power and BT connections is £7,654.	£350,000	24.8
Arts Council East Midlands	Stamford Vision has been in discussion with the Arts Council for over a year, an application has just been lodged and a decision anticipated by the start of November 2005. This grant would be specifically for two sculptures in the centre of Red Lion Square and Sheep Market and associated workshops and evaluation.	£65,000	4.6
Esme Fairburn Trust	In order to fund the third sculpture in Sheep Market we will have to apply to this national trust. They have just refocused their activities on visual arts so this seems appropriate. They have a five month decision making cycle for sums of this size so if the application is soon a decision would not be forthcoming until the end of January.	£30,000	2.1

WREN	We have been in discussion with this organisation since the start of 2005. We will be applying to this distributive environmental body for appropriate 'public amenity' works such as seats and handrails. Their committee cycle is such that we cannot apply before their November panel meeting and a decision will not be forthcoming before the end of December. If a grant is awarded we will have to spend the money within 12 months.	£50,000	3.5
East Midlands Tourism	An expression of interest has been lodged with the East Midlands Tourism Challenge Fund for Public Realm Works. We will find out whether we have been successful in moving to the next stage on 15.8.05. Should we be ultimately successful in securing funding we will know by October 2005. The application is specifically to improve the visitor experience and we have therefore put in a bid which revolves around wayfinding – there are two specific elements related to visitor orientation and interpretation. This funding adds to the quality of the scheme but is not fundamental to it.	£250,000	17.7
Heritage Lottery Fund	It is intended to make a joint bid with either the Men of Stones or Stamford Civic Society to support the project which will provide us with detailed information about the importance of stone carving to the town's heritage as an artistic expression.	£10,000	0.7
Private sector funding	We have received a definite offer of stone from Castle Cement which is of good enough quality to be used in the artworks. We value this donation in the region of £20,000.	£20,000	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	Costs of the works if all the project above are included is £1,500,000	<b>£1,413,000</b>	<b>100</b>