



Results of the Business Questionnaire October 2003

Stamford Vision Business Group has recently completed a comprehensive survey of all businesses and employers in the town. The aim of this study was to see what the current state of business is and to understand the town's economic base. We wanted to find out what makes the town tick and how we can help businesses develop in the future.

What has emerged is an immensely heartening picture of a prosperous town where the vast majority of businesses anticipate a positive future. The town has a real spread of businesses, with a diverse range of employment opportunities.

What is particularly pertinent is that businesses from all sectors have identified the attractiveness of the town as having a direct impact on their decision to locate in Stamford. Maintaining Stamford's position as the finest stone town in England must be key in both retaining businesses and attracting new ones. This links in with Stamford Vision's Gateway project which will transform Sheep Market and Red Lion Square. Whilst it is obvious that improving the spaces between buildings will help to attract visitors, here is evidence that these areas have a much wider importance to the economy of the town than just that one sector. Indeed this supports the views expressed by the people of the town at the transportation exhibition, held last year, where there was overwhelming enthusiasm for these new public spaces.

Stamford Vision, working through partnership, can champion the town's cause with all those authorities which can make decisions that will impact on the town. Understanding issues such as these and basing our discussions on real the information provided by the businesses in the survey, we will be able to engage the, increasingly important, regional bodies such as East Midlands Development Agency and the Welland Sub regional Strategic Partnership. Our aim is to convince them that they want to invest in our future.

One of the constraints to future growth identified from the survey was the lack of available land or premises. We have begun to address this issue, funded by Welland SSP, with the creation of pump priming grants to convert redundant premises and bring them back into economic use. This adaptive

reuse project has signed up three conversions so far and there is still money available for other schemes. The first grant offered is for the refurbishment of the top floor of 2 St Mary's Hill which has lain empty for many years. This work will provide space which could either accommodate a medium sized business or several small businesses.

The survey has given us a real insight into what a successful town Stamford is for the diversity of businesses which are based here. By listening to what they have told us in their answers and linking up with the available new funding sources and expertise, we hope to retain exiting businesses and promote the town to new businesses.

This illustrates the joined up nature of all our projects as we work towards delivering Vision 2015.

Catherine Hammant
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