

CABINET
16th January 2020

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGENERATION

CULLOMPTON TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN & DELIVERY PLAN

Cabinet Member **Cllr Graeme Barnell**
Responsible Officer **Mrs Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy & Regeneration**

Reason for the Report: To consider the key themes detailed in this and to seek approval to progress to a Stage 1 Public consultation on the Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To agree the themes set out in this report to form the basis for a Stage 1 Public Consultation; and**
- 2. That Cabinet approve the associated Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report and the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report for consultation.**
- 3. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration to finalise the material and arrangements for consultation.**

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan SPD will provide guidance on the planning and delivery of development within Cullompton. It will ensure the delivery of key priorities for Mid Devon, directly relating to all four Corporate Plan priorities including a thriving economy (Priority 1, Aim 2 & 3: Economy), delivery of homes (Priority 2, Aims 2 & 3: Homes), empowering local communities (Priority 3, Aims 1, 2 and 3) and caring for the environment (Priority 4, Aims 1, 2 and 3).

Financial Implications: The procurement and cost of commissioning this masterplan has formally been considered and approved at Cabinet. A budget of £60,000 has been approved.

It is expected that the masterplanning process will identify opportunities and sites for regeneration / redevelopment. Funding arrangements for the implementation of such projects is yet to be determined but would look to private sector finance HAZ.

Legal Implications: In order for the masterplan to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, public consultation needs to take place in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Whilst not forming part of the Development Plan, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications relating to the town centre.

Risk Assessment: A full risk assessment will be undertaken as the projects in the scheme are developed. Failure to support a regeneration of the Cullompton Town Centre could lead to deterioration in commercial activity, a less vibrant centre, less coordinated development and uncertainty over essential infrastructure.

Equality Impact Assessment: No equality issues are identified for this report.

Impact on Climate Change: A core principle within the Draft Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan is to support through design and timely delivery of infrastructure, dwellings and employment, the Council's commitment to achieving new zero carbon emissions by 2030. The Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan has regard throughout to climate change.

1.0 INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council has resolved to develop a masterplan for Cullompton Town Centre and has commissioned consultants in its production. It will form the basis for the regeneration of the town; enhancing the town's economic prospects and providing a clear strategy to ensure the town meets its full potential as an attractive and thriving town in the 21st century. It will provide the umbrella framework within which the Cullompton Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) bid funded by Historic England under the Future High Streets programme will operate.
- 1.2 The Masterplan is being developed in the context of the strategic projects planned in and around Cullompton, including:
 - North West Cullompton urban extension;
 - New homes allocated to the east of the town;
 - The proposed Culm Garden Village with up to 5,000 new homes, new jobs, schools and local centre;
 - A new link connecting the Garden Village to the town centre;
 - A Heritage Action Zone which will see investment in Cullompton's historic high street; and
 - Potential for the reopening of Cullompton rail station.
- 1.3 In accordance with Mid Devon's Statement of Community Involvement, the Masterplan SPD will be subject to two stages of public consultation; Stage 1 to scope out the proposed contents of the masterplan and present the options that might be included in the masterplan and Stage 2 to present the draft masterplan itself.
- 1.4 The Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan was presented to PPAG on 6th January 2020. Members recommend that Cabinet approve the themes set out below as a basis for Stage 1 public consultation with particular emphasis on:
 - Road / traffic
 - Living in the town centre

- The use of key assets e.g St Andrew's Church, The Walronds, The Manor Hotel, The Town Hall
- Delivery of public / private partnerships
- The Third (Community) sector

2.0 BASELINE ANALYSIS

- 2.1 A visioning workshop was held on 4 September 2019. Fifty people attended representing community groups, businesses, and wider stakeholders as well as Councillors and officers. The workshop comprised a roundtable discussion structured in two parts – the first part focused on issues and opportunities relating to buildings and character, Cullompton's identity, public spaces, town centre uses and movement. The second part explored the 'Big Ideas for Cully' which intended to raise the level of ambition for the town.
- 2.2 The key messages that came out of the visioning workshop were that there is a lot that makes Cullompton special – from its historic courts and lanes to its markets and strong sense of community. There is a high level of ambition for positive change in the town centre, including the possibilities for enhancement associated with the relief road, the opportunity to improve public spaces and the opportunity to strengthen the sense of arrival into Cullompton. There was recognition that some bits of the town are not functioning as well as they should be, for example the pedestrian experience, the historic fabric and vacant shops. Possible new and improved links as well as potential opportunity sites and site moves emerged. These messages have helped shape the key issues that are proposed to form the basis of the Stage 1 consultation.

3.0 EMERGING KEY THEMES

- 3.1 Analysis of the comments made at the visioning workshop indicates that there are a number of key themes that are emerging. Each theme is welcomed and relevant. It is proposed that the Stage 1 public consultation is focused around them:
- Principle 1: Cullompton's distinctive historic buildings and landscape will be restored and enhanced
 - Principle 2: Cullompton's centre will rediscover its historic role as a place of work and making
 - Principle 3: Cullompton will draw people into the town centre with an enticing experience for visitors
 - Principle 4: Cullompton's spaces will be reclaimed and redesigned to support a vibrant community life
 - Principle 5: Cullompton will be a sustainable town for its growing community: with education, community and recreational facilities
 - Principle 6: It will be easy of move around on foot, on bicycle, by bus and by train.
- 3.2 The emerging themes, with an emphasis recommended by PPAG as outlined at para. 1.4 of this report, will form the basis for the presentation boards.

3.3 It is worth noting that further ‘visioning events’ have been undertaken including with Yr 5&6 students at Willow Bank Primary School and St. Andrew’s Primary School during November. It included visits to 3 locations around the town: the proposed railway station site; the Bull Ring and former Mills.

4.0 **Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening**

4.1 The emerging themes for the Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan have been ‘screened’ to establish whether it requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA Screening Report (**Appendix 2**) has identified that the Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment. The SEA Screening Report has also found that there is no requirement for the Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan to be subject to a full SEA. Importantly the SPD provides additional guidance on the applications of Local Plan policies which have already been the subject of SEA assessment.

4.2 The emerging themes for the Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan has also been ‘screened’ for the purpose of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) to assess whether it may affect the protected features of a European ‘habitats site’ identified under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The HRA Screening Report (**Appendix 3**) identifies that the Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan is not likely to have significant adverse effects on the integrity of Habitat sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects and further ‘Appropriate Assessment’ is not required. Importantly the Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan will provide additional guidance on the application of Local Plan policies which have already been the subject of Habitat Regulations Assessment.

5.0 **NEXT STEPS**

5.1 The Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan once adopted will not in itself form part of the Development Plan for planning purposes, but will nevertheless be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and will form the framework within which the Cullompton HAZ bid will operate.

5.2 A provisional timetable for the next stages in the production of the masterplan is set out in the table below:

Action	Date
Final Production of presentation material for Stage 1 public consultation	January 2020
Stage 1 Public Consultation. Inc 4 events around the town centre	February / March 2020

Draft Plan produced	Spring 2020
Stage 2 public consultation:	Summer 2020
Adoption	Autumn 2020

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan SPD will seek to provide a comprehensive framework to guide development in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. It will provide the umbrella framework within which the Cullompton Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) bid funded by Historic England under the Future High Streets programme will operate. The Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan once adopted will achieve full weight in decision making as a material planning consideration. The Stage 1 public consultation will form the first phase towards the adoption of this document.

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Background Papers:

The adopted policies relating to Cullompton may be viewed in the AIDPD:

<https://new.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning-policy/mid-devon-local-plan/part-2-aidpd/>

The Adopted Local Plan:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning-policy/adopted-local-plan/>

Scrutiny 30 September 2019

Cabinet 5 April 2018

Circulation of the Report: Members of Cabinet