

Chard Regeneration - Leisure Centre Update

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Purpose of the Report

The report provides a general progress update on the Chard Regeneration Scheme, specifically:

- i) Leisure Centre project
- ii) Wider regeneration site – Building 11

Recommendation

That members note the contents of the report.

Background

Following detailed design, SSDC applied in May 2019 for Planning Consent and Listed Building Consent to build a new Leisure Centre, Library & Community Hub and public realm improvements at the Boden Mill (ACI site) in Chard. The proposal requires the removal of buildings associated with the factory site but the retention of the Mill, Building 11, the listed arch and some adjoining buildings to the south of the arch. The planning application was heard by both SSDC's Area West Committee and then Regulation Committee on 3 September 2019 where it received approval.

Leisure Centre Update

Our main contractor, Speller Metcalfe Ltd has maintained momentum on the project and the works are progressing well.

Some key milestones achieved in June and July:

- The new sub station on site was energised in June, and a permanent power supply has been made to building.
- The infrastructure for the electric vehicle charging points has been put in place. The chargers will be fitted as part of the wider Deletti project, which will see charging points rolled out across the district.

- The pool tiling and grouting has been completed and the pools were undergoing their trial filling on 29/07/21. Once full, the pool plant, pumps etc will be tested.
- First floor, the floor coverings and decoration works are substantially complete. Final decoration works are now underway and the first room to be fully completed is likely to be the spin studio.
- Ground floor, the soft play area was being floored on 29/07/21 and will shortly be ready to receive the play equipment installation.

The photo below shows the pool prior to filling:



Wider Regeneration Site

Building 11

The planning application for the demolition of Building 11 (reference 21/01333/FUL) has been submitted and responses have been received from the statutory consultees.

There has been a recent change of planning officer for the application, and the new officer will require some time to come up to speed with the background of the application. We do not expect that the application will go before committee before September or October, and at this stage do not know what the officer recommendation is likely to be. These factors have resulted in the application exceeding the eight-week determination period.

This delay means that there is very little likelihood of Building 11 being removed before the leisure centre opens to the public, however the contractors have indicated that they will be able to undertake the work safely without affecting the opening of the leisure centre.

Marketfield Access

As members will be aware, we have been unable to widen the Marketfield access road as planned because the footway is not within the ownership of SSDC. We have been in dialogue with the Royal Mail, who own the footway, to establish if there is a mutually agreeable solution to this issue.

The Royal Mail have recently closed their Ilminster Depot and transferred the operations to Chard, so the Chard Depot is running at full capacity. The previous arrangements of season tickets for Royal Mail delivery vehicles in the Marketfield car park will not be continued once the leisure centre is open to the public. We are looking at options to use the Crowshute car park for certain Royal Mail vehicles to ease pressure on the town centre car parks, which are primarily used by shoppers.

Site visit

Members of Area West Committee are invited to visit the construction site for a progress inspection of the leisure centre. The date and time of the visit is to be agreed, but this is likely to be a week day in mid to late August.

Next Steps

Work is underway to plan the opening event for Leisure Centre, this is an important Milestone not just the project but for the community of Chard. It will be an opportunity for people to come together and of course view the fantastic new facilities available.

Officers will also continue to engage with Homes England to investigate ways to bring forward the residential components of phase two of the programme.

Council Plan Implications

The Chard Regeneration Scheme is a specific objective of the Council Plan and forms part of Priority Project 2 for 2021/22.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None arising from this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

None arising from this report
