

and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure, services and facilities, Cullompton could become less sustainable and the town centre could deteriorate further.

1. BACKGROUND.

- 1.1. The Mid Devon Core Strategy 2007 sets the direction of growth for Mid Devon for the plan period to 2026. It focuses development on the three main towns: Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton. Cullompton is the second largest settlement in Mid Devon and is strategically located adjacent to the M5 Motorway.
- 1.2. Policy COR14 of the Core Strategy sees Cullompton continuing to develop as a small, growing market town and aims to increase the self-sufficiency of the town by improving access to housing, employment and services for its population. It requires the Council to promote the removal of traffic from the town centre, improve local air quality by enhancing walking and cycling opportunities, completing a relief road system and implementing air quality action plan initiatives. It also seeks to promote public transport improvements and improve access to the rail network.
- 1.3. The emerging Local Plan Review 2013-20133 sees Cullompton becoming the strategic focus of new development in the medium to long term, reflecting its accessibility, economic potential and environmental capacity. Policy S11 states that:

Policy S11 Cullompton

Cullompton will develop as a fast growing market town with a strategic role in the hierarchy of settlements in Mid Devon. The town will become the strategic focus of new development reflecting its accessibility, economic potential and environmental capacity. This strategy will improve access to housing through urban extensions and expanded employment opportunities. There will be significant improvements to the town's infrastructure and connectivity, including the reopening of the railway station, and improved services for its population and nearby rural areas. Proposals will provide for approximately 3,930 dwellings, of which 1,100 will be affordable, and 73,500 gross square metres of commercial floor space over the plan period.

The Council will guide high quality development and other investment to:

- a) Make any necessary improvements to the M5 motorway including junction 28 to maintain highway capacity and safety;*
- b) Promote further public transport improvements within Cullompton and to other urban centres (particularly Tiverton and Exeter) and improved access to the rail network by the reopening of Cullompton Railway Station;*
- c) Continue measures to support the implementation of the Cullompton Air Quality Action Plan including the construction of new highway links to relieve the town centre and enhanced walking and cycling opportunities around the town;*
- d) Manage the town centre so that economic regeneration and heritage reinforce each other by promoting new homes, shops, leisure, offices and*

other key town centre uses which are well designed and contribute to vitality and viability;

e) Provide community infrastructure such as education and enhanced open space to support new development proposals;

f) Enhance the tourism and visitor role of the town and surrounding area; and

g) Support measures to reduce flood risk within Cullompton and make provision for green infrastructure.

- 1.4. The Local Plan Review builds on existing strategic allocations in the adopted Local Plan. The Allocations and Infrastructure DPD (AIDPD) allocated a site of 74.8 hectares to the north west of Cullompton for housing and employment with associated infrastructure including a new primary school and community facilities and a new road linking Willand Road with Tiverton Road.
- 1.5. A masterplan SPD for the NW Cullompton allocation was adopted in February 2016. The masterplan bridges the gap between the high level planning policies for the site and the implementation of development in order to ensure high quality design and a successful place that is comprehensively designed across the allocation. It sets out the infrastructure required and phases of development.
- 1.6. Policies CU1-CU6 of the emerging Local Plan Review re-allocates the land at NW Cullompton, but seeks to increase the allocated area to 100 hectares to provide 1,350 dwellings and 10,000 square metres of employment floorspace, as well as strategic green infrastructure, primary school, new road and community facilities.
- 1.7. Policies CU7-CU12 of the emerging Local Plan Review proposes to allocate a site of 160 hectares to the east of Cullompton for 2100 dwellings within the plan period and at least a further 500 dwellings post-2033, as well as a further 20,000 square metres of commercial space within the plan period and a further 12,000 square metres post-2033. The allocation also proposes community uses including a new primary school, retail and leisure uses, strategic green infrastructure and links across the motorway into Cullompton.
- 1.8. In January 2017, land to the east of Cullompton was awarded garden village status by the Government. It is proposed to allocate the land for the garden village in two phases, through the emerging Mid Devon Local Plan Review and through the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. The garden village has the potential to deliver up to 5,000 new houses with jobs, schools and community facilities such as a new sports hub and country park and local retail and leisure facilities. Work has started on engaging the community and other stakeholders in developing the vision and principles that will shape the garden village and a masterplanning process will be required for the garden village to shape development and to ensure the quality of the place envisaged from the start is carried through to development and beyond. The garden village masterplanning process is likely to be started in the first half of 2018.
- 1.9. There are traffic congestion problems in Cullompton Town Centre which is having an adverse effect on air quality, living conditions and the attractiveness

of the town centre. Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to review and assess the current and likely future air quality in their areas against those objectives in the National Air Quality Strategy. Where objectives are not likely to be met then the local authority is required to designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at the relevant locations. The local authority must then draw up an action plan setting out the measures it intends to take in pursuit of the air quality objectives within the area covered by the AQMA. Cullompton has been designated as an AQMA and an action plan was produced in 2009. Cullompton's air quality problems arise primarily from traffic flows on Station Road and the High Street.

- 1.10. One key objective is the implementation of a town centre relief road to take traffic away from the town centre. The provision of a relief road has been assessed as having a very high impact on air quality, as well as a reduction in traffic noise along town centre routes and reduced congestion. Provision of a town centre relief road is an integral part of the existing development strategy for Cullompton with a relevant adopted policy and is also the subject of policy CU19 of the emerging Local Plan Review. Potential routes for the relief road are currently being modelled and suggested options for the route will be subject to public consultation before the plans are finalised. Funding opportunities are being sought towards the provision of the relief road.
- 1.11. In addition to the requirement for a town centre relief road, there is also a requirement to increase capacity at J28 of the M5 in order to cater for the planned growth in Cullompton, including the new garden village. The work to improve access to and from the M5 will involve improvements to the existing junction to improve the capacity of the road network at the junction, linking into the town centre relief road. Ultimately, the relief road will connect into a new motorway junction onto the M5 with new south facing slips onto the motorway. This will require a new bridge over the railway and river Culm. The Government recently announced that Mid Devon's bid under the Housing Infrastructure Fund towards implementing improvements to the existing junction have been successful. A process of further engagement with Homes England over the £10 million in question is underway.
- 1.12. The Council is also working with Taunton Deane Borough Council, Devon County Council and Somerset County Council over a project that seeks to secure new railway stations for both Cullompton and Wellington. This is also being undertaken with the support of both Town Councils. The adopted and emerging local plans identify a site for the railway station. There is potential at Cullompton to also consider transport interchange facilities in association with the proposed railway station.
- 1.13. With the level of anticipated growth in and around Cullompton, there is an urgent need to ensure that the existing town, its facilities and infrastructure keep pace with the increase in housing numbers. The significant growth anticipated in Cullompton can be made sustainable through investment in infrastructure, addressing long-standing issues of air quality and motorway capacity and ensuring services and facilities within the town are fit for a

growing market town and provide an attractive environment in which to live, work and visit.

- 1.14. Policy AL/CU/17 of the AIDPD recognises the need to improve the town centre through physical regeneration and enhancement and the need for the town centre to be managed so that economic regeneration and heritage reinforce each other. The policy recognises the need to improve air quality, redesign parking arrangements, implement traffic relief, and improve the historic building fabric of the town centre. The importance of infrastructure and its relationship with town centre regeneration and enhancement is also recognised in Policy CU20 of the emerging Local Plan Review (2013-2033).
- 1.15. Policy CU20 of the emerging Local Plan Review relates to Cullompton's infrastructure requirements. It states that:

The Council will promote the reopening of the Cullompton Railway Station. A site for a new railway station north of Station Road is allocated for this purpose. The Council will use developer funding via planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy where appropriate, seek external sources of funding and work with partners to deliver the following infrastructure for Cullompton:

- a) Provision of a Town Centre Relief Road and implementation of other measures in the Cullompton Air Quality Action Plan;*
- b) Mitigation to reduce traffic impacts on the Trunk and Local Road network in association with the East Cullompton Urban Extension and other Cullompton allocations;*
- c) Town centre regeneration and enhancement;*
- d) Extra care housing provision;*
- e) Expansion of library facilities;*
- f) Primary and secondary education facilities;*
- g) Public open space and green infrastructure;*
- h) Bus service enhancements;*
- i) Provision of railway and bus interchange;*
- j) Expansion of emergency fire and rescue services;*
- k) Provision of healthcare facilities; and*
- l) Community facilities including sports and leisure facilities; and*
- m) Provision of works to reduce flood risk.*

- 1.16. In December 2017, a bid was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding in respect of improvements to the Cullompton conservation area, which is considered to be "at risk". The focus on the funding is on improving the condition of listed properties and unlisted historic buildings in the town and a significant improvement to the quality of the public realm in the town. The bid identifies issues affecting the character and appearance of the town centre, including the impact of heavy traffic creating soot and dust and the visual impact of traffic and parking management, with signs, poles and yellow/white lines. Removal of through traffic from the town centre would allow for a major uplift in the environmental quality of the town centre including improvements to the public realm, a reduction in noise and an improvement in air quality.

- 1.17. In addition to Mid Devon planning policy, the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has produced a draft Neighbourhood Plan which went out to public consultation in October/November 2017. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to represent the community's vision and priorities for how they would like to see the Cullompton area develop and change in the coming years. It sets out a number of planning policies to be taken into account when proposals for development come forward in the town and covers issues such as traffic impacts, public rights of way networks, timing of infrastructure, improving and enhancing the town centre and the provision of community facilities, as well as protecting and enhancing the environment and heritage assets. Town centre policies include promoting pedestrian priority, improving service arrangements, promoting art, cultural and leisure facilities, improving the town centre retail offer and promoting visitor and evening economies. The Plan has an aspiration to develop a new public transport hub, including the re-opening of Cullompton railway station. There is also a policy on accessibility and making Cullompton a dementia-friendly town. Once adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan for Mid Devon.
- 1.18. With the extent and pace of change and the significant planned growth in and around Cullompton, there is a need to ensure that the economic function of the town centre keeps pace with housing and develops as a prosperous and attractive place for businesses to thrive and the issues currently affecting the town centre are addressed and not exacerbated as the population rises. There is a need to ensure that the function of the town centre is safeguarded and that the retail and leisure offering in the garden village development complements rather than competes with the town centre. Linkages across the motorway and integrated transport options must be delivered as part of any town centre regeneration project.

2. THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF A MASTERPLAN.

- 2.1. Key to delivery of regeneration of the town centre is the development of a masterplan to guide the process. A masterplan is a comprehensive plan that acts as a blueprint for the development of an area: setting out principles for the way in which it will develop on a comprehensive basis, coordinating policy and planning requirements.
- 2.2. A masterplan has been prepared for the NW Cullompton strategic allocation and a comprehensive masterplan will be prepared for the garden village, including the east Cullompton strategic allocation. It is therefore considered essential that the town centre also goes through a masterplanning process to ensure that the development, regeneration and enhancement of the town centre develops in tandem to the housing and employment growth elsewhere in and around the town.
- 2.3. Once this masterplan is finalised it will set out the firm direction for the regeneration of town and provide the basis for detailed consultation with all interested parties.

- 2.4. It is proposed that the masterplan includes a delivery plan to ensure that the masterplan outcomes are deliverable. This would include details of potential incentives and funding opportunities.
- 2.5. The masterplan would be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Whilst the SPD will not in itself form part of the Development Plan, it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The preparation of an SPD requires two stages of public consultation in accordance with Mid Devon's Statement of Community Involvement. The masterplan SPD would provide detail to supplement policies S11 and CU20 of the Local Plan Review and also focus on implementation and delivery of the key priorities envisaged by those policies. It is anticipated that the work on this SPD would be completed at a similar time to the formal adoption to the Local Plan Review and the SPD itself could be adopted by the Council shortly thereafter.

3. AIM AND SCOPE OF THE CULLOMPTON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION MASTERPLAN AND DELIVERY PLAN.

- 3.1. The aim of the masterplan is to provide a clear strategy to ensure that Cullompton town centre meets its full potential as an attractive, thriving vibrant place with a strong economic function, now and into the future.
- 3.2. Cullompton town centre should be a place of choice and quality, with a good range of shops, services, cultural and leisure opportunities, offering something different to nearby centres, set within an attractive and pleasant environment reflecting the history and character of the place.
- 3.3. The project will need to pull together the different strands of work ongoing at present and envisaged in the near future into a comprehensive masterplan for the town centre which addresses the key issues, makes recommendations for regeneration and enhancement of the town centre, as well as a wider focus on transport infrastructure and set out delivery and funding options.
- 3.4. The masterplan should seek to strengthen the economy by creating new opportunities for businesses, jobs, shops, leisure, heritage and culture, and transform public spaces to make the town a more attractive place to shop, relax and stay, strengthening the town's role as growing market town and focus of strategic growth for Mid Devon. It should also consider sustainable transport options and the potential of a new transport interchange, and movement linkages with the proposed garden village. It is seen a complementing the work on the garden village and will also need to consider the relationship between these places: the existing town of Cullompton and the proposed new community.
- 3.5. The key objectives of the masterplan are considered to be:
 - Improving the quality of the town centre in terms of heritage, public realm, air quality and traffic congestion.

- Improving sustainable transport, walking and cycling within the town and physical links to and from existing and new housing developments.
 - Consideration of transport management initiatives and rationalising car parking. Identification of how these may deliver public realm benefits.
 - Improving the retail, leisure, cultural and tourism offerings within the town centre.
 - Improving the economic function of the town centre so that it is able to compete with /complement new business, retail and leisure offerings within the garden village.
 - Achieving a prosperous town centre developed in pace with significant planned housing growth.
 - Developing an evening economy.
 - Identifying development opportunities within/adjacent to the town centre.
- 3.6. The masterplan would sit alongside and supplement other initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Plan and Townscape Heritage Initiative project.
- 3.7. A map of the centre of Cullompton showing the suggested geographical area of the masterplan is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.8. The Council wishes the local community to have a key role in the development of the masterplan and the masterplan should build on the aspirations for the town set out in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. This will involve engagement with stakeholders such as the Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Highway Authority as well as at least two stages of public consultation.
- 3.9. It is envisaged that the masterplan would be developed in two stages: an initial scoping exercise leading to the development of options, followed by the development of a draft masterplan with delivery and funding options.
- 3.10. It is intended to commission consultants to assist in the preparation of this masterplan. This report seeks authority to do so.

Contact for more Information:

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List of Background Papers:

Emerging Local Plan Review
 Draft Neighbourhood Plan
 NW Cullompton Masterplan
 Culm Garden Village Expression of Interest

Circulation of the Report: Members of Cabinet