
Chard Regeneration Scheme Update

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Purpose of the Report

1. The report provides a general progress update on the Chard Regeneration Scheme, specifically:
 - i) An overview of the impact of Covid-19 on the project
 - ii) A progress update on the construction works
 - iii) An update on the HAZ (High Streets) project

Recommendation

That Members note the contents of the report.

Background

2. 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.

Covid-19 Overview

3. The site operations are continuing with Covid precautions in place, and productivity levels are at around 95% of pre Covid expectations.
4. The nature of the works on site are such that there are relatively few operatives in close proximity and extensive use of mechanised equipment for erecting the steel frame and floor planks.
5. As the building work progresses there will be a greater requirement for close proximity working and this may lead to certain operations taking longer than expected, giving a drop in productivity.

6. Supply chain delays are being well managed by the main contractor and currently there are no significant delays on essential supplies.
7. There are however national shortages of some essential supplies, caused by the industry shutdown period earlier this year. Base coat plaster is in short supply nationally and many builder's merchants are quoting October deliveries for orders placed in August. The main contractor will provide updates on this situation as the project progresses.
8. Overall, the works are progressing well, but they remain behind schedule due to the Covid shutdown. The effect of the winter period and a potential resurgence of Covid-19 with the cold weather could have further implications for the construction works. Members will be kept updated on the situation as the works progress.

Progress Update

9. Following the completion of foundation piling in late July the steel frame followed on immediately. The majority of the steel frame is now in place to the pool hall and gym areas.
10. Concrete first floors were installed in the gym areas in early August. Local residents were kept informed of the works as the concrete topping works extended into the evenings. No complaints were received and the floors and stairs are now in place.
11. The timber beams supporting the roof are now in place over the pool hall. The roof deck and covering will be installed over the pool area in the next couple of weeks.
12. The excavation of the swimming pool is now underway and will be completed at the same time as the roof. The roof over this area is critical as it allows the pool specialists to get the shell of the pool underway without exposure to the weather.
13. The frame of the building is now visible on the local skyline and local people can see that works are progressing. This sets a positive note on the Covid recovery front as local people are now working on the site and the contractors are spending money within the local economy.

Local Impact

14. The frame of the building is now visible on the local skyline and local people can see that works are progressing.
15. This sets a positive note on the Covid recovery front as a number of local people are now working on the site.
16. The contractors are keeping a log of local expenditure so that the value of the benefit to the local economy can be measured. This will include the following:

- Sub-contractors staying in local accommodation
- Meals and food taken locally
- Materials sourced from local suppliers
- Local labour employed on the site

Members will be provided with an update on local expenditure in due course.

Update photo – taken just before the pool hall roof beams were installed, but showing the concrete first floor and stairs.



HAZ Project

17. The Chard High Street Heritage Action Zone project is part of a nationwide initiative designed to secure lasting improvements to our historic high streets for the communities who use them. It is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and run by Historic England.
18. South Somerset District Council applied for a grant of £1m for the project of which they are expected to match fund. The programme will deliver improvements to the high street through three complementary strands: (a) undertaking physical improvement works to town centre buildings and within the public realm; (b) facilitating cultural activities and events celebrating the history of the high street and its importance to local communities over the generations and, crucially, (c) giving

local communities a key role in deciding what works they want to see happening on their high street and what sort of place they want it to be.

19. Historic England recently confirmed that SSDC would receive the full £1m applied for. Following a successful recruitment process, Anna Matthews will be taking the role of project manager and joins SSDC on the 5th October 2020. The regeneration team are continuing to progress the programme and are engaging with building owners eligible for a grant in preparation for the grant scheme opening.
20. The public realm projects are now at RIBA3 stage designs. The ITT for RIBA4 detailed designs was published in June 2020. Eight bids were received and the contract has been awarded to a design team consisting of Hydrock, LHC and Coreus. RIBA4 designs are expected to be completed by early 2021 with construction commencing in summer 2021.
21. Due to Covid-19, the cultural programme strand of the HAZ project has been put on hold.

Next Steps

22. 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.

Council Plan Implications

23. 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

24. None arising from this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

25. None arising from this report
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