

LDF PMB and MAG Combined Group

Core Strategy Workshop 10 – December 16th 2011 Chard Delivery Report and its Implications

Report by Spatial Policy Manager

Purpose

To report on progress in concluding the Chard Eastern Development Area Feasibility Report by Thomas Lister Ltd Consultants and to discuss emerging issues and proposals and further work required to produce a definitive report on the implications of the Feasibility Study and firm recommendations for Chard's future development in time for the Project Management Board meeting on 18th January 2012.

Recommendation

That the PMB

1. note the receipt of the draft Feasibility Report and the need to clarify a number of matters in order to finalise it and enable the report and the consequent implications report for the delivery of the proposed Chard strategic allocation to be presented at the next PMB meeting
2. note and support the need to establish the SCC position in some detail on the current status of the A358/ A30 Convent Link junction and the extent to which shared working and potential funding of any work required of the public sector to bring the scheme forward can be expected
3. note the need to explore the practicality of the financial implications of the emerging approach for potential CPO work to deliver the Chard strategic allocation
4. note the need for a fully informed risk assessment to inform decisions required on delivery of the Chard strategic allocation

Background

Consultants Thomas Lister were instructed in June of this year in respect of the provision of advice and a clear evidence base which is to be presented to the LDF Planning Inspector demonstrating that the Vision for the Eastern Development Area of Chard (CEDA) is both viable and deliverable. Elements of this exercise include a review of LDA Design work previously undertaken in preparation of the Chard Regeneration Framework (CRF), including viability appraisals provided in support of the Chard Regeneration Framework (CRF), market assessment work to inform and update viability appraisals required to confirm the value inputs to be utilised, as well as the take-up rates considered appropriate in respect of those various identified end uses of the proposed development sites. This should both inform the type, tenure and size of buildings that are likely to be required, together with potential take up rates to assist phasing considerations.

Consultations and land ownership cross referencing has been undertaken, to confirm those interests held in the respective sites comprising the CEDA and to establish landowners/developers intentions.

Development appraisal and financial modelling has also been undertaken to support the CRF proposals together with consideration of appropriate funding mechanisms to facilitate.

The Consultants were asked to produce the Feasibility Report by 2nd December so that an implications report could be presented to the Project Management Board (PMB) to help determine whether the Chard Eastern Development Area is practically achievable and therefore promotable into the next stage of the Core Strategy. The emerging approach from the draft Feasibility Report is for undertaking CPO work to deliver the Millfield Link and phase II of the allocation in the light of developer and landowner resistance to engage in a consortium and/or lack of interest.

Report

In the event an initial report was produced by 1st December and a second iteration by 12th reflecting comments made on the first consisting of 82 pages and 5 appendices. However it is still considered that there are some further important points to iron out and clarify before a definitive report can be produced and definitive implications drawn. In particular

- In the light of initial landowner/developer resistance to consort the resource requirements and costs of initial work to pursue any potential CPO process prior to the Core Strategy Examination (esp Environmental Impact Assessment, Highways design, ongoing negotiation and administering a first resolution)
- clarification of costs associated with administering any CPO process and the extent to which they can be done in house or out house
- Points of detail in the report relating to development values, potential compensation levels, detailed breakdown of costs for the Millfield Link scheme used to identify the potential funding shortfall, length of Millfield Link road costed and application of provisional CIL rates and affordable housing targets for the Chard strategic allocation.

Clarification of the practicality of running a CPO and meeting subsequent costs in the worst case scenario of having to pursue any CPO to conclusion need to be explored in some detail with the Asst Director of Finance and Corporate Services as does the extent of potentially sharing these with Somerset County Council partners.

Furthermore some greater certainty is required on the matter of the state of the A358/A30 Convent Link junction in the centre of Chard in the light of the County Council's response on the current Redrow Homes application for 65 dwellings at Snowdon Farm. Whether the junction is at capacity or not has significant implications for the process for implementing the CEDA. Further engagement with SCC is needed in this regard. In the event of clarity not being reached it may be appropriate to seek an additional view on transport matters.

Members need to be fully informed of risks associated with decisions they will be required to make. A more detailed risk assessment is now required which will provide information on risk in particular associated with

- judgement on transport capacity of the A358/A30 Convent Link junction
- funding of any potential CPO work
- levels of compensation
- prospects for delivery of the town centre regeneration project
- prospects for achieving CIL contributions or other funding sources for the Millfield Link and in the case of CIL funding if identified the prospects of receiving this sooner or later from delivery of the Phase II development of the Chard strategic allocation

All the above constitutes the extra work needed to be undertaken in order to present a definitive Feasibility Study and Implications report to the PMB. It is the intention to

prioritise this work in order to come back to Members of the Board with a definitive report on 18th January (although given that this meeting is dealing with a full agenda on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan it may be appropriate for a second meeting specifically for the Chard Delivery report shortly after the 18th).