

Area West Committee – 21st January 2009

## 9. Chard Regeneration Scheme – Appointment of Members to the Town Team

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### Purpose of the Report

To agree the appointment from Area West Committee of 2 members of the District Council to serve on the Town Team being established as part of the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Area West Committee appoint 2 members of the District Council to serve on the Town Team being established as part of the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

### Background to the Chard Regeneration Scheme

Members will be aware that exciting plans to transform and regenerate the town of Chard took a big step forward recently when it was announced that South Somerset District Council, the South West RDA and Somerset County Council have appointed LDA Design - a leading masterplan consultancy - to prepare long term plans for the town.

Working towards a July deadline, the consultancy has been tasked with producing an overall vision for the town, a 'framework plan' to help prioritise investments and improvements, and 'masterplans' for the much-anticipated redevelopment of the Boden Mill and Car Parks site (MU/CHAR/4) in the town centre and the Chard 'Key Site'.

LDA Design will also give advice on how to take the plans forward so that Chard can be renewed.

The appointment is the result of substantial further investment in the project from the South West RDA, following its first contribution in July last year which enabled South Somerset District Council to purchase the ACI (Boden Mill) factory site.

It means that we can now start to look, in detail, at the town as a whole, looking at how we can develop and enhance the town both as a shopping, tourist and leisure destination and also as somewhere people can live and work for years to come.

### Community Leadership and Participation

To prepare robust plans and effective and practical advice, the LDA will consult widely. There will be opportunities for people to hear about and comment on the scheme including open community events and surgeries. In addition, a permanent Town Team and Community Forum will be established.

The Town Team - a group of people who regularly meet to go through key proposals, challenge them if necessary and help to push them forward. The Town Team will be involved in the creative process of generating ideas as well as challenging the ideas put forward by LDA. The core membership of the Town Team will be drawn from the elected membership of the County, District and Town Councils who are now being asked to

nominate 2 members each. Other members will be drawn from the local business sector and public sector organisations. The first meeting will be held no earlier than 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

The Community Forum will be a wider group of up to 50 that can provide views that are representative of those of local people. Expressions of interest in joining the forum will be invited from other elected members at parish and district council level, community groups and other individuals.

The first two meetings of the forum will be visioning workshops held on Saturdays in February.

## **Chard Regeneration Scheme - The “Delivery” Stage**

This is a large and ambitious scheme and further detailed reports on its progress will be made in due course. As part of their brief LDA will be helping to establish the Town Team and Community Forum, but it is our intention that they remain in place to also guide the delivery of the Chard Regeneration scheme long after they have helped LDA to complete the Chard Frameworks and Plans.

## **Financial Implications**

No new financial implications will result from adopting the recommendations made in this report.

## **Corporate Implications**

South Somerset District Council aims to increase economic vitality and prosperity in the area, ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities and promote a balanced natural and built environment.

**Background Papers:** *None.*

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