

**CABINET**  
**30 MAY 2019**

## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGENERATION**

### **STAGE 1 PUBLIC CONSULTATION CULM GARDEN VILLAGE VISION & CONCEPT EAST CULLOMPTON MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT: ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONCEPTS (PHASE 1 CULM GARDEN VILLAGE)**

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	*****
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Mrs Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

**Reason for Report:** To note the outcomes of the recent stage 1 public consultation on two documents: 1) a Vision & Concept for the Culm Garden Village; and 2) an East Cullompton Masterplan SPD Issues, Opportunities & Concepts in respect of Phase 1 of the Culm Garden Village.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Cabinet note the report.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** Contribution to delivering the priorities of the Corporate Plan 2016 to 2020; Economy, Homes, Community and Environment.

**Financial Implications:** Delivery of significant housing phased with infrastructure and employment growth will play a pivotal role in bringing forward corporate aspirations to facilitate growth within the district which in turn will help boost the economy. Progress with delivery of housing at Culm Garden Village will help unlock funding streams for infrastructure delivery.

**Legal Implications:** None at this stage except that consultation is taking place in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and forms an intrinsic part of the production of Supplementary Planning Documents. In future consultations, account will need to be taken of those comments which were critical of the level of detail provided.

**Risk Assessment:** Risks associated with the delivery of the Vision for Culm Garden Village include the current lack of planning status for the wider Garden Village (only Phase 1 East Cullompton is currently identified as an emerging allocation), and the requirement to fund the infrastructure required to deliver the project.

**Equalities:** No equalities implications are anticipated as a result of this report.

### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Two reports were considered at the meeting of Cabinet on 3 January 2019 for approval of documentation in relation to stage 1 public consultation on two documents: 1) a Vision & Concept for the Culm Garden Village; and 2) an

## East Cullompton Masterplan SPD Issues, Opportunities & Concepts in respect of Phase 1 of the Culm Garden Village.

- 1.2 The reports set out the background to the project, the planning context, details of the proposed consultation materials, including their scope and purpose, and the proposed consultation methods and timescales.
- 1.3 At the meeting of Cabinet on 3 January 2019 it was resolved in respect of each of the two reports:
  - a) That the document at Appendix 2 be approved for Stage 1 public consultation.
  - b) The proposed amendments to the document set out in Appendix 1 be approved
  - c) Delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration to finalise consultation material.

### **2.0 Stage 1 public consultation**

- 2.1 Public consultation took place over a six-week period from 18 January 2019 to 1 March 2019 on two documents:
  1. The draft Culm Garden Village Vision & Concept Document that sets out a Vision and a number of key principles to guide development at the proposed new garden village, together with a Concept Plan which starts to add shape to ideas on how the garden village might look.
  2. The East Cullompton Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document: Issues, Opportunities & Concepts document that sets out a number of issues and opportunities based on an analysis of the site, brought together to inform some initial concepts for the masterplanning of the East Cullompton Local Plan Review allocation, which will form Phase 1 of the garden village.
- 2.2 Permanent exhibitions of the display material were set up at The Hayridge, Cullompton and Kentisbeare Village Hall and 6 staffed exhibitions were held, 4 in Cullompton and 2 in Kentisbeare. The documents, display materials and online questionnaires were also available on the Culm Garden Village website.
- 2.3 The staffed exhibitions were held at varying times: during the morning, afternoon, evening and on Saturday mornings and were attended by 292 people over the 6 week period: 129 in Kentisbeare and 163 in Cullompton. Kentisbeare Parish Council also opened Kentisbeare Village Hall to enable residents to view the display materials on a Saturday morning during the consultation period and the Parish Council has reported that 80 people attended this event.
- 2.4 At the start of the consultation, feedback was given by Cullompton Town Council and Kentisbeare Parish Council that the questionnaires were too difficult for many people to understand and contained too much jargon. The

questionnaires were immediately simplified and the original questionnaires replaced.

- 2.5 The relationship between the two documents and the planning status of the two different areas (East Cullompton Phase 1 and the wider garden village) was also considered by respondents to be difficult to understand and it was suggested that this could have been made clearer in the consultation material.
- 2.6 A total of 423 responses were received: 314 for the Vision & Concept and 109 for the Masterplan SPD. Of the 423 responses, 329 were received via the online questionnaires and 94 via paper questionnaires, emails or letters.
- 2.7 A detailed summary of the public consultation responses on both documents is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 2.8 Responses were received from the following statutory and other consultees:

Highways England  
Environment Agency  
Sport England  
Devon & Cornwall Police  
Devon County Council  
    Highway Authority  
    Education  
    Waste  
    Historic Environment  
    Lead Local Flood Authority  
    Public Health  
    Economy and Enterprise  
Devon Clinical Commissioning Group  
Natural England  
NHS Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital  
South West Water  
Cullompton Town Council  
Kentisbeare Parish Council  
Bradninch Town Council  
East Devon District Council

A summary of these responses for both documents is attached as **Appendix 2**.

It is intended to publish a detailed summary of the public consultation responses on the Culm Garden Village website and to publish in full statutory and other consultee responses, including from the Town and Parish Councils.

### **3.0 Key themes: Vision and concept**

- 3.1 A number of key themes emerged from the consultations that were mostly common across the two documents. For the Vision and Concept document these were:

Principle of development; transport; integration with Cullompton; green and blue infrastructure; delivery of community facilities and green space; sustainability; affordable housing; and provision of a green buffer zone.

The consultation also asked for suggestions for a name for the garden village. The top 5 suggestions are set out in the responses to question 1 in **Appendix 1**.

- 3.2 The main points under the key themes are set out below.

*Principle of development*

- 3.3 Respondents found it confusing that the consultation was asking people to comment on what the garden village should be like when there was no question asking people what they thought of the principle of developing the wider garden village (up to 5,000 new houses). Whilst the document explained the planning framework and the need to further consult upon and allocate the wider garden village in future planning documents, many respondents found this difficult to grasp.
- 3.4 Similarly, the lack of a “red line boundary” around the potential wider garden village caused concern with residents suspicious of the intentions behind this lack of clarity. Indicating such a red line at this stage would not be appropriate, being in advance of allocation of land within a Development Plan. It is the future allocation that will establish the development boundaries.
- 3.5 The need for the level of housing proposed was also questioned, and concern was expressed that the level was too high to cater for an identified local need. Similarly, the level of housing will be established through a future Development Plan and supported to associated evidence.

*Transport*

- 3.6 There was significant concern about the impact of increased traffic from new development on the surrounding road network, in particular on Junction 28 of the M5 motorway, the roads serving the motorway junction and Cullompton town centre, as well as on Honiton Road. Respondents highlighted the current lack of capacity at the motorway junction and problems of queuing traffic during the morning and evening peak periods, as well as large vehicles being unable to turn out of Kingsmill Industrial Estate because of congestion at the junction.
- 3.7 There was concern that insufficient work had been carried out on potential motorway junction improvements/solutions to provide any clarity or comfort to residents that the necessary improvements were either feasible or deliverable.
- 3.8 The nature of the surrounding road network was also a concern, with many of the surrounding roads being rural lanes and the potential raised for these lanes to become rat-runs to avoid congestion on the main routes from increased traffic. The ability of the existing road to Honiton (A373) to accommodate additional traffic was also a concern, particularly as the road is narrow in places and unable to accommodate large vehicles passing one another.

- 3.9 The timing of the delivery of motorway junction improvements and the town centre relief road was considered crucial, not only to provide for new development, but to deal with existing traffic problems experienced by residents.
- 3.10 The re-opening of Cullompton railway station was welcomed but concern was raised in responses that there was no certainty that this would actually happen. The need for improvement to local and rapid bus services was also highlighted.
- 3.11 The Highway Authority (Devon County Council) has recognised these concerns and has recommended the preparation of a sustainable and holistic transport strategy as fundamental to ensuring development impacts at the Garden Village are managed and mitigated in an appropriate manner.
- 3.12 Highways England recognised the need to improve access to the M5 motorway but is also supportive of a sustainable approach to development to reduce traffic on the strategic road network. Highways England consider it essential that the development strikes the appropriate balance between the provision of significant additional housing, employment opportunities and local facilities to create a sustainable new community, and that delivery is phased to match the provision of the necessary transport infrastructure in order to minimise the traffic impact on the strategic road network.

*Integration with Cullompton*

- 3.13 The concept of walkable neighbourhoods was supported. However, concern was raised about the ability of the new development to integrate with the existing town, particularly bearing in mind the limited ability to create new pedestrian and cycle links across the motorway/railway/River Culm. Respondents considered good pedestrian, cycle and bridleway links into Cullompton (separated from road traffic) and the surrounding area to be essential.

*Green and blue infrastructure*

- 3.14 The concept of a landscape-led approach was supported generally provided green and blue infrastructure was good quality and provided wildlife habitats. The Environment Agency is supportive of multi-functional green and blue infrastructure, Natural Flood Management and sustainable urban drainage schemes. It considers that further work is required on flood risk and water quality and supports links between this project and the Connecting the Culm project. Natural England is supportive of wider green/blue corridors through the development to support wildlife and also encourages any proposal to incorporate measures to help improve people's access to the natural environment.

*Delivery of community facilities and green space*

- 3.15 Respondents considered it important that community facilities such as schools, sport, leisure, green space (including the proposed country park), medical, retail and community space, are delivered early to provide a good living standard for new residents and to minimise pressure on existing facilities.

### *Sustainability*

- 3.16 Respondents were supportive of sustainable development and wanted to see excellent public transport links, high quality employment and education provision on site, zero/low carbon development with renewable energy. The view was expressed that neighbourhoods should be walkable with clustered community facilities, built to standards to cater for disability, and include substantial green space focused on biodiversity. The use of the pylon runs as principal green routes and open space was not supported.

### *Affordable housing*

- 3.17 Respondents thought there should be a high proportion of affordable housing and that developers should not be permitted to reduce the proportion of affordable housing over time.

### *Green buffer zone*

- 3.18 The provision of a green buffer zone to separate new development from Kentisbeare village was supported. There was disagreement from respondents on where the buffer should be and what, if any, should be included within the zone. A high proportion of respondents wanted to see a clear buffer with no development except perhaps walking, cycling and horse riding routes, whilst a higher proportion wanted to see sports facilities included within the buffer area (see page 5 of **Appendix 1**). Respondents considered that there should be green buffers between new development and other existing residential development.

## **4.0 Key themes: East Cullompton Masterplan SPD**

- 4.1 As stated, a number of key themes emerged from the consultations that were mostly common across the two documents. For the East Cullompton Masterplan SDP document these were:

Principle of development; transport; integration with Cullompton; identification of existing issues and features; community facilities, sport and leisure and green space; housing; employment; delivery; and relationship to the wider garden village.

- 4.2 The main points under the key themes are set out below.

### *Transport and integration with Cullompton*

- 4.3 The same views were expressed in response to the Masterplan SPD consultation as in the Vision & Concept document (see 3.5 to 3.12 above).

### *Identification of existing issues and features*

- 4.4 Respondents expressed concern regarding the level of detail on the constraints plan and lack of supporting information, e.g. the lack of a catchment-based flood risk assessment and detailed topographical, landscape and wildlife surveys. The requirement to carry out further work on flood risk assessment and mitigation, water quality, and habitat analysis and enhancements was highlighted by the Environment Agency. The need for further work on the historic environment was also highlighted within the responses.

### *Community facilities, sport and leisure, and green space*

- 4.5 Respondents wanted to see a range of sport and leisure provision, quality green space (not under the pylon runs), and a range of community facilities in clusters walkable from housing developments including local shops, comparison retail, leisure and sports facilities, healthcare, cafés, Post Office, food pub and community building. There should be plenty of free parking and space for the local centre/s to grow organically. The walkable neighbourhood concept and active walking and cycling provision were supported by Devon County Council Public Health. Concern was raised by some residents about the potential for sports facilities outside the allocated area and encroachment of these facilities into the rural area.
- 4.6 Natural England considers there may be significant opportunities to include green infrastructure in urban environments such as green roof systems and roof gardens; green walls to provide insulation or shading and cooling; new tree planting or altering the management of land (e.g. management of verges to enhance biodiversity). Consideration could also be given to issues relating to habitat connectivity, the protection of natural resources, including air quality, ground and surface water and soils within urban design plans.

### *Housing*

- 4.7 Respondents were in favour of a high proportion of affordable housing for local people and a mix of house types and tenures to suit all age groups and to include consideration of those with disabilities. There was a mixed response to the potential for self-build development, with a number of respondents replying “don’t know” which could imply that more information is needed on this.

### *Employment*

- 4.8 Many respondents wanted to see a more ambitious approach to employment delivery, focused on high skilled jobs, energy efficiency and links to skills providers. Respondents thought it important to also consider existing employment provision in the Cullompton area and the regeneration of Cullompton town centre.

### *Delivery*

- 4.9 Whilst most respondents were supportive of high quality, sustainable development within the East Cullompton allocation, concern was raised around timely delivery of infrastructure and community facilities, maintaining the quality of the development throughout the planning and construction phases, and not allowing developers to water down the vision. Devon County Council has confirmed that primary school provision will need to be available as part of the first phase of development.

### *Relationship to wider garden village*

- 4.10 Development of the East Cullompton allocation (Phase 1 garden village) was accepted by the majority of respondents, subject to the timely delivery of infrastructure and facilities. However, respondents expressed their strong concerns about development of the wider garden village, particularly as the principle of development had not been tested through the planning process and there was no formal boundary as yet.

## **5.0 Next steps**

- 5.1 Next steps will be to further develop the two documents based on the consultation responses and further work and background studies being undertaken by the land promoters, Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council. Many points have been raised within the representations received that will need careful consideration, response and identification of how they will inform the content of the emerging documents.
- 5.2 It is intended that a further report will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting, setting out in detail next steps and timescales for each of the two documents and the garden village project. This report therefore seeks only to provide feedback on the representations received in the form of key themes and summary responses. The further, future report will consider the response to those representations and next steps.

## **6.0 Appendices**

1. Summary of public consultation responses
2. Summary of statutory and other consultation responses

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<b>Circulation of the Report</b>	Consultation materials on the Culm Garden Village website <a href="https://culmgardenvillage.co.uk/get-involved/">https://culmgardenvillage.co.uk/get-involved/</a>