

# Stamford Vision: Business

## Notes from the meeting of 6.04.06

1. Wayne Lound, Vacancy Support Manager, Job Centre Plus

He gave an interesting perspective on the employment situation in the locality as he covers an area covering South Kesteven and Rutland. He acts as the liaison between employers and the Job Centre Plus Service (the central contact centre of employers). Employers can register their vacancies on line and job seekers can access this service both over the internet and at job points in the Job Centre. Many of the jobs advertised in Stamford are registered primarily as employment agency vacancies which they then place on the service. He said that, unlike in Grantham, there were few large scale vacancies. The lack of new development has an impact on major employment opportunities although Marks and Spencer will provide a boost in September. Currently at any one time there are 400 people seeking jobs in the town as well as others who may be returning to work and therefore not registered as unemployed. The current government strategy, 'New Deal' is targeted as subsidised employment getting people back into the workforce and off incapacity benefit. Another strategy relates to graduates and there is an advisor available who will work with SMEs to promote the opportunities for graduate employment.
2. New business space and steps needed to achieve this

Pinpointing locations for new business space is the first step then looking at potential funding – public/ private – to achieve suitable development. The type of space required eg offices, small workspace units etc is crucial and in order to have an idea of what is necessary it would be helpful to have a discussion with Mike Sibthorp and the new planning policy officer at SKDC. CLH to arrange for them to attend a future meeting.
3. Benchmarking

The Welland SSP has now committed funding to the Welland benchmarking project. This is a 2 stage project, the initial stage is to validate the key performance indicators and the methodology adopted, and the second stage is to support the roll out of the programme across the 12 towns involved. Stamford is some way ahead of the other towns in the collection of data and has been chosen to be the pilot for the Visitor Satisfaction Survey. On-street interviews will take place on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April by professional market researchers.

The spring footfall counts are now completed.
4. Business Awards

A meeting was held with all the sponsors to feedback on this year's event and to look forward to 2007. The group agreed that the Business Group should support our ongoing involvement.

Next meeting **Thursday 4.5.06**