

Area West Committee – 16th November 2011

9. Chard Regeneration Scheme – Progress Report for the period April to October (2011)

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1. Purpose of the Report

On 16th March 2011 officers reported to Area West Committee on the new governance arrangements for the Chard Regeneration Scheme (CRS) and it was recommended that regular progress reports be made to Area West Committee. This report advises members of Area West Committee of recent progress made with the CRS. It particularly focuses on the period March to October 2011.

2. Public Interest

This report outlines the progress made with the Chard Regeneration Scheme since March 2011. The scheme includes a range of projects that will provide a holistic regeneration package for the town.

3. Recommendation

That members note the progress of the project and the content of the report.

Members should also note that both elements of the report are part of an active and ongoing project. In particular, the town centre component is progressing on a daily basis and has now reached a critical stage. A further verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

4. Background

The Chard Regeneration Scheme is now in its implementation phase. Since March 2011 there have been two main areas of focus

a) Town Centre Regeneration - specifically the mixed-use redevelopment of the 3.5 acre site defined as MU/CHAR/04 in the 1998 Local Plan. This site comprises Boden Mill and the former holdings of Air Control Industries (ACI) as well as the two adjoining SSDC-owned car parks at Boden Street and Market Fields. The site was acquired by SSDC (with SWRDA funding) in 2007. The aim is to find a development partner to bring forward the site in line with the Local Plan and within the context of the wider Chard vision for economic and community regeneration.

b) Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA): This significant site, defined as KS/CHAR/1 in the former Local Plan, is an area of 176 acres. The Chard Regeneration Plan (2010) identified options for the phased development of the CEDA and identified a preferred option. (Development aims and outputs are detailed in the Chard Regeneration Framework, www.southsomerset.gov.uk/chardregen)

The preferred option within the Chard Regeneration Plan incorporates a revised highways solution that provides more deliverable phased transport infrastructure linked to development. The route is largely through the Eastern Development Area serving development sites on either side as opposed to previous proposals for a by-pass which would run along the periphery of the expanded settlement.

In order to support the allocation of the CEDA through the Core Strategy as a major housing allocation, it is necessary to demonstrate that the project is deliverable. Unlocking the growth and regeneration opportunities highlighted in the plan is complex and requires a phased approach to aid viability and deliverability through the sequenced provision of required infrastructure. Any development that is brought forward out of sequence will need to be considered carefully to ensure that it does not impact upon the viability of subsequent growth.

5. Progress March – October 2011

In May 2011 Thomas Lister Ltd were appointed to support the delivery of the CRS. Thomas Lister Ltd are providing specialised advice on the redevelopment of the Chard Town Centre site and providing a robust strategy for the phased delivery of the town's eastern development area (CEDA). Specific advice surrounds professional assessment of the suitability and viability of interests; development of the marketing brief; scoring criteria; technical and valuation issues; landowner/developer negotiation; CIL/106 advice; pursuit of a development agreement & final appointment. This support has been fully funded by the South West Regional Development Agency

5.1 Chard Town Centre Site

In March 2011 the marketing brief advertised nationally the availability of the former ACI/Car park sites for a comprehensive regeneration scheme as set out in the CRS. This represented Stage 1 of the site development strategy. Under the auspices of SSDC officers, and with decision making vested in the Chard Regeneration Scheme Project Board, the submissions were appraised, evaluated and short-listed.

Four outline proposals were received from highly regarded developers. Using a scoring matrix developed by the PDG and approved by Project Board, three of these development proposals were deemed to be of a sufficiently robust standard to invite the those developers to expand their plans into detailed, designed and costed schemes. A development prospectus was then prepared to provide site-specific technical information to assist the three developers in refining and progressing their schemes to be submitted by October 21st as Stage 2 proposals.

It had been clear from the outline submissions received that the current economic climate had restricted the variety of options for development that would underpin the development programme. The prospectus therefore tried not to further limit the aspirations and imagination of the developers and the need for developers to incorporate a high level of regenerative design into their plans was emphasised.

Following receipt of two detailed proposals, the selection process featured a public consultation on 29th October with feedback on the proposals sought from members, the Town Team, Community Forum, Chard residents and businesses. The feedback process remains open until 7th November.

The developer interviews took place on the 2nd November and a recommendation report (incorporating the results of the consultation, interviews and scoring matrix/assessment of the proposals) will be compiled for the CRS Project Board on 6th December. The

Project Board will make a decision on the preferred developer at that meeting. The final decision will need to be ratified by District Executive in January 2012.

**Table 1: Project Timetable:
Chard Town Centre Delivery**

Project Milestone	Start	Finish
PROJECT BOARD MEETINGS:	23/06/11	06/12/11
EOI'S Closing Date	03/05/11	03/05/11
TL APPOINTED & INCEPTION	27/05/11	27/05/11
Review of EOI's	27/05/11	27/05/11
Meetings with EOI Parties	03/06/11	06/06/11
Project Board Agrees Progress		
Preparation of Detailed Bid Pack	23/06/11	02/08/11
Detailed Bid's Sought (4 Parties)	03/08/11	21/10/11
Decision/Authorisation Process:	24/10/11	05/01/12
Detailed Submission Analysis	24/10/11	28/10/11
Draft Report for AWC	28/10/11	28/10/11
Developer Interviews	02/11/11	02/11/11
Assessment Process	02/11/11	08/11/11
AWC Pre Agenda	02/11/11	02/11/11
Final Draft AWC Report	04/11/11	04/11/11
Project Board Update Report	09/11/11	09/11/11
Area West Committee	16/11/11	16/11/11
Report to Project Board	22/11/11	22/11/11
Project Board Decision	06/12/11	06/12/11
DX Report Draft	07/12/11	07/12/11
Asst & Fin Svs, PFH, Ldr Approve	08/12/11	08/12/11
Management Board Report	08/12/11	08/12/11
Management Board	12/12/11	12/12/11
DX report - final amends	23/12/11	23/12/11
Report to DX	05/01/12	05/01/12
Preferred Developer: HoT's agree	09/01/12	28/02/12
Planning Application Prep/Submit	04/04/12	19/07/12
Planning Consent Decision Process	20/07/12	18/10/12
Legal Documentation	27/02/12	29/10/12
Contract Becomes Unconditional	31/10/12	31/10/12

5.2 Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA):

The following points will update Members on the milestones achieved, knowledge gained and ongoing requirements to facilitate delivery of the CEDA and providing evidence to the Inspector. The timescale will become critical, as SSDC are required to satisfy the LDF Inspector that the wider vision for Chard is viable and deliverable.

1. A Market Assessment has been completed. This has informed and facilitated agreement on the CIL financial model subsequently used and tested in discussions with developers/ landowners. This has also been used to test assumptions within a robust viability model.
2. Developer/Agent/Landowner consultations have been intensified with all landowners and developers who wish to be engaged. Evidence established from these meetings (attended by development control) shows that all parties are, in principle, happy either to proactively support the CEDA proposals, or at least they do not object to them.

3. Exploratory meetings have been held with landowners to explore access requirements to the Eastern Area Development site.
4. A viability testing model has been developed by Thomas Lister Ltd. This model will test financial information and sensitivities relating to the development of the sites. This model will be used to support the Planning case and identify viability shortfalls/timings in order that appropriate actions/remedies can be identified. The model will also ensure that we can meet the necessary outputs.
5. Finally, a Viability Report will be prepared which pulls together all the market evidence, developer/land owner consultations, proposed delivery steps and progress made to date. This report will identify any financial viability gaps in the phased development plan and consider those steps necessary to resolve any identified issues. This will be completed by the 2nd Dec, 2011.

Table 2 provides a summary of the required milestones, indicating when they are to be completed.

**Table 2: Project Timetable:
Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA)**

Project Milestone	Start	Finish
PROJECT DELIVERY GROUP MEETINGS:	02/08/11	06/12/11
PROJECT BOARD MEETINGS:	23/06/11	06/12/11
TL Appointed & Inception Meeting Held	27/05/11	27/05/11
Desk Top Review	10/06/11	17/06/11
Market Assessment Analysis Report (draft submitted)	13/06/11	15/08/11
Highways Infrastructure Project Board Meeting	13/06/11	08/07/11
CIL Proposal Review	13/06/11	09/09/11
CEDA Landowner/Developer Consultations	20/06/11	21/10/12
Development Appraisal/ Financial Modelling	01/07/11	11/11/11
Viability/Funding/Delivery Report (draft submitted)	27/09/11	18/11/11
Landowner/Developer Negotiations	07/11/11	25/11/11
Final Report/Evidence Base Prepared (for Inspector)	18/11/11	02/12/11

Chard Regeneration Scheme - Further Reports

This is a large and ambitious scheme and it is expected that further detailed progress reports will be made to Area West Committee on a twice-yearly basis.

Financial Implications

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

Corporate Priority 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.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None.

Background Papers:

Chard Regeneration Scheme - Delivery Management Structure - Area West Committee – 16th March 2011

SSDC Request for Specialist Economic Regeneration Advice [Consultants Brief], March 2011

Chard Regeneration Framework – Vision, Regeneration Plan & Implementation Plan (available online at www.southsomerset.gov.uk/chardregen)

Chard Regeneration Scheme Workshop – Report to Area West Committee – 18th August 2010.

Chard Regeneration Scheme – Regeneration Plan (Executive Decision) – a report to Joint Area Committee – West - 18th November 2009

Chard Regeneration Scheme: Project Initiation Document - 24th June 2009

Chard Regeneration Plan – Final Draft submitted for internal review, October 2009

“Chard Regeneration Scheme – Briefing” to Joint Area Committee – West – 18th March 2009

Chard Regeneration Scheme – Appointment of Members to the Town Team: Area West Committee – 21st January 2009

Chard Regeneration – SWRDA Funding – Confidential Item: Report to District Executive – 2nd October 2008

Chard Town Centre – Purchase of Property – Closed Session: Report to District Executive – 6th March 2008

“Chard Regeneration Framework - a brief for consultants” October 2008”

Developing the Chard Vision - a report to SSDC District Executive January 2007

These documents, along with the Vision for Chard, The Regeneration & Implementation Plan comprise the Chard Regeneration Framework (CRF). Approved through internal County, District & Chard Town Council review and public exhibition in 2010, these documents were published and are available to view at www.southsomerset.gov.uk/chardregen.