

CABINET
1 OCTOBER 2020

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGENERATION

**EAST CULLOMPTON MASTERPLAN SPD AND CULM GARDEN VILLAGE
FRAMEWORK MASTERPLAN**

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

Reason for Report:

To seek approval to engage consultants to progress the production of the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD and Culm Garden Village Framework Masterplan, including the commissioning of necessary evidence base reports.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration to engage consultants to progress the production of the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD and Culm Garden Village Framework Masterplan, including the commissioning of associated evidence base reports.**

Financial Implications: This significant project requires financial resources to continue progress towards delivery. Capacity funding from Homes England's Garden Villages and Towns Programme to advance the project has been received over the past 4 years. Continued financial support from capacity funding is critical to adequately resource the project. This capacity funding is conditional on progress being made with the project in line with the Council's place making aspirations and to meet the Government's requirements.

The cost of appointing the consultants of approximately £100,000- £130,000 will be financed entirely from the capacity funding budget and is therefore at no cost to the MDDC budget. It is intended that consultants be selected via a tender process.

Budget and Policy Framework: This report relates to strategy formulation which is currently budgeted for under Homes England capacity funding. The documents will not affect the existing policy framework but will add detail to existing policies and help inform future policies.

Legal Implications: None anticipated at this time. Procurement will be in accordance with requirements commensurate with the value of the commission.

Risk Assessment: If progress on masterplanning the garden village is delayed, the Council may become vulnerable to speculative planning applications being submitted which do not accord with the Council's aspirations for the garden village and which could lead to unsustainable and uncoordinated development which would not meet policy requirements for essential infrastructure, open space and local services.

One of the Government's priorities is the delivery of housing, the achievement of which is increasingly linked to future success of funding bids. The ability to show progress against key milestones in the delivery plan for the project is of increasing importance.

Establishment of a comprehensive masterplanning framework for the development is considered vital to achieving the Council's aspirations for the garden village in terms of community, place making and quality. The absence of such an approach would represent a significant risk to achieving the desired quality outcomes.

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

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

Impact on Climate Change: Masterplanning the garden village in a holistic way will provide a valuable opportunity to put the Council's commitment to the Climate Change Declaration at the heart of sustainable growth options. Opportunities exist for encouragement and provision of sustainable travel options including public transport and walking and cycling, provision of new local employment opportunities, exploration of low carbon construction opportunities, provision of accessible natural open space, tree planting, enhancement of wildlife habitats and natural flood management.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Policies CU7-CU12 of the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan Review allocate 160 hectares of land to the east of Cullompton for up to 1,750 homes and associated development within the period up to 2033 (with at least 850 houses thereafter). This allocation is intended to form part of a larger garden village proposal. Policy CU7 of the Local Plan Review requires comprehensive masterplanning of the development including at least two stages of public consultation, and adoption of the masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document before any planning application is determined. The Mid Devon Local Plan Review was adopted at the meeting of Full Council on 29 July 2020.
- 1.2 Culm Garden Village was one of 14 initial areas awarded garden village status by the Government in January 2017 following a successful expression of interest by the Council. The background to this was summarised and included within the report considered by Cabinet on 6 July 2017.
- 1.3 With Culm Garden Village receiving garden village status, there is a clear intention and direction of travel towards a garden village of significantly greater scale and covering substantial additional land to that currently allocated by policy CU7 of the Mid Devon Local Plan Review.

- 1.4 The draft Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan has been through examination and is awaiting a referendum before being made. The Plan supports the idea of the wider garden village beyond the local plan allocation conditional upon establishing a joined-up and locally led approach that ensures physical and social 'integration' of existing and new development enabling development to the east of the M5 to become an integral part of the community of Cullompton.
- 1.5 The remainder of the garden village for development over and above the Local Plan Review allocation will need to be allocated within a future plan, whether at local or more strategic level scale. Its allocation was due to form one of the site options for consultation through the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP). Following the decision by East Devon District Council to withdraw from GESP, the plan and allocation options cannot be taken forward as intended. At the Council meeting on 26 August 2020, MDDC resolved to consider options for an alternative joint strategic plan as well as to accelerate an early review of Mid Devon's Local Plan. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to Culm Garden Village. A proposal for allocation of the remainder of the garden village is therefore intended to be taken forward within a future development plan, such as the early review of the Mid Devon Local Plan.
- 1.6 Masterplans bridge the gap between planning policy aspiration and its implementation in order to achieve high quality design and create successful places. They also set out key principles that planning applications will need to have regards to in order to be considered acceptable. Additionally, as masterplans often relate to large strategically important sites that are to be delivered in phases over what may be a long time period, they also need to contain flexibility in order to respond to changing circumstances.
- 1.7 Supplementary Planning Documents provide guidance and can only be developed in support of adopted planning policies. Whilst they do not form part of the Development Plan, they are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.8 As development is to be allocated through two different plans and the policy vehicle for allocating the wider garden village has not yet been finally established, it is not possible to masterplan the whole of the garden village within one masterplan SPD document. There is currently no site allocation for the garden village, only for initial development east of Cullompton. At this stage, it is therefore proposed only to develop a detailed Masterplan SPD for the part of the garden village to be allocated under the Mid Devon Local Plan Review (policies CU7-CU12).
- 1.9 However, the Council has an aspiration to masterplan the whole of the garden village area as one, rather than in parts. In looking to respond positively to this context, the opportunity is being taken now to develop and determine the key choices and decisions for the initial East Cullompton Masterplan SPD area at the same time as establishing a clear picture and understanding of the broader, longer term concept for the wider garden village in the form of a framework masterplan.

- 1.10 Whilst the framework masterplan for the wider garden village will not have the level of detail and planning status as an adopted SPD, it will take the form of planning guidance for future developers until such time as a detailed SPD can be developed and adopted under a future allocation. This is to ensure that the whole of the garden village is developed as a sustainable new settlement that achieves the Council's aspirations for the garden village in terms of climate change, community, place making and quality.
- 1.11 A technical evidence base has been developed by the land promoters for the East Cullompton Local Plan allocation which is sufficiently detailed to inform the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD. However, as information gathering for the remainder of the garden village is less advanced due to the fact that land is not yet allocated, there will likely to be a need for this Council to commission baseline technical reports to inform the wider masterplanning work. Such baseline reports could include flood risk, heritage, landscape and visual and ecology. A gap analysis is being carried out to determine the information and reports that have already been carried out (if any), and determine any further reports that need to be commissioned alongside the masterplanning work itself.

2.0 BACKGROUND WORK AND ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

- 2.1 Following approval by Cabinet on 3 January 2019, stage 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.
- Stage 1 is a means to scope out the content and key issues for the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD and Garden Village Framework Masterplan.
- 2.2 Results of the public consultation and details of engagement activity that informed those documents were reported to Cabinet on 30 May 2019. This public consultation formed Stage 1 of the two stage public consultation process required by the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- 2.3 With the adoption of the Local Plan Review on 29 July 2020, it is now imperative that the next stage of masterplanning is progressed and a draft Masterplan SPD (East Cullompton) and draft Framework Masterplan (wider garden village) is produced for Stage 2 public consultation.

- 2.4 Whilst work has been ongoing to inform the masterplanning process, including technical work and engagement with local communities, additional resourcing, knowledge and expertise is required to produce the draft SPD and Framework Masterplan.
- 2.5 One of the key principles for delivery of Culm Garden Village is that it is locally-led. Production of the draft Masterplans by consultants commissioned by the Council would ensure that full control of the masterplanning process is retained by MDDC.

3.0 **SCOPE OF COMMISSION**

3.1 It is recommended that consultants (funded by capacity funding set aside for this purpose) be engaged to produce two documents on behalf of the Council:

- 1) A draft East Cullompton Masterplan SPD and
- 2) A Culm Garden Village Framework Masterplan

The Masterplan SPD and Framework Masterplan will build on engagement work to date, including the Stage 1 public consultation.

3.2 The production of the Masterplans will require a multi-disciplinary approach. It is expected that the commission will be filled by a multi-disciplinary consultancy or group of consultancies.

3.3 The engagement work to date has identified a number of priorities that need to be addressed within the Masterplans. These include:

- 1) Masterplanning should be landscape-led, building on the area's natural assets and creating quality green and blue infrastructure.
- 2) Climate change, including opportunities for low carbon development, should be a key focus for the development.
- 3) Natural flood management and sustainable urban drainage should form a key aspect of flood risk mitigation.
- 4) Active transport (walking, cycling, public transport) should be the main transport choice.
- 5) The garden village should promote links (physical, social and economic) with Cullompton.
- 6) The garden village should be self-sustaining with good employment and skills opportunities.
- 7) Urban design should focus on a high quality living environment, taking into account the health and well-being of future residents.

3.4 The consultants will need to consider phasing of delivery of development and viability to ensure that the development is policy-compliant and deliverable.

3.5 The commission will consist of:

- 1) Production of a draft Masterplan SPD for the East Cullompton Local Plan Review allocation, building on the technical work and engagement (including the Stage 1 public consultation) that has taken place to date.

This will be a detailed masterplan to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

- 2) Production of a Framework Masterplan for the whole of the Garden Village, again building on technical work and engagement (including the Stage 1 public consultation) that has taken place to date. This will be less detailed but will set a vision and key principles for the garden village and provide guidance, including a spatial land use plan, on land uses including green spaces, movement and connections, character areas and sustainability. The detailed East Cullompton Masterplan will fit seamlessly within this wider Framework Masterplan.
- 3) Production of evidence base reports to inform the Masterplan SPD and Framework Masterplan where there are gaps in current knowledge. These reports could include flood risk, ecology, heritage, landscape and transport.

3.6 The consultants will need to take into account ongoing work that is being carried out in respect of provision of essential infrastructure, such as delivery of the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road, and Strategic Outline Business Cases for motorway junction improvements and the re-opening of Cullompton railway station.

3.7 The consultants will also need to take into account the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan, Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan that is moving towards Stage 2 public consultation on a draft Masterplan and a Delivery Plan, and the Connecting the Culm project that has developed a catchment-wide flood model and will be identifying natural flood management and water quality opportunities within the catchment through a catchment blueprint.

3.8 A provisional timetable is proposed:

Action	Date
Cabinet	1 October 2020
Award of contract	November 2020
Draft Masterplan SPD and Framework Masterplan to Cabinet	May 2021
Stage 2 public consultation	June/July 2021
Final draft Masterplan SPD and Framework Masterplan to Cabinet	October 2021
Adoption	November/December 2021

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The East Cullompton Masterplan SPD will seek to provide a comprehensive framework to guide Phase 1 development in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. Once adopted it will achieve full weight in decision making as a material planning consideration.

4.2 The Culm Garden Village Framework Masterplan will provide guidance to ensure that the entire garden village is delivered in a holistic way. It will also

inform development of future planning policies for the garden village. The East Cullompton Masterplan SPD will fit seamlessly into the wider Framework Masterplan.

- 4.3 The first phase of public consultation has been undertaken. The engagement of consultants is now sought to develop the draft East Cullompton Masterplan SPD and draft Culm Garden Village Framework Masterplan ahead of the second stage of public consultation.

Contact for any more information	Tina Maryan, Area Planning Officer tmaryan@middevon.gov.uk
Background Papers	Cabinet report 3 January 2019 Cabinet report 30 May 2019
Circulation of the Report	Members of Cabinet