

Joint Area Committee – West – 18th March 2009

6. Chard Regeneration Scheme - Briefing

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Joint Area Committee West about the work undertaken by SSDC and partners to establish a long term vision, strategy and delivery plan for the future development of Chard.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Background

Over the years Chard has grown and will continue to do so. However, development across the town has been seen by many as piecemeal rather than part of a strategic and planned approach. There has been a significant loss of employment land to residential development, community and leisure facilities have not kept pace and traffic problems are a growing concern.

There was a clear need to look at the town as a whole and decide how it could be enhanced and developed not only as a shopping, tourist and leisure destination but also as somewhere people will want to live and work for years to come.

The Chard Regeneration Scheme

The Chard Regeneration Scheme is the result of many detailed discussions over a number of years about the challenges that face Chard and the regeneration opportunities that could be available.

In January 2007, SSDC's Executive Committee agreed the need to lead the development of a Chard Vision project that would allow the challenges to be met and the regeneration opportunities to be taken.

Extensive negotiations with the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), Somerset County Council and Chard Town Council were concluded in October 2008. These established the Chard Regeneration Scheme. The scheme will provide a framework for the future of Chard, enabling development that will;

- strengthen Chard's functions and facilities;
- diversify and increase Chard's economic base;
- integrate key development opportunities including the Chard Key Site and the Town Centre Site around Boden Mill ensuring a more holistic approach to major developments.

SWRDA have committed substantial funding to the project towards;

- the purchase of the ACI (Boden Mill) factory site by SSDC to consolidate SSDC ownership of the Town Centre Site (MU/CHAR/4) for future development.

JAW

- the appointment of LDA Design consultancy to create a regeneration framework for Chard

The Chard Regeneration Framework

The plans to transform and regenerate the town of Chard took a big step forward in early 2009, when it was announced that South Somerset District Council, the South West RDA, Somerset County Council and Chard Town Council had appointed LDA Design - a leading masterplan consultancy - to prepare long term plans for the town that addressed the issues set out in the “Chard Regeneration Framework” brief for consultants.

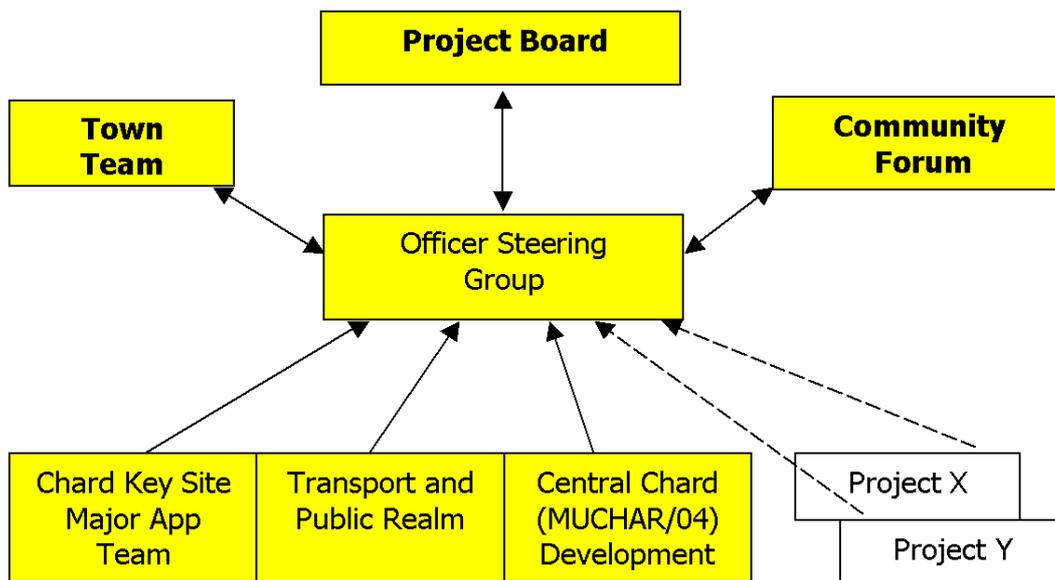
Working towards a July 2009 deadline, LDA Design have been tasked with producing;

- an overarching Vision for Chard;
- a strategy for better transport;
- an Urban Development Framework (UDF) to help prioritise investments and improvements;
- a Masterplan for the redevelopment of the Boden Mill and Car Parks site (MU/CHAR/4) in the town centre;
- a Masterplan for the Chard ‘Key Site’.

Crucially, LDA Design will also give realistic advice on how to finance the plans for Chard’s regeneration so that they can be delivered.

To prepare robust plans and effective and practical advice, LDA are consulting widely. There will be further opportunities for people to hear about and comment on the scheme including open community events and surgeries as it develops.

Project Management



The Chard Regeneration Scheme is designed to establish a long-term vision, strategy and delivery plan for the future development of Chard. The project is being led by SSDC and has a wide variety of stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors. To ensure success, it is necessary to have an inclusive, adaptable management structure

that will remain in place to endorse the Vision for Chard and oversee the key developments that will follow.

There is therefore a strong focus on building integrated community leadership for the Chard Regeneration Scheme through the Project Management Board, and the Town Team and Officer Steering group that bring together the County, District and Town Councils.

Through the Town Team, Community Forum and other opportunities for community participation an impressive coalition of interests is being established that will continue to drive the project forward over a number of years.

Chard Regeneration Scheme - Project Management Groups

| Group: | Members: | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Project Board (PB) | Mark Pollock Cllr Peter Seib Cllr Kim Turner Cllr Martin Wale Andrew Gillespie | SSDC Director –Economic Vitality SSDC Portfolio Economic Development] SSDC Portfolios Area West & Market Towns Mayor of Chard SSDC Head of Area Development (West) |
| Officer Steering Group (OSG) | Andrew Gillespie Mark Pollock Rob Murray Claire Littlejohn John Furze Wendy Thomson Paul Calvert Jeff Copp Andy Foyne | SSDC Head of Area Development (West) SSDC Director –Economic Vitality SSDC Economic Development Officer SSDC Community Development Officer Chard Town Council Town Clerk SCC Economic Development Officer SWRDA SCC Transport Development SSDC HoS Economy, Transport & Planning |
| Town Team (TT) | Cllr Nigel Mermagen Cllr Dan Shortland Cllr Jill Shortland Cllr Paul Buchanan Cllr Jenny Kenton Cllr Dave Hill David Mansfield 12 local business owners - Manufacturers, industrialists and retail sector representation | SSDC SSDC SCC SCC CTC CTC SSH (Delegates list on request) |
| Community Forum (CF) | 45+ people | Chard residents, Community Group & Council representatives (as of 21.02.09) |

As part of their brief LDA have helped to establish the Town Team and Community Forum. The Team and Forum will be there to guide the development of the Chard Regeneration Framework and the subsequent delivery of agreed Masterplans and projects.

Chard Town Team

The core membership of the Town Team is drawn from the elected membership of the County, District and Town Councils. Other members come from the local business sector and public sector organisations. The first meeting was held on 24th February.

The Chard Town Team will meet regularly 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.

Chard Community Forum

The Community Forum is a wider group of up to 50 people who can act as a sounding board and provide representative local views. There was a great response to calls for expressions of interest in joining the forum from other elected members at parish and district council level, community groups and other local residents.

The first two meetings of the forum were visioning workshops. They took place on the first and third Saturdays in February and created a lot of interest and support.

The Vision for Chard

The outcomes from high level strategic visioning exercises which LDA Design carried out with key stakeholders in Chard are being used to prepare a Vision document. The document will be designed to promote Chard, inform the other elements of the Chard Regeneration Framework and further raise public awareness of the preparation of the UDF and key site masterplans.

This stage of the development of the Chard Regeneration Scheme will be finalised through another Community Forum in late March.

Further details of the proposed vision and the community forum event will be made available on 18th March.

Chard Regeneration Scheme - Further Reports

This is a large and ambitious scheme and further detailed reports on its progress will be made regularly to JACW.

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: *Developing the Chard Vision - a report to SSDC District Executive January 2007*
"Chard Regeneration Framework - a brief for consultants" October 2008