

Chard Regeneration Scheme Town Centre Regeneration Update Report

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Purpose of the Report

1. This report updates members of Area West Committee on the recent engagement that was undertaken with Chard Holyrood School as part of the consultation process and the regeneration proposals for SSDC landholdings adjacent to Chard Town Centre.

Public Interest

2. The regeneration of the Boden Mill site (and the adjacent landholdings) is an integral part of the Chard Regeneration Scheme. It is of interest to all who live and work within the town and surrounding areas.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that Area West Committee note the content of this report.

Background

4. In December 2016, the decision was taken to explore alternative options for a new community-driven development scheme for the Chard Regeneration Scheme site. SSDC District Executive Committee agreed to fund the exploration of new options, development appraisals and scheme designs.
5. Throughout 2017 preliminary design and feasibility work was undertaken that tested the site for the number of facilities that might be included in the scheme, and tested the market demand for those facilities. The resulting designs include a range of community facilities such as a leisure centre and community hub.
6. The new scheme proposals were considered by the CRS Board in February 2018 and then presented in confidential session to the Area West Committee in April 2018. Approval was given by the Committee to consult the community on the proposals and for SSDC officers to work up and progress the implementation of the new development proposal.
7. The formal consultation period opened on June 16th 2018 and extended to 30th September 2018. This was a consultation on the initial proposals for the scheme and for the associated design concepts. The consultation sought the opinions of the residents and businesses of Chard and the surrounding areas. Details of the consultation and analysis of findings were presented to Area West Committee in September 2018.
8. Following the consultation where the scheme received mostly positive support, officers have progressed elements of the scheme.

Chard Holyrood School Engagement

9. SSDC officers have been engaging with a number of school pupils from Chard Holyrood School. On Thursday 27th September, officers attended a session with around 30 pupils ranging from years 7 to 11. The officers discussed the proposals for the regeneration scheme and gathered their views.

10. As a result of the initial consultation, the school have set up a 'Chard Regeneration Group' and activity has included distributing questionnaires to all pupils studying geography asking them what they like and dislike about Chard as well as what they would like to see incorporated in the scheme. The group have since analysed the data and will be presenting their findings to officers, a select number of Board members and the local press in mid-November.

Stakeholder Meeting

11. Invitations were sent out to key stakeholders to participate in a Chard Regeneration Scheme. Some of the delegates were selected on their ability to represent a wider group, and others who have an interests and experience relevant to the project. The Stakeholder Meeting will be held on the 23rd November 2018 between 16.30 and 18.30 to enable delegates to attend after work.

The meeting will include re-iterating the Council's ambitions to undertake a regeneration scheme in Chard Town Centre.

The agenda will include;

- Background information and terms of reference
- Consultation overview
- A general project update on Chard Regeneration Scheme
- Some of the constraints and opportunities that have been identified
- Some of the early activities that are being undertaking

We will also having some group discussions to capture stakeholder views and ideas.

Moving the Regeneration Scheme Forward

12. The Chard Regeneration Scheme Board met on 31st August and 2nd November 2018, and Board Members approved further work to be undertaken with potential partners such as the Museum to understand the viability of partnership options in the new co-located facility.
13. Officers have further developed the scheme with appointments to commission elements of work that will be required to support any major planning application of this type and these include:
- A) The appointment of a planning and regeneration specialist to assist with the design and access routes including walking and cycling, and general town centre environment including the signage improvements and public realm aspirations.
 - B) A heritage consultant has been commissioned to complete the survey required as part of the planning application. The site has three listed buildings and the whole site is listed by association.
 - D) Seven Reptile, bird nesting and mammal surveys were undertaken in the garden area at the back of Boden Street Car Park. Aborticultural Surveys were undertaken to understand which trees were of value and needed to be integrated into any POS scheme. Following the surveys some clearance work was undertaken to remove the overgrowth outside of bird nesting season.
 - E) Initial highways traffic impact assessment was undertaken using TRICS technology (TRICS is a software system that uses a database of trip rates for developments to indicate what the traffic will be generation as a result of new developments. This will assist with further Traffic Impact work that will be required.
 - F) An SSDC officer has been working on the detailed site elevations for the buildings that we are looking to retain. This will be a requirement to support a planning submission.

G) A needs assessment evaluation was commissioned as it is required as part of the Sport England funding criteria. It should be noted that the scope for the consultants appointed to undertake this work included the whole District need as it will also inform the Council's future priorities. This report is due to be completed in November

I) Investigations are underway regarding the use a procurement framework route for the appointment of design and delivery of the scheme.

14. The Regeneration of Chard is a significant programme for the District Council. The leisure facilities have been identified not only by the Council but by the public through the consultation process as the pinnacle or priority project within the regeneration scheme. The delivery of which will underpin further projects.

Financial Implications

The work commissioned to date has come from the One Public Estate (OPE) funding and the Council's infrastructure reserve. Officers will be exploring a mix of funding options as the scheme progresses.

Council Plan Implications

The Chard Regeneration Scheme is a specific objective of the Council Plan and a priority project for 2018-19.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None at this stage.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None at this stage.

Background Papers
