

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGENERATION

CULM GARDEN VILLAGE – GOVERNANCE, DECISION MAKING AND UPDATE ON PROJECT PROGRESS AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO GOVERNANCE THROUGH REFINED DECISION MAKING POWERS OF THE DELIVERY BOARD

Cabinet Member	Cllr Richard Chesterton
Responsible Officer	Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

Reason for Report:

1. To provide an update on the implementation of the Culm Garden Village governance arrangements since the Cabinet decision of July 2017;
2. To establish clear lines of decision making for the project going forward taking into account the governance arrangements previously established and in particular the role and function of the Culm Garden Village Delivery Board; and
3. To provide an update on project progress and identify key areas of focus and work for the next 12 months.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **That project progress and implementation of the previously agreed governance arrangements be noted.**
2. **That the decision making powers and framework for the Culm Garden Village project and its Delivery Board as set out in 2.3.7 and 2.3.8 be agreed.**

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The garden village project contributes to all four corporate priorities of economy, homes, community and environment and is central to the delivery of many of aims identified within the Corporate Plan. It is a significant strategic project with a national profile.

Financial Implications: This significant project requires financial resources to continue progress towards delivery. Three tranches of capacity funding for it have been awarded by the Government to date with a further capacity funding bid for the current year having recently been submitted. The outcome of this latest bid is awaited. Continued financial support from capacity funding is critical to adequately resource the project and advance its progress in line with the Council's place making aspirations and the meet the Government's requirements.

In January 2018 the Council also received notification of its success in being awarded £10m from the Government's Housing and Infrastructure Fund towards delivery of highway infrastructure in Cullompton. This funding is currently being considered in more detail through the Homes England due diligence process and if receiving final confirmation, is to be utilised to deliver the Cullompton town centre relief road. The Council also intends to seek funding from other sources including

Government capital programmes in order to help deliver infrastructure associated with the project including the provision of a railway station. Ensuring a fit for purpose the governance structure and decision making framework for the project is critical.

Legal Implications: None anticipated at this time as a result of the governance structure in place other than the amendments to the Delivery Board's terms of reference and decision making powers as set out below. Legal implications could arise in the future should changes be proposed to take on development corporation type powers. This is not currently being proposed.

Risk Assessment: Robust, suitable and appropriate governance arrangements for the garden village are necessary to drive project progress, allow it to operate efficiently and to build relationships with the local community and stakeholders. Effective governance arrangements will also ensure that best use is made of grant money and funding opportunities. The governance arrangements provide a structure within which the project will develop and be accountable.

Equality Impact Assessment: No equality issues are identified for this report at this stage. As the project goes forward it will need to consider the views from representatives from protected groups that the project has the potential to impact upon.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Culm Garden Village was awarded garden village status by the Government in January 2017. Background to this was summarised and included within the report considered by Cabinet on 6th July 2018. Since then, a significant amount of work has been done to progress the project and a number of key milestones have been reached.
- 1.2 The first part of this report provides an update on the implementation of the governance arrangements for the project to date and sets out proposed refinements to the decision making powers of the Culm Garden Village Delivery Board. For clarity, these are set out alongside the decision making powers that would be retained by the Council.
- 1.3 The second part of the report describes the progress made in key areas of the wider project and identifies the focus of work looking forward over the next 12 months (and beyond). The updates and forward look are set out under four main headings: Policy and Strategic Planning; Governance and Project Team; Masterplanning and Design Quality; Infrastructure Delivery and Funding.
- 1.4 One of the key milestones in the delivery plan for the project was to establish a governance framework for the Garden Village, including setting up a Delivery Board. At the meeting on 6th July 2017 Cabinet approved the governance structure and granted delegated authority as follows:

'Delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Leader to prepare initial governance documents for approval at the first meeting of the Delivery Board.'

- 1.5 The first meeting of the Delivery Board took place on 21st July 2017 with subsequent meetings approximately 6 monthly thereafter. The agreed governance arrangements recommend an annual review of the Board's composition and role. The second part of this report reviews the composition, role and decision-making powers of the Delivery Board and recommends refinements to the Board's terms of reference.

2.0 **GOVERNANCE UPDATE AND DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK FOR THE CULM GV PROJECT**

- 2.1 The Cabinet Report of 6th July 2017 is the basis of the current governance arrangements for the project and included a structure and explanation of each component of the structure, including the Delivery Board, Community/Stakeholder Forum, Landowner/Developer Forum and Project Team. Cabinet approved that report in July 2017. The diagram at **Appendix A** sets out the previously agreed governance structure together with an indication of linkages. These governance arrangements have now been implemented and are working well.

- The **Community/Stakeholder Forum** has enabled a high level of community involvement in the project. Community engagement through the Forum has been extensive and highly valuable in ensuring the project continues to be locally led. Key areas of focus for the group so far have been: developing and refining the local vision and ambitions; looking at site constraints and opportunities to feed into the masterplanning process; and identifying areas of focus for the first working groups. The Forum will continue to be involved as the project progresses.
- A **Landowner/Developer Forum** has been set up to bring together landowner representatives to focus on delivering the garden village. The forum is well attended. The landowner group will be part of a Working Group to consider innovative delivery mechanisms.
- The **Project Team** focuses on driving the project forward, including implementing the Project Plan. The Project Team currently consists of the Project Management Lead and one Mid Devon Planning Officer. Capacity funding is being sought to enable the Project Lead to continue in the role and for the Project Team to expand. Whilst significant progress has been made with the project, additional resource is required to deliver the project to its ambitious timescales, in particular in relation to: progressing planning policy and applications; transport issues given the significance of the Motorway Junction and Relief Road to the overall scheme delivery and its acceleration; urban and landscape design input into the masterplanning process; and communications support which will be key to maintaining and growing local and community support for the Garden Village.
- To ensure the project delivers its ambitions, it is anticipated that a number of **Working Groups** will need to be set up, initially focusing on sport and recreation, health and wellbeing, self/custom build and modern construction techniques, developing a "Smart" garden village, employment and innovative delivery mechanisms.

2.2 The governance arrangements provide for a Garden Village Delivery Board with overall responsibility for delivery of the project. The Board is accountable for the success of the project and has responsibility and authority for project delivery. The following paragraphs of this report review the composition, role and decision-making powers of the Delivery Board and recommends refinements to the Board's Terms of Reference.

2.3 **Role, Purpose and Function of the Delivery Board**

2.3.1 The Cabinet Report of 6th July 2017 described the Board as having:

“Overall responsibility for the delivery of the project. It will be accountable for the success of the project and have responsibility and authority for the project delivery.”

2.3.2 That report was accompanied by appendices which provided more details. In terms of the role, purpose and function, those further details indicated that the Board would:

- Champion the Garden Village and its delivery and reporting to respective corporate management teams and elected members to ensure corporate support and buy in;
- Facilitate and promote joined up delivery and to engage with and secure support at a strategic level from key stakeholders and partners for the delivery of the Garden Village;
- Set the overall direction of the project;
- Monitor overall progress;
- Ensure appropriate resources are in place;
- Make decisions on strategic issues and resolve showstoppers; and
- Provide 'upwards' high level liaison into existing/emerging sub-regional forums.

2.3.3 It is not proposed to fundamentally change the established role, purpose or functions of the Board, with the exception of potentially strengthening a key purpose of the Board as being to 'steer' the overall delivery of the Garden Village. This is because the actual delivery and the decisions that drive such delivery (e.g. new roads or junctions and related funding or planning applications/permissions) will continue to be taken by other bodies such as MDDC through the usual statutory processes and planning decision making routes.

Board Composition / Membership

2.3.4 The composition and membership of the Board has evolved slightly since its original inception to include representation from Highways England and Neil Parish MP. The current membership is:

- Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration, MDDC (Chair)
- Leader, MDDC
- Chief Executive, MDDC
- Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration, MDDC
- Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, DCC

- Mayor of Cullompton
- Vice Chair Kentisbeare Parish Council
- Highways England representatives
- Heart of the South West LEP representative
- Homes England representative
- Neil Parish MP

2.3.5 The Board's Terms of Reference recognise that this membership may need to evolve further over time to reflect changing circumstances of the project. In this regard, it is proposed that the Board invites attendance from both the Landowner/Developer Forum and the Community Stakeholder Forum to attend the Board to provide an impartial voice for those Forums directly to the Board but to not have voting rights.

Decision Making Processes and Powers

2.3.6 The Delivery Board currently makes recommendations for particular courses of action to be followed and will seek to steer, monitor and guide the project towards those key milestones and decisions. This will involve making some operational decisions, such as the approval of an engagement strategy or consultation that is not part of an existing statutory process, or to procure expertise or studies. The Board will also take a view on project funding such as any future capacity funding bids or other similar revenue based funding awards.

2.3.7 The following list sets out the proposed key decision making areas/powers for the Culm GV Delivery Board:

- Reviewing and agreeing the Garden Village Project Delivery Plan in terms of the:
 - Longer-term (5 to 7 years) milestones
 - Annual milestones and key activities for the next financial year
 - Detailed milestones and activities for the 3 months following a Board meeting
 - The risk assessment and proposed mitigation for the activities and milestones
 - The proposed budget allocation/prioritisation for the relevant MHCLG derived capacity funding for that financial year.
 - Reviewing and agreeing the Consultation and Engagement Strategy (draft currently in production) and the content/structure of the website (currently in production).
 - Reviewing and agreeing further procurement related to reports, studies, expertise and services related to progressing the garden village project in addition to those set out in the project delivery plan (i.e. from potential 'top-up' capacity funding received from MHCLG or other funding sources directly related to the garden village).
- (NB The Board itself cannot procure as it is not a legal entity. The Board can agree the procurement activities proposed, but the actual procurement will be governed and approved by the Council or other project partner e.g DCC carrying out the procurement).

- Reviewing and commenting on emerging planning policy related to the Garden Village (e.g. the Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document and the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan).
- Commenting on garden village related planning applications.

2.3.8 The Delivery Board has no statutory decision-making powers and statutory decisions (e.g. approval of planning documents) are made through the usual processes of the relevant authority. This is not proposed to change. For clarity, the table below sets out a decision making framework. This clarifies the level and of nature of the input from the Delivery Board into Mid Devon's statutory decision making processes.

Area/Type of decision	Culm Delivery Board	MDDC Planning Committee	MDDC Planning Policy Advisory Group	MDDC Cabinet	MDDC Council for approval of policy document for adoption
Supplementary planning document	Recommendation	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
CGV planning policy	Recommendation	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consultation in connection with formal planning policy process	Recommendation	No	Yes	Yes	No
Planning applications	Comment	Yes	No	No	No

2.3.9 This proposed key decision making areas/powers and giving further emphasis to the 'steering' nature of the Board were discussed at the meeting of the Delivery Board on 27th July 2018. The Board indicated that it was in agreement with them.

3.0 **PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE AND KEY WORK AREAS GOING FORWARD**

3.1 This section of the report sets out progress with the project to date and provides a high level forward look at the key areas of focus for the project over the course of the next 12 months (and beyond). The updates and forward look are set out under three main headings: Policy and Strategic Planning; Masterplanning and Design Quality; and Infrastructure Delivery and Funding. These are in addition to the Governance and Project Team update in the Section 2 of this report.

Policy and Strategic Planning

3.2 The **Mid Devon Local Plan Review** which allocates land within the garden village for up to 1,750 homes and associated development in the period up to 2033 (with at least 850 thereafter) has been submitted for examination. Examination relating to the allocation is likely to take place late 2018/early 2019 with adoption Spring 2019 (subject to Planning Inspectorate timetable).

- 3.3 The **Greater Exeter Strategic Plan** (GESP) is intended as the policy vehicle to allocate the remainder of the Garden Village, subject to the requirements of that plan making process. The garden village project team has been working closely with the GESP team on initial site analysis, emerging policy making and conceptual masterplanning that could enable the delivery of the balance of homes (up to 5,000 homes in total) and associated development. Public consultation on the draft Plan is expected to take place in the summer of 2019.
- 3.4 The **Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan** includes policies that give support to the garden village. The garden village project team has been working with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to progress their plan. It is expected that the Plan will be submitted for examination late 2018/early 2019 with adoption following the adoption of the Mid Devon Local Plan Review.

Masterplanning and Design Quality

- 3.5 Masterplanning the garden village is progressing. The project is about to enter into a significant phase of work to produce a Framework Masterplan for long term growth at Culm Garden Village, and a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Mid Devon Local Plan Review allocation area.
- 3.6 Land promoters have commissioned/undertaken various background studies to form the evidence base for the masterplan and are working collaboratively with the garden village project team to produce an initial issues and opportunities document to inform the Framework Masterplan and SPD. A Stage 1 “issues and opportunities” document is being produced and is anticipated to go before Cabinet in September and then out public consultation in September/October 2018. A Stage 2 draft Framework Masterplan and SPD would then be produced for consultation early in 2019.
- 3.7 Masterplanning work to date has included consideration of the green infrastructure framework with the GESP team, a technical stakeholder workshop to establish constraints and key infrastructure requirements and suggested opportunities for sustainable development of the site, and two community stakeholder events: the first looked at the vision and key principles for the garden village while the second considered opportunities for community infrastructure and links with Cullompton. The project team will be bringing together outputs from these to inform the collaborative work with the landowners and promoters over the emerging draft Framework Masterplan and SPD.
- 3.8 High levels of placemaking and design quality have been key drivers and ambitions of the work at Culm Garden Village from its inception. A key factor in creating political and local support for the garden village has been expectations for the delivery of high quality in design and placemaking. The masterplanning process will also be producing design guidance for the garden village to sit alongside the masterplan work to support delivery of design quality, and establishing a Design Review process to challenge, test and ensure high quality design and placemaking is sustained as the project moves through key masterplanning and planning application stages.

- 3.9 Further studies and research are planned to be undertaken over the next 12 months to develop, understand and better define current emerging thinking and concepts related to design quality, innovation and garden village attributes linked into masterplan working groups from areas such as: green and blue infrastructure; sport and recreation; health and wellbeing; self/custom build and modern construction techniques; developing a “Smart” garden village; and developing the economy/employment through upskilling/green economy, emerging sector analysis and targeting inward investment.
- 3.10 Independent viability modelling on an iterative basis throughout the masterplan evolution will help understand the scope for and benefits of delivering high quality outcomes and key design and innovation related attributes of the garden village. The project team is working collaboratively with the land promoters to progress a joint commission to establish an agreed viability model to test the masterplan for deliverability, and to test various stages of the project as it progresses. The model will also provide evidence for the need for targeted Government funding and/or loans to support the delivery of the garden village.
- 3.11 The masterplanning process and ongoing delivery of the garden village will need to be supported by a strong communications and engagement strategy (which is also in production). A bespoke website linked to social media is being developed to inform and engage with stakeholders and local communities. It is intended that the website will be delivered in advance of the first public consultation in September/October 2018. Longer term plans include the development of an interactive consultation module to better connect with residents and stakeholders.

Infrastructure Delivery and Funding

- 3.12 Technical work is ongoing to support the Council’s Housing Infrastructure (Marginal Viability) Fund bid for £10 million to deliver town centre relief road that will unlock housing growth. Delivery of the relief road will provide highway capacity for proposed growth to enable an early release of around 500 homes at Culm Garden Village. Significant progress has been made with this work. Milestones for the next 12 months include:
1. Completion of highways options and design work and related community engagement and consultation to take place in September 2018.
 2. Production of a related planning application for submission in 2019.
- 3.13 A long-term highway solution to motorway junction capacity is required for the proposed growth at the Garden Village. The Council is working with Devon County Council Highway Authority and Highways England to progress a strategic outline business case over the next 12 months for a new strategic intervention to unlock delivery of the total envisaged garden village potential of up to 5,000 homes and associated infrastructure and uses.
- 3.14 Initial timetabling work carried out to date has indicated that a new train station at Cullompton is feasible. Further work will now be undertaken (subject to funding) to move this work on to the next stage. The Council is

working closely with partners over new station provision at both Cullompton and Wellington in connection with a proposed metro service.

- 3.15 The project team has been working with the land promoters, Environment Agency, Devon Wildlife Trust and the Blackdown Hills AONB through the “Connecting the Culm” project and related Interreg funding bid, towards producing a catchment-based flood risk assessment and natural flood risk management strategy to mitigate the impacts of flooding and surface water drainage on the garden village and River Culm wider catchment area. This work will be progressed further over the next 12 months.
- 3.16 In collaboration with the land promoters, the project team will be looking at the potential for accelerated delivery of a digital network and state-of-the-art broadband service provision in the area to support future and existing residents and businesses.
- 3.17 The Culm Garden Village project has made significant progress across a wide range of work areas and identified key milestones since garden village status was awarded at the start of 2017. The project team believes the project to have established a solid project management, technical and governance footing for continued progress. Community and stakeholder engagement has been extensive supporting this as a genuinely locally-led project. The master planning work has been progressing and is about to enter a significant phase of work which will be the key focus for the project over the next 6 to 12 months, alongside continued extensive engagement and intensifying work relating to the delivery of key pieces of infrastructure.

Contact for any more information	Tina Maryan, Area Planning Officer 01884 234336 tmaryan@middevon.gov.uk
Background Papers	Cabinet report 9 th June 2016 DCLG prospectus locally led garden villages, towns and cities https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508205/Locally-led_garden_villages_towns_and_cities.pdf Culm Garden village Expression of interest https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/342814/culm-garden-village-mid-devon-eoi-submission_low-res2.pdf Cabinet report 6 th July 2017

File Reference	None
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