

# **Chard Regeneration Scheme Update Report**

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## **Purpose of the Report**

This report updates members of Area West Committee on the Chard Regeneration Scheme project.

## **Public Interest**

South Somerset District Council has worked with partners to develop an ambitious strategy which will bring significant changes and benefits to Chard and the community. Chard Regeneration Scheme encompasses the town centre with a focus on redeveloping and bringing in to community use the Boden Mill site. Following consultation in summer 2018, the proposed components to be included on the site are a new leisure centre with swimming pool, a library and community hub, alongside a blend of housing and commercial developments.

The project team appointed by the Council and working with the partners includes Alliance Leisure (leisure development specialist), AHR architects and Speller Metcalfe. It is intended that the Chard Regeneration Scheme will make a significant, positive difference to the economic vitality of the local area. It will be of interest to all who live, work, study, shop, use the services and enjoy the leisure opportunities within the town.

## **Recommendation**

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

## **Project Update**

Since planning permission was granted at Committee in September, the project team have been carrying out various works to satisfy a number of planning conditions. In order to progress to the enabling and demolition phase, the project team need for the planning conditions to be discharged by South Somerset District Council.

The first element of work is the demolition and enabling works which will encompass:

- Site set-up, fencing, hoarding as required
- Asbestos removal, and associated works in line with the R&D Survey provided
- Demolition
- Temporary Works as required where Building 11 is to be left and archway retained
- Mains Service Disconnections

The Council is utilising the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Plan of Work for the design and construction of the buildings. The RIBA Plan of Work organises the process of briefing, designing, constructing and operating building projects into eight stages and details the tasks, costs and outputs required at each stage. The Council's partners, Alliance Leisure, have assessed costs for demolition and enabling to RIBA stage 4 (stage 4 being "Technical Design" and the stage immediately before construction). A key consideration in making the decision to demolish and commence enabling works is that some of the buildings are within the curtilage of listed buildings. In such circumstances, developers can only progress demolition if they are in a position to replace the demolished buildings with the development proposed in the planning and listed building consents.

In relation to the budget for Phase 1, covering the Leisure Centre, Library & Hub and public realm at the Boden Mill site, costings have been developed to RIBA Stage 3, (the "Developed Design" phase) which gives a high degree of confidence in the costs. Work is currently being undertaken to progress costings to RIBA stage 4, which will give cost certainty, at which stage the Council as developer will be in a position to finalise the budget for Phase 1.

### **High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ)**

Chard town centre is set to benefit from a Historic High Street fund investment, after Culture Secretary Nicky Morgan announced 69 towns across the country set for a share of £95 million of funding. South Somerset District Council (SSDC) applied for £1 million of the High Street Heritage Action Zone funding. A full announcement of exactly how much will be offered by Historic England will not be known until early 2020 once a full programme design has been submitted by SSDC.

SSDC's High Street Heritage Action Zone funding bid comprised of three public realm projects, the restoration of historic buildings and a cultural programme. Public realm improvements will be phased as each part of the Chard Regeneration Programme is completed. Public consultation has been a key feature of developing proposals to date and further consultation exercises will take place over the coming months to help finalise proposals.

### **Next Steps**

Once the demolition and enabling works are complete in early 2019, construction will commence for the leisure centre, library hub and associated public realm in spring 2020. Phase one construction target completion date is summer 2021. Whilst phase one construction is ongoing, the project team will be preparing a planning application for phase 2 and implementing some of the softer interventions as part of the wider Chard Regeneration Scheme programme. This includes support to attract artisan/independent retailers to the town, support to develop the growth of local food producers and food businesses, and undertaking a market health check in partnership with the Town Council.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no new financial implications directly associated with this report.

## **Council Plan Implications**

The Chard Regeneration Scheme is a specific objective of the Council Plan and a priority project for 2019/20.

## **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

None from this report. However, the Chard Regeneration Scheme seeks to achieve a high environmental performance standard including maximising recycling of arisings from the demolition, minimising energy use in new buildings and providing renewable and low carbon energy generation on site to meet the operational needs. The Programme also aims to improve access to the town centre, in particular, encouraging walking and cycling by making it safer and easier to access the town centre on foot or cycle.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

None

## **Background Papers**

None

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