

Area West Committee – 19th December 2012

7. Update Report - Chard Regeneration Scheme (CRS)

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Purpose of the Report

To provide an update to Area West members on the progress of the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

Public Interest

The Delivery Stage of the Chard Regeneration Scheme (CRS) has overseen the implementation of several planned regeneration developments now progressing in Chard. They include projects within the Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA) and the Chard Town Centre site at Boden Mill, Marketfields and Boden Street car parks. Progress on other sites, relevant to the CRS is also reported.

Recommendation

That members note the content of the report.

Background

On 16th March 2011 the Chard Regeneration Scheme (planning to implementation stages) were reported to Area West Committee. The report set out the timetable for the selection of a scheme and a developer for the Boden Mill, Boden Street and Marketfields car parks sites. All specific deadlines contained in the report were met.

On 16th November 2011 the proposed timetable (table 1) for reaching agreements with the selected developer was set out in the second progress report to Area West Committee. It was reported that Henry Boot Developments were the preferred developer for the mixed use development at this location. They were selected through an open procurement process that included public consultation. The key features of the scheme include a superstore, public open space, refurbishment of the Boden Mill, undercroft parking and housing.

The necessary permissions to proceed with negotiations were obtained from SSSC District Executive in February 2012, and all specific deadlines were met up to and including the signing of Heads of Terms agreement between SSSC and the developer.

In March 2012 SSSC entered into negotiations with the developer to conclude a Development Agreement. From this point onwards the negotiations have been complex with both parties using legal teams to ensure that their risks and interests are protected. Working to timetable during this stage of the negotiating process has proved to be very difficult. Both parties remain committed to concluding this negotiation and re-establishing a realistic development timetable.

The report to Area West Committee of 16th November 2011 also updated members of progress (table 2) in the Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA). All dates within this

timetable were met. The evidence base and final feasibility report was drafted for the Inspector by December 2011 and awaits Local Plan adoption.

The requirements of delivering an ambitious strategic masterplan in the current climate have proved challenging but the CRS partnership can report that a number of phased developments are now underway.

Report: Progress to Date

The following areas of work are now coming forward through negotiation or pre-planning application discussions:

1 The installation of the MOVA (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation) traffic signals system (A30/A358 central crossroads) was completed in the summer of 2012. Initial impact has been difficult to assess because of the proximity of the lengthy road works this autumn at the Victoria Road / A30 roundabout, but the junction still operates close to capacity at peak times. *This development is regarded as a strategic infrastructure development that has been forward-funded by SSDC to provide the junction capacity for Phase 1 strategic developments to come forward.* The Transport Assessment completed for the CRS demonstrates that capacity at the junction will only be sustainably addressed once road connectivity is delivered through phased development in CEDA.

2 Planning Application, Morrish Homes (adjacent Oaklands Avenue) for 78 dwellings and required transport infrastructure. This is the Morrish Planning application and is the result of detailed consultations with Highways, the Area West, Economic Development and Conservation Teams, together with local resident consultation. The application for this strategic site is consistent with the CRS and its phasing. It includes a section of the 'distribution road' and builds in access for future phased growth to the North East of this site. The planning application has been submitted and will be discussed (with the resulting planning decision) by Area West Planning Committee at the appropriate time.

3 Planning Application at Mount Hindrance. This application has now been received on behalf of developers MacTaggart and Mickel. The planning application includes part of the Phase 1 planned development for this location, but is out of line with the proposed phased approach to the CRS. This application has been submitted and will be discussed (with the resulting planning decision) by Area West Planning Committee at the appropriate time.

4 Town Centre Site at Boden Mill and adjacent car parks. Both parties (Henry Boot PLC and SSDC) are now close to concluding their negotiations on the conditional development agreement.

It is imperative that the conditional Development Agreement is in place before any firm decisions are made by SSDC. Once a conditional Development Agreement be agreed, Henry Boot will be given a period of time (approx. 6 months) to develop their proposal to the unconditional stage. Beyond this a planning application will be expected. The timeframe for the development will be re-established as soon as a conditional Development Agreement is signed.

5 The Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA). A masterplan has been received from a consortium representing landowners with interests in the area, predominantly to the south of the A30 and linking right through to the A358. The submission of a masterplan is a very important piece of evidence that will allow officers to demonstrate to

the Local Plan Inspector that the CEDA is viable and deliverable and that there is a clear appetite amongst developers to bring this development to fruition.

It is considered that the submission of the Morrish application, agreement on the Millfield Link (between developers and landowner), together with the creation of a consortium of willing developers is undisputable evidence that Chard can grow in a way that is articulated in the Chard Regeneration Framework. The financial commitment and enthusiasm shown by the landowners and developers will be recognised by the Inspector and can only be beneficial in convincing him/her that Chard should develop in accordance with the agreed Regeneration Framework. All potential development in CEDA will be subject to the normal planning application process.

6 Brecknell Willis have now completed their development at the Millfield Trading Estate and their former sites at Tapstone Road are being considered for further development. The company remain one of the most significant employers in Chard and were well represented on the CRS Town Team where the Financial Director ensured their planned developments were properly factored into the CRS and referenced in the Chard Regeneration Framework documents.

Financial Implications

This report provides an update only. There are no additional financial implications as a result of this report.

Corporate Priority Implications

The work of the Economic Development, Heritage and Tourism Service supports the Districts Council's corporate priorities (2012-15):

- Focus 1: Jobs
- Focus 2: Environment
- Focus 4: Health and Communities

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Background Papers:

District Executive Report- Disposal of SSDC owned land in Chard comprising the Boden Mill, former ACI factory site, Market Fields and Boden Street car parks (Confidential)

Chard Regeneration Scheme- Area West Report 16th November 2011

Chard Regeneration Scheme - Area West Report - 16th 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
