An aerial photograph of the Cullopton town centre, overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color. The map shows a dense residential area with a central cluster of buildings, surrounded by open fields and a road network. A prominent road runs vertically through the right side of the town.

CULLOMPTON

TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

MASTERPLAN REPORT

April 2021

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



STEVINGTON

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1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the masterplan

Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners was commissioned to prepare a masterplan and delivery strategy for Cullompton Town Centre on behalf of Mid-Devon District Council. The consultant team for the project includes transport and movement experts Hydrock and property and economic development specialists, Avison Young.

This report presents the vision and spatial masterplan for Cullompton town centre, including:

- The policy and strategic context;
- Summary of analysis and community engagement undertaken for the project;
- A vision and thematic objectives for the town centre;
- A Masterplan setting out spatial and design priorities;
- A heritage strategy; and
- A phasing and delivery strategy.

A detailed baseline study was prepared for the project and can be found [here](#).

1.1.1 The Cullompton town centre masterplan identifies a clear vision for the town centre and sets out a spatial framework to guide future development and investment in Cullompton. The role of the masterplan is to provide realistic principles and overarching guidance that brings together the design and future delivery of development, public realm improvements and transport projects in Cullompton.

1.1.2 The masterplan has been developed in the context of a number of strategic projects planned in and around the town, set out in section 2.3. With these strategic projects on the horizon, a clear vision and spatial strategy is needed to help ensure that Cullompton town centre can realise its full potential as the commercial hub of an expanded town, making the most of its distinctive characteristics. The masterplan sets a framework for these strategic projects to support one another and to have a positive impact on the future of the town that can be greater than the sum of their parts. It also identifies further studies and steps that should follow the masterplan to help achieve this vision.

1.1.3 The masterplan will be adopted as a supplementary planning document and is part of the evidence to inform the Council's emerging Local Plan. It will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

1.2 Project process and engagement

Overview of project process

1.2.1 The project commenced in July 2019 and has consisted of two main phases of work:

- Stage 1: understanding the context and developing a vision; and
- Stage 2: producing a masterplan, heritage strategy and delivery guidance for the town centre.

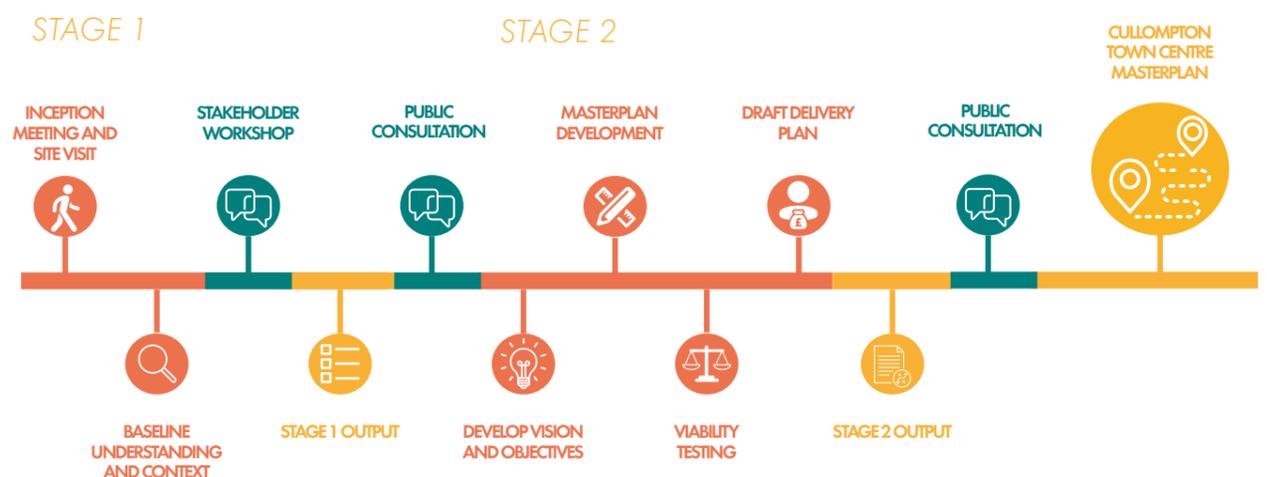
1.2.2 In Autumn 2019 the project team undertook research and analysis to develop a thorough understanding of Cullompton and its surrounding context. This included a policy review, an analysis of the socioeconomic make-up of the local population, a review of the property market, historic research and mapping of the town's urban design characteristics. A visioning workshop was held to ask key stakeholders about what works well and what could be improved in Cullompton. This all fed into an interim report which was completed in December 2019.

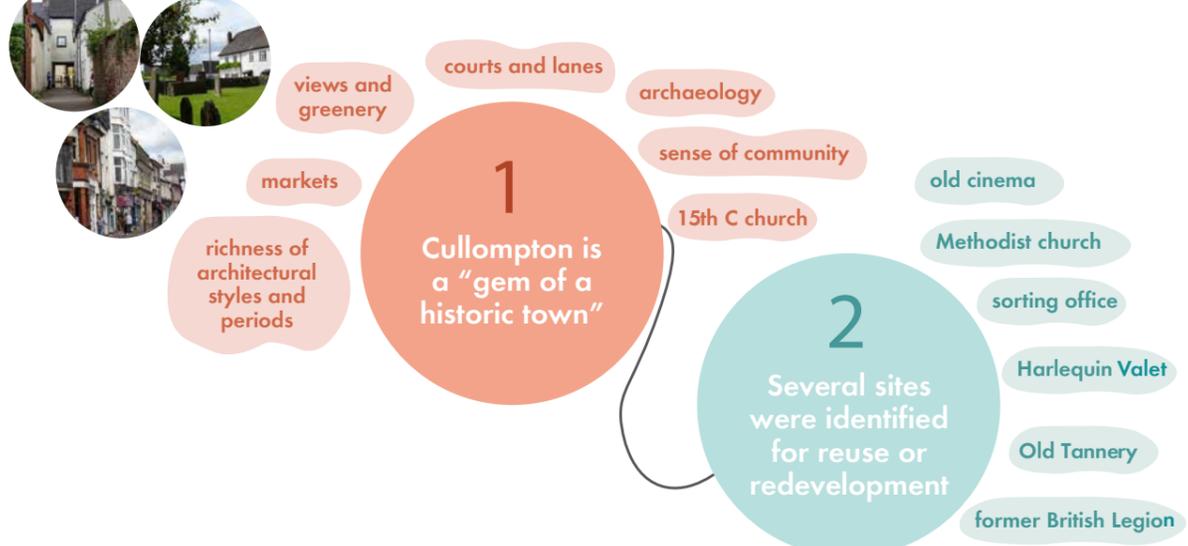
1.2.3 Through the baseline analysis, issues, opportunities and priorities emerged which evolved into a vision and thematic objectives for the town. These were consulted on during a six week consultation period in Spring 2020, and a refined vision and objectives were used to develop a strategic spatial plan and draft masterplan. This report presents the draft masterplan, as well as a heritage strategy and high-level advice for delivery and phasing.

Community engagement

1.2.4 The process has been deeply informed by community input, through:

- A Visioning workshop, September 2019
- End of stage 1 6-week public consultation, February 2020
- Draft masterplan 6-week public consultation, spring 2021





1.2.5 Visioning Workshop
 To kick-off the process, a Visioning Workshop was held on Wednesday 4th September at the Hayridge Centre. Fifty people attended representing community groups, businesses and wider stakeholders, as well as councillors and officers. The event included a presentation setting out some initial thoughts about what makes Cullompton special, as well as an introduction to the baseline analysis undertaken so far. A workshop followed which 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

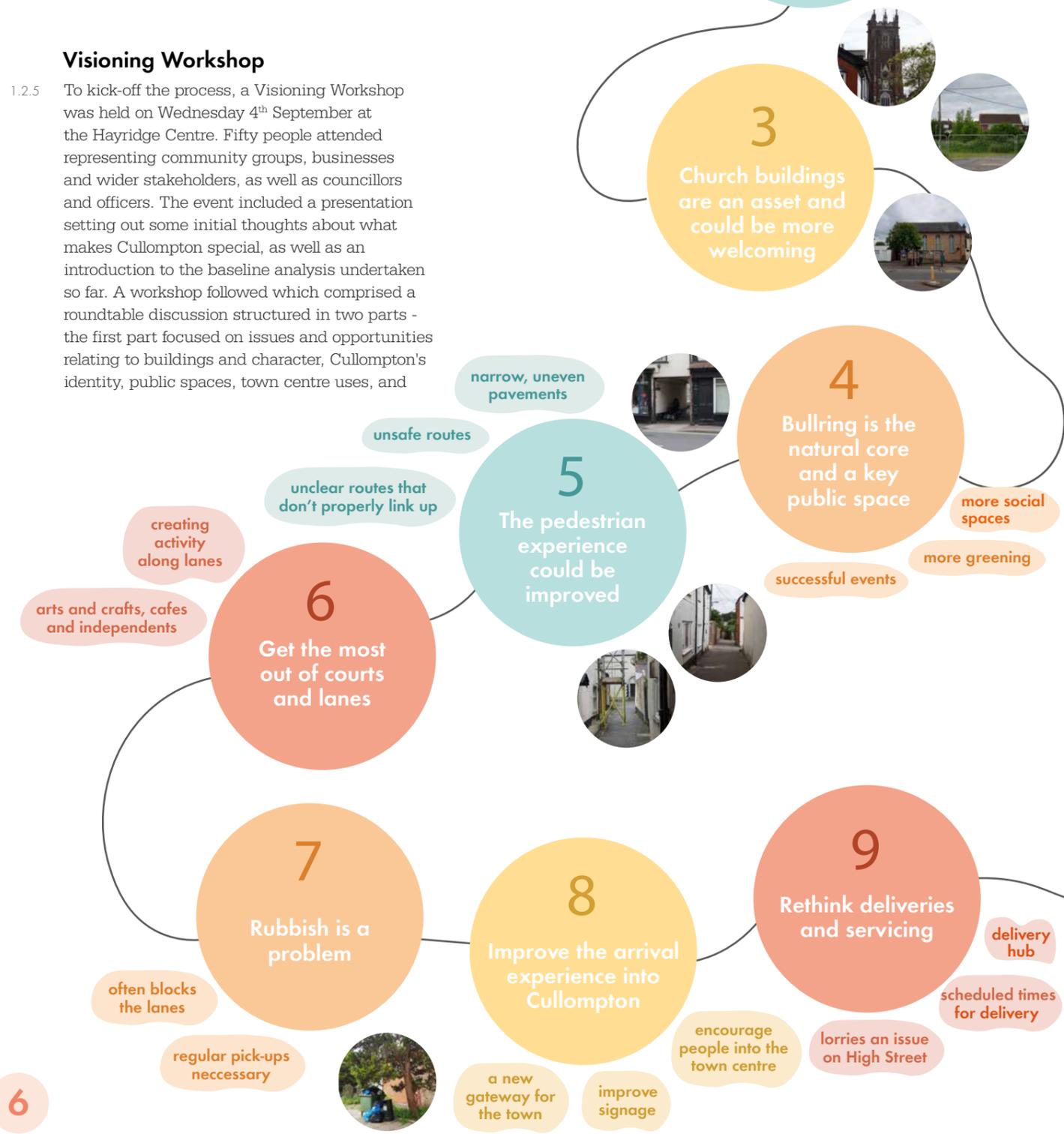


Figure 1 Photos of the stakeholder workshop

movement. Attendees were also asked to consider the opportunities associated with the planned investment in and around the town e.g. the relief road and potential reopening of the station. The second part explored the 'Big Ideas for Cully', which intended to raise the level of ambition for the town. The key messages are set out on this spread.

1.2.6 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 the vacant shops. This feedback has helped to shape the emerging vision and objectives for the masterplan.





Figure 2 A leaflet advertising the stage 1 engagement



Figure 3 A summary of the stage 1 engagement

End of stage one, 6-week public consultation

1.2.7 A public consultation was held between 25 February and 15 April 2020 to test the baseline analysis findings and the emerging vision and objectives for the masterplan.

1.2.8 The consultation was communicated through the council's website, social media, the council's email list for those interested in planning in Cullompton and was featured in Devon Live. The consultation materials were displayed online and in town:

- Wednesday 4 March, 10am-2pm, Cullompton Town Hall
- Friday 13 March, 2.30-6pm, Tesco entrance, Station Road
- Saturday 14 March, 9.30am-12.30pm, Farmers Market
- Monday 16 March, 4-7pm, The Hayridge Centre

1.2.9 People were able to give their feedback through completing a questionnaire (either online or written at the events) or providing a written response (via email or post).



Figure 4 Photos of engagement with school children

1.2.10 In addition, this phase of consultation sought to engage young people in their town, through two workshops with local schools:

- Tuesday 19th November 2019, St. Andrew's Primary School, 5-11yrs, 10 children
- Wednesday 20th November 2019, Willowbank Primary School, 10-11yrs, 25 children

1.2.11 Throughout all of the engagement activities, demographics were monitored to check that all parts of the community were involved. The response was representative of the community in Cullompton in terms of gender, ethnicity and location with a decent spread of addresses across the town. In terms of age, there was a higher response rate from over 65s than the town's population, however engagement with schools helped to bring in the views of young people.

1.2.12 The feedback from this stage of consultation is summarised on the following pages and helped to inform the masterplan priorities and proposals.



Figure 5 Worksheets from the engagement with school children

39% Bring in traffic restrictions on the high street / the relief road

If you were in charge of Cullompton's future, what one thing would you change?

42 people responded to this question.

16% Improving the town's offer in terms of shops and activities

12% New railway station and sustainable transport

10% Improve the historic buildings and streetscape

10% Upgrade the existing or create a new motorway junction

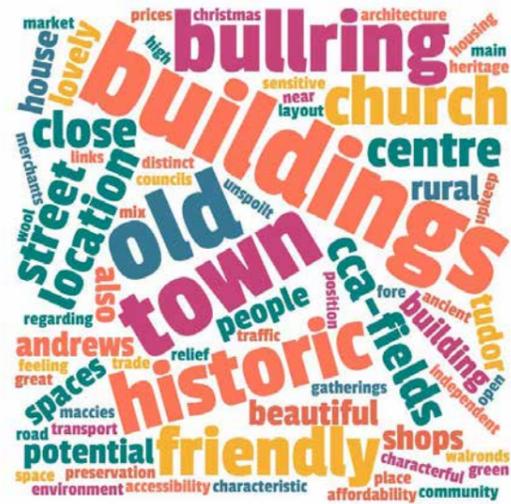
6% Parking restrictions and enforcement

4% Decrease scale of new development

Figure 6 An infographic, summarising the feedback to the question: If you were in charge of Cullompton's future, what one thing would you change?

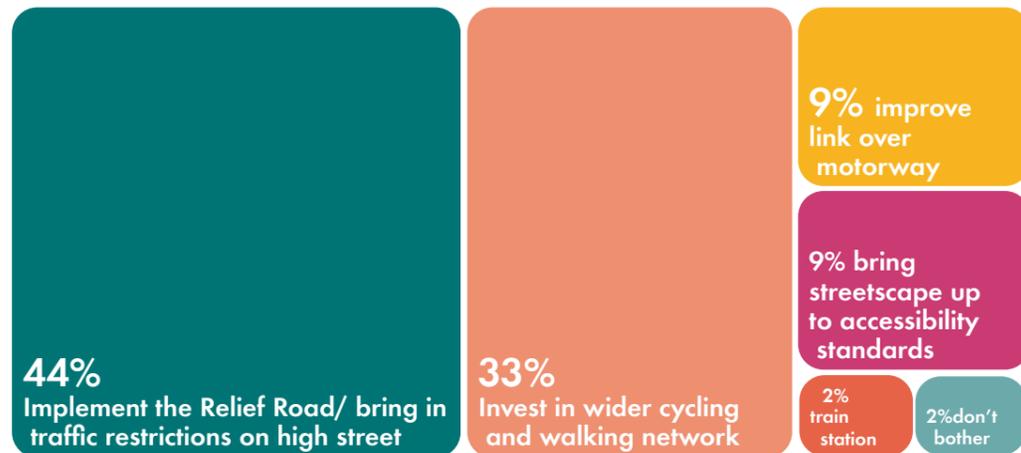
What do you think is Cullompton's best characteristic?

40 people responded to this question.



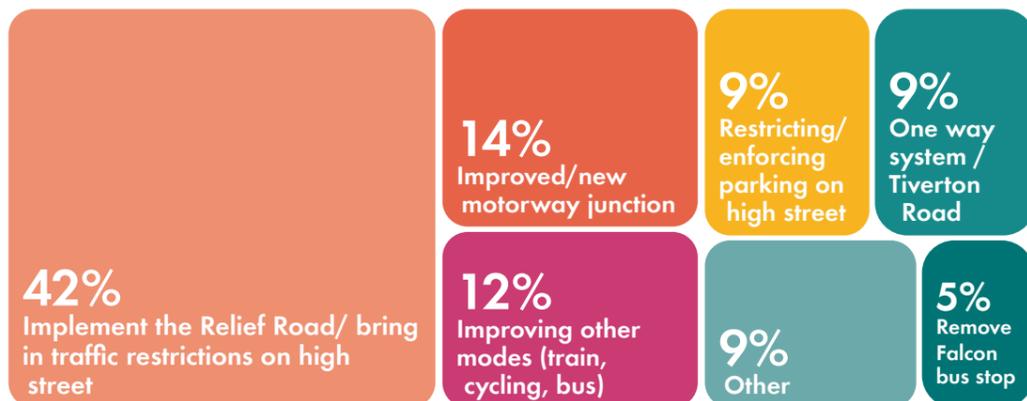
What are your priorities for improving pedestrian and cycle movement in and around Cullompton?

36 people responded to this question.



What are your priorities for improving vehicular movement in and around Cullompton?

34 people responded to this question.



What are your priorities for making the most of Cullompton's heritage?

40 people responded to this question.



What are your priorities for improving public and open spaces?

39 people responded to this question.



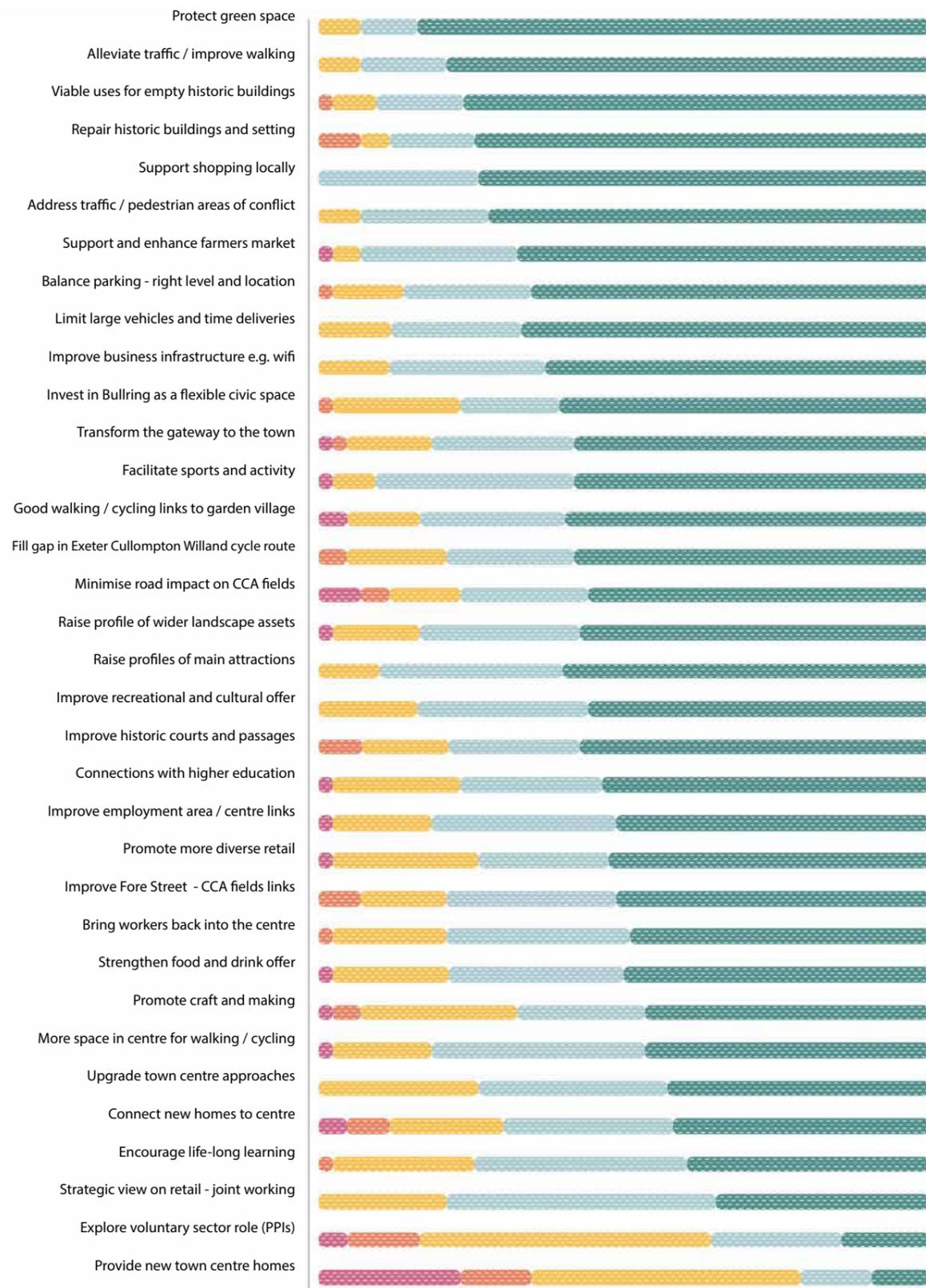
How can we support the town centre's role as a focus for homes, shops, work and community life?

39 people responded to this question.

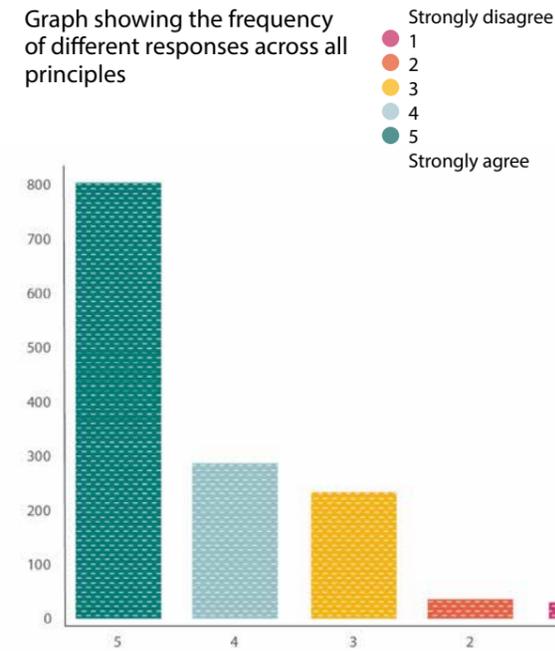


Figure 7 Infographics, summarising the feedback from the Stage 2 online and written survey.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following principles?



Graph showing the frequency of different responses across all principles



Five principles with the highest % of people who strongly agree



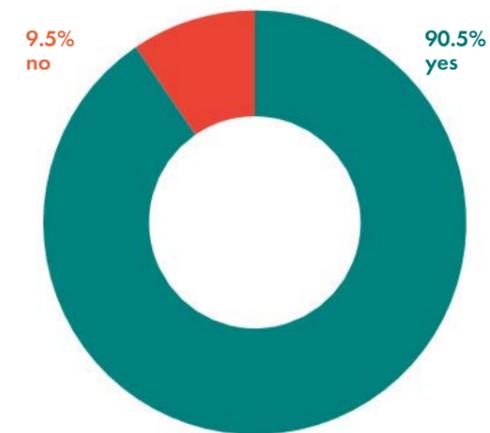
Three principles with the highest % of people who strongly disagree and disagree combined



In answering the following questions please assume that the proposed Relief Road will have been completed and be open for use:

Do you think restricting traffic in High Street is a good idea?

42 people responded to this questions.



If yes, what do you think should be done?

38 people responded to this questions.



Figure 8 Infographics, summarising the feedback from the Stage 2 online and written survey.

2 Context

2.1 Planning context

Local Plan Review (2013-2033)

2.1.1 The Local Plan Review, adopted 29 July 2020, will guide sustainable development in Mid Devon District over a 20 year period. The Review sets out a vision for the District that promotes community well-being, supports sustainable economic success, conserves and enhances the area and respects environmental limits.

2.1.2 The Local Plan Review reinforces Cullompton's role as a strategic location for growth, considering its accessibility, economic potential and environmental capacity. The review allocates further land for development. Development will be targeted to: provide sustainable urban extensions; provide enhancements to the town centre through additional investment; develop any remaining underused brownfield sites; and protect and enhance the key environmental assets including heritage, biodiversity and air quality.

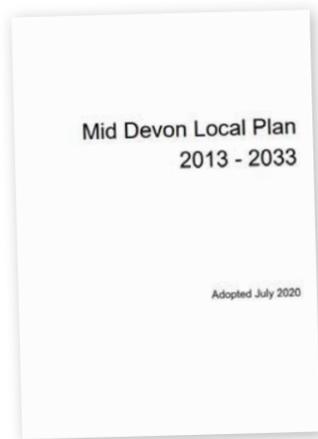


Figure 9 Adopted Local Plan

Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan submission

2.1.3 The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan is the community's vision and priorities for how they would like to see the Cullompton area develop and change in the coming years. At the time of writing this report, Mid Devon District Council has determined that the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan, as modified to incorporate the independent examiner's recommendations, should proceed to a Referendum during 2021. Although, it is not yet adopted as part of the development plan for the area, it now carries significant weight. It sets out a number of planning policies which seek to:

- Ensure all new developments contribute to the overall sustainability of Cullompton as a town and a community
- Improve mobility, accessibility and reduce the overall use and impact of the motor vehicle
- Provide new dwellings to meet a wide range of needs and demands
- Respect and appreciate the countryside
- Protect and enhance the historic built environment whilst broadening the appeal of the town and its cultural activity
- Make Cullompton more business friendly

"Cullompton is a market town with a distinct character and identity rooted in a rich history that will be conserved as the town grows into the future as a vibrant centre for its residents and the surrounding rural area."

Extract from the vision statement for Cullompton as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan

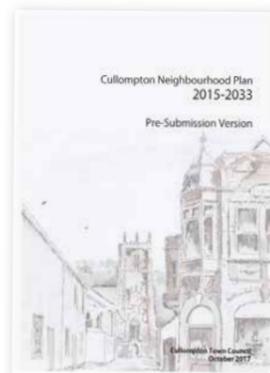


Figure 10 Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan

- Provide first class local community facilities and develop community-based services that meet the growing demands of the community

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

2.1.4 The Appraisal describes what makes the area special in terms of architecture, history, character, landscape, open spaces and trees, appearance and building material and ornamentation. The 2009 Appraisal has recently been updated and is well advanced with an expectation that it will be finalised in 2021. The management plan identifies three key issues for the conservation area: through traffic which detracts from the environment of the town centre; erosion of historic character and appearance throughout the conservation area; and decreasing vitality and viability of the town centre. The Plan sets out opportunities and principles to address these issues to enhance the conservation area.

Mid-Devon Climate Emergency Declaration

2.1.5 In recognition of the impact of climate change Mid Devon District Council joined other Devon wide local authorities in May 2019 to form the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. Further to this, Mid Devon District Council has set the ambitious target of being carbon neutral by 2030, against the Devon-wide and nation-wide target of 2050. The interim Devon Carbon Plan is now out to public consultation and the Mid Devon District Council Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan has been adopted.

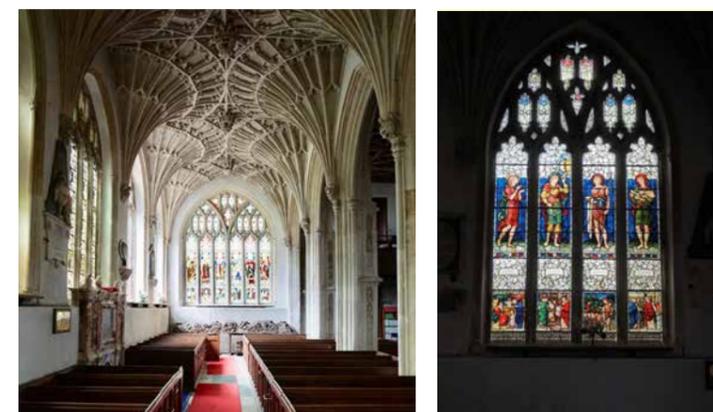
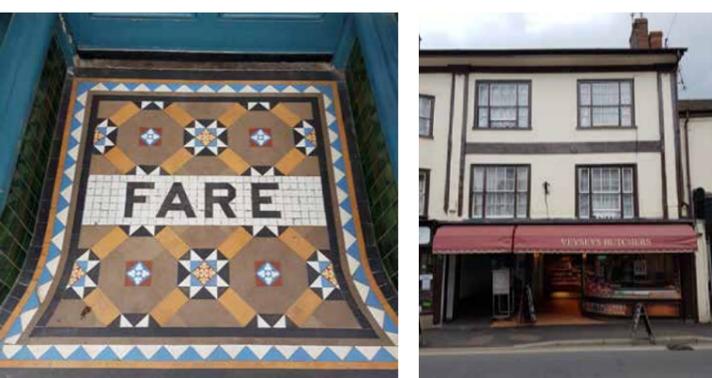


Figure 11 Photos of Cullompton



National Design Guidance (2019)

- 2.1.6 In October 2019 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government published a new National Design Guide, along with an update to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in relation to 'good design'. The new Design Guide provides some explanation to the definition of 'good design' for use by Local Planning Authorities. The document sets out characteristics of a well-defined place under ten themes: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.
- 2.1.7 In terms of Cullompton's future, given the two significant planned developments (Culm Garden Village and the North West Urban Extension) as well as any future development, the National Design Guidance will serve as a policy tool as authority planning officers prepare local planning policy and guidance and assess the quality of planning applications.
- 2.1.8 This National Design Guidance can be supplemented with design guidance on a local level. Mid Devon District Council accordingly adopted the Mid Devon Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document during October 2020.

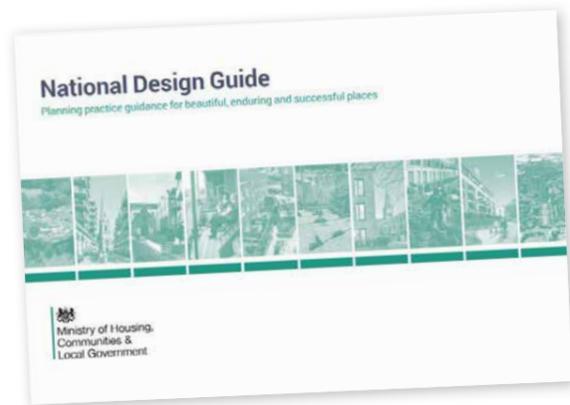


Figure 13 National Design Guide

Figure 12 Photos of Cullompton

Change in planning use classes (2020)

- 2.1.9 The Government on 21st July 2020 published The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 1st September 2020. The main change is the introduction of Use Class E, subsuming A1, A2, A3, B1, D1, D2 (retail, office and non-residential institutions and assembly and leisure uses), into one single class E. This means that a change of a building's use between the following use classes will no longer require planning permission: retail, professional services, food & drink, business (office, research and development and light industrial process), Non-residential institutions (medical or health services, crèches, day nurseries and centres), and assembly and leisure (indoor sport, recreation or fitness, gyms).
- 2.1.10 The changes are still relatively new and there is limited data on their impact, however it is anticipated that the extension of permitted development rights will have an impact in town centres and high streets.
- 2.1.11 There is also two further new classes:
 - F.1 for non-residential institutions (education, art gallery, museum, public library, public exhibition hall, places of worship, law courts)
 - F.2 for shops no larger than 280sqm (selling mostly essential goods and at least 1km from another similar shop); community hall, outdoor sport/recreation area, indoor or outdoor swimming pool, skating rink.
- 2.1.12 The premises within these planning use classes would therefore need planning permission for a change of use, securing their place in the town.

Planning White Paper (2020)

- 2.1.13 In August 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published the The Planning for the Future paper for consultation. The objective of the paper is to streamline and modernise the planning process, 'cutting red tape not standards' and ensuring more land is available for development where it is needed.
- 2.1.14 Among other proposals, the paper puts forward a system where local authorities would zone all land in their areas for "growth", "renewal" or "protection". Areas zoned for growth would accommodate "substantial development" and would benefit from outline permission (but developers would still need to secure reserved matters permission in accordance with a locally drawn up design codes). Areas zoned for renewal would be seen as suitable for some development.
- 2.1.15 There is an emphasis on building environmentally friendly, sustainable homes, taking a digital-first approach to modernising the planning process, reviving town and city centres and improving the system of developer contributions towards infrastructure.
- 2.1.16 The consultation is now closed and there remains uncertainty over if and when measures will be introduced.

2.2 Strategic context: Responding to Covid-19

2.2.1 Covid-19 has added a further layer of challenge and complexity to the planning and designing of town centres across the UK. The country's town centres were already on a trajectory of significant structural change prior to the pandemic. Many of these shifts have been accelerated by the pandemic, whilst others have been diverted to a different course. High Streets may look very different in the future - but it is not yet fully clear how these changes will manifest themselves.

2.2.2 Economies, places and mindsets will change but other essential traits will endure. For example, humans are social animals and will continue to come together. We are also incredibly adaptable. However, Central Government has underlined that any adaptation must align with climate objectives, identifying post pandemic responses as a once in a generation opportunity to shift living patterns and habits to help reduce our carbon emissions.

Placemaking implications

2.2.3 A number of trends and opportunities have been identified since the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. These each have implications for the Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and the future operation of the town centre.

Working patterns

2.2.4 Work patterns have been transformed and will not bounce back even with the roll out of a vaccine. Companies and workers have discovered that many types of work can be done remotely and there has been a corresponding shift to home and hub working.

- Many people will work from home in future and the design of homes should reflect this. Perhaps with a move away from open plan living, to flexible interiors that can support two separate home workers without disruption and with the retention of living space that can be separate from work space. Access to outside space for all residents and superfast and reliable broadband will also be key.

- Now people can work from anywhere, there may well be greater demand for flexible workhubs, either in co-working spaces or at local cafes and pubs for people to escape the home for work without having to commute. These could be flexible spaces, with separate or spacious, open desk space, superfast broadband, bike access and coffee provision. The Nook provides a great model for Cullompton.

- For Cullompton, this freedom of working locations is a real opportunity to attract new residents who no longer feel they must live in town or city centres in order to be close to workplaces.

A community focus

2.2.5 Lockdowns during 2020 helped to foster neighbourliness and community networks and resulted in the emergence and growth of circular and exchange economies across the country, which can be harnessed for the good of Cullompton and other small towns

- Local grocery and independent shops have been newly appreciated and seen an increase in custom, reversing a historic trend away from these shops towards supermarkets. Given that much of Cullompton town centre's catchment is within a 10 minute cycle, this is a real opportunity for a stronger town centre role.

- There has been an increase in home grown foods and allotment use and a new appreciation for the resilience or buffer this provides in food supply as well and the physical and mental well-being benefits.

- Local community groups have been more active than ever, with many making good use of technology such as through Whats App groups or Next Door websites. Cullompton's well-established community networks are well placed or benefit from this trend.

- There has been a more general growth in the appreciation of care work, socially constructive and front line jobs and community roles. Many of these important jobs are found in and around Cullompton.

Open spaces

2.2.6 Open space became a far greater priority for those in lockdown and during various transition phases in 2020. There are a number of key facets to this which are important for the masterplan.

- Green open spaces provide access to nature, the opportunity for exercise and a relatively safe setting for small social gatherings. In Cullompton, this translates as a crucial role for the CCA fields and the water meadows and fields which surround the town centre

- Streets and public spaces are critical for impromptu and informal catch-ups when people bump into friends and neighbours when out and about. For these to work effectively, pavements must be wide enough for people to pause and benches be provided. This has clear implications for Fore Street and the Bull Ring.

- Outdoor spaces connected to cafes and restaurants and to cultural venues help these businesses to survive during times of social distancing and support residents in living sociable but safe lives.

- Initiatives in Paris and elsewhere to create the '15 minute city' based on walking and cycling - this is also relevant to smaller centres

The life of the town centre

2.2.7 Shops, food and drink businesses and cultural and leisure venues have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic and need as much support as possible from town strategies and masterplans.

- Many local theatres need a new (or interim) model that can enable them to stage performances in a socially distanced manner. Good alternative outdoor performance spaces are key, as are good alternative interim uses for interior spaces so these can still have some use and bring an income

- There are many creative responses by food and beverage venues from the simple take over of street

space in Paris and London for tables and chairs, to the establishment of greenhouse eating pods where space allows. The removal of some traffic from Fore Street will help Cullompton embrace this approach.

- Shops are the heart of a town centre and provide more than a utilitarian service. Many provide identity and a sense of belonging for local residents. Independent shops, which are more nimble than large retailers, can help revive town centres and Cullompton is very well placed for this.

- Creative use of vacant units in town centres is critical and can help to both address blight on the high street and provide valuable community uses and pop-up shops for residents.

- 2020 has taught us that new buildings in town centres should be adaptable and loose fit design so that these can respond to future economic and cultural shifts without having to be demolished and replaced.

- Town centre coordination between businesses, management of key issues and curation of the town centre is more important than ever. Bringing Cullompton's businesses together, such as through the existing group Culm Valley in Business, the town council or an independent group would aid this. The town's active community groups can also be involved in taking forward masterplan ideas.

- Changes to business rates have been discussed in recent years to address the discrepancy between online and bricks and mortar retailers that penalises businesses with physical stores. The 2020 Grimsey Review made a strong case for these changes and it is currently under consideration by Central Government.

Addressing economic insecurity

2.2.8 2020 saw a sharp recession and a significant rise in unemployment, with some sectors such as the aviation industry, retail and the leisure industry being

disproportionately affected. This will result in economic insecurity for some residents and masterplans can play a key role in supporting low cost living for residents in the future. Key opportunities include:

- Keeping household bills down by ensuring low operational carbon requirements for new homes, through insulation, ventilation and renewable energy sources
- Encouraging walking and cycling as a form of transport that is free at the point of use
- Supporting centres of exchange such as tool libraries and maker spaces, perhaps making use of vacant units on the high street or Fore Street.

Movement implications

- 2.2.9 There are a number of movement trends and opportunities which have arisen as a result of the pandemic and its associated lockdowns during 2020. These can be summarised as:
- A lower level of commuting and therefore lower levels of private cars on the road for long trips as a result of the greater emphasis on working from home
 - An associated uptake in walking and cycling during lockdown – lots of people have been on a bike for the first time in a while, and technology (e.g. e-bikes and scooters) means that micro-mobility should be key to access strategies going forward. It is important to capitalise on and embed this trend in local Cullompton movement patterns.
 - User confidence in public transport has plummeted due to safety concerns and it will be a challenge to restore former use levels in the coming few years. It will be critical to support local public transport by making it accessible, reliable and attractive. Short-medium term, we can directly influence the quality and setting of public transport stops.

- There may be an uptake of private car commuting in the short-medium term which would be difficult to accommodate in the medium-long term. It is important that this trend is not allowed to continue. Increased working from home, cycling and walking can hopefully have a mitigating effect on this. There will, however, be potential impacts on town centre parking of course.
- Funding available during 2020 for temporary improvements to increase space for social distancing while walking and cycling provides a good starting point for assessing these schemes and establishing the more successful elements on a permanent basis.

Property implications

Office space (B1)

- 2.2.10 In the short term, offices will have to accommodate fewer people, i.e. lower density occupation, which may hit achievable rents. Looking forward, this may increase the amount of floor space required by tenants for 'safe' occupation but conversely, the lockdown has forced flexible working practices on many businesses which we expect to become more acceptable going forward, reducing required floor space. How this manifests itself in the market and if it has a lasting effect is too early to tell.
- Tenants may seek increased rent free periods, shorter leases and more frequent breaks to allow for the need to vacate in the future should economic weakness persist which will hit investment values, and investors may apply higher investment yields to office investments to allow for risk, which will also negatively impact investment values.

High street retail, banks/building societies, estate agencies, restaurants and cafes, pubs/bars and takeaways (A1 – A5)

- 2.2.11 Retail units will have to accommodate social distancing requirements thus raising cost and reducing efficiency, and may suffer from falling revenue as high street

retailers and service providers that can move from physical to online do so.

- 2.2.12 There is an emerging trend of retailers seeking turnover rents (i.e. rent linked to achieved turnover rather than a fixed rent with periodic increases); while popular with tenants as a slower month/quarter means they will pay less rent, the uncertainty is an issue for investors who will place a higher yield on the investment, therefore reducing property investment value. Despite this, a pragmatic view of turnover rents suggests that they may contribute to a more sustainable business and stable occupation, and in turn this stability could translate into stronger trading and therefore higher rent in better times. We anticipate that most landlords will be reluctant to switch to turnover rents in the short term and will resist surrendering existing leases to re-sign on a turnover basis.

Residential (C3)

- 2.2.13 It's not yet clear what impact Covid-19 will have on residential sales values as the market is only just beginning to emerge from the lockdown and demand is strong, as many transactions that were pending at the time the lockdown started are being pushed through at previously agreed prices. Initial feedback from estate agents suggests that now viewings are available, there is a pent-up demand formed of those whose search was put on hold during lockdown and those who want/need to move in the interim weeks, compounded by the low level of stock in the market. In many areas we anticipate a short spike in values back to or in excess of pre-Covid values, however this will soon fall back once this backlog is cleared – although the extent to this fall is unknown.
- 2.2.14 What we do not yet know is what impact a sustained and serious economic slowdown/recession will do to employment and earnings. A significant downturn will have an impact on what buyers are able to pay, and what mortgage lenders are prepared to lend, both of which may have an impact on the sale prices for homes, and the rate (i.e. the speed) of sale achievable by housebuilders – and hence land values.

Grimsey Review 2020 and High Street Task Force

- 2.2.15 In June 2020 an updated Grimsey Review was released, largely in response to the impact of Covid-19 on Britain's town centres. The report sets out three headline priorities of:
- A shift to Localism, with local people encouraged to redesign their own high streets and have a say on the businesses, services and amenities there
 - Fewer cars, more green space, with centres that are designed for people rather than the car
 - Local leadership by people with a broad range of skills which is valued and recognised
- 2.2.16 A number of recommendations are then made to help achieve these three overarching goals which cover:
- Establishing participatory planning with high street Citizen's Assemblies, Community Value Charters and community right to buy and the establishment of community trusts through the National Lottery Community Fund.
 - Amending business rates, replacing the current system with a 2% sales tax that will level the playing field between online and offline retailers
 - Re-skilling for new employment sectors for those predominantly young and female workers likely to lose retail and leisure jobs in the future
 - Encouraging people to give up cars, introduce a pedestrianisation task force and pilot mobility hubs for sustainable transport modes
- 2.2.17 In addition to the updated Grimsey Review, The High Street Task Force recently developed a framework for place regeneration in response to Covid-19 impacts, focused on repositioning, reinventing, rebranding and restructuring UK High Streets.

Cullompton's context

Cullompton is located 12 miles north of Exeter in the heart of Mid Devon, situated adjacent to the M5 which is the main transport corridor through Devon. Cullompton is the second largest town in the district with a population of over 8,800. The town is close to rail services from nearby Tiverton Parkway and is set within a stunning valley landscape, with views towards the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBs.



Figure 14 Strategic context diagram

2.3 Related projects

2.3.1 A number of significant changes are proposed for Cullompton through which a very different future can be imagined. Sites in the town, identified in the Adopted Local Plan (2013-2033) which are due to be built include:

- North West Cullompton
- East Cullompton (Culm Garden Village)
- Ware Park and Footlands, and
- Land at Colebrook. C

Together, they could more than double the town's population, which would create more demand for shops and services, bringing historic buildings back into use. This coupled with investment from the Heritage Action Zone funding and reduced traffic on the High Street (as a result of the Relief Road implementation), could result in a renewal of the centre, re-establishing a vibrant historic heart for the town. Movement patterns would change; there is a risk that new development would result in more traffic for the town. A new station would help bring people out of their cars for trips to Exeter, Bristol and Taunton, while strong cycling and walking routes (in particular over the M5/river/rail) will be needed to support active travel for trips within the town. Strong coordination will be needed to ensure these projects are mutually beneficial and that investment achieves the greatest impact. The following pages highlight the critical interdependencies and considerations as these initiatives move forward.

Relief Road

2.3.2 Traffic in the town centre is having an adverse effect on air quality, living conditions, the heritage assets and their setting, and the attractiveness overall. A key objective of the Local Plan has been to implement a relief road which diverts traffic away from the town centre and improves capacity. Following an option analysis and consultation, a preferred route option was approved by Devon County Council in March 2019. The route runs through the CCA fields alongside the rail line, joining Duke Street to the south and Station Road to the north. A

planning application was submitted to the Council in June 2020. Planning permission has now been given for the construction of the Relief Road with a planned completion date of 2023 / 2024.

Improvements to M5 Junction 28

2.3.3 Devon County Council is pursuing funding for works intended to address capacity, environmental and safety concerns, whilst also providing a substantial improvement for pedestrian and cycle movements across the motorway.

Cullompton Rail Station

2.3.4 The Adopted Local Plan (2013-2033) identifies and allocates a site for the reopening of the railway station, on the Bristol to Exeter line. The Station would benefit the town by providing a sustainable transport option and decreasing travel times to Exeter (the main destination for commuters from Cullompton), as well as Taunton and Bristol. In May 2020, Mid-Devon secured funding to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC).

Heritage Action Zone

2.3.5 Following a successful bid, Cullompton has been selected for the High Streets Heritage Action Zones scheme and will now work with Historic England to develop plans to revive the high street over a four-year programme. The fund will deliver physical improvements and cultural activities to regenerate the high street and restore local historic character. Through the programme, councils, businesses and community groups will be able to access expert advice and investment to bring historic buildings back to life.

Culm Garden Village

2.3.6 In January 2017, the Government identified an area to the east of Cullompton on the other side of the M5 as a 'Garden Village', with the potential to deliver up to 5,000 new homes alongside jobs, schools and community facilities. The Garden Village

includes an area which is allocated for mixed use development in the Local Plan. A masterplan is being developed for the Garden Village which considers the strategic location of homes, neighbourhood centres, employment areas, community facilities, green infrastructure and connections. The stage 1 draft of the masterplan was consulted on in January/February 2019.

North-West Urban Extension

2.3.7 The Local Plan allocates this site and a masterplan for the area was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in 2016. Since then planning applications for the first phase are in the process of being approved, including 600 homes, a link road which serves the development from off Willand Road, a primary school, green infrastructure, sports pitches, allotments and a community orchard. Phase 2 / 3 will include 750 homes, a local centre, community building, more green infrastructure, a MUGA, employment land and Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

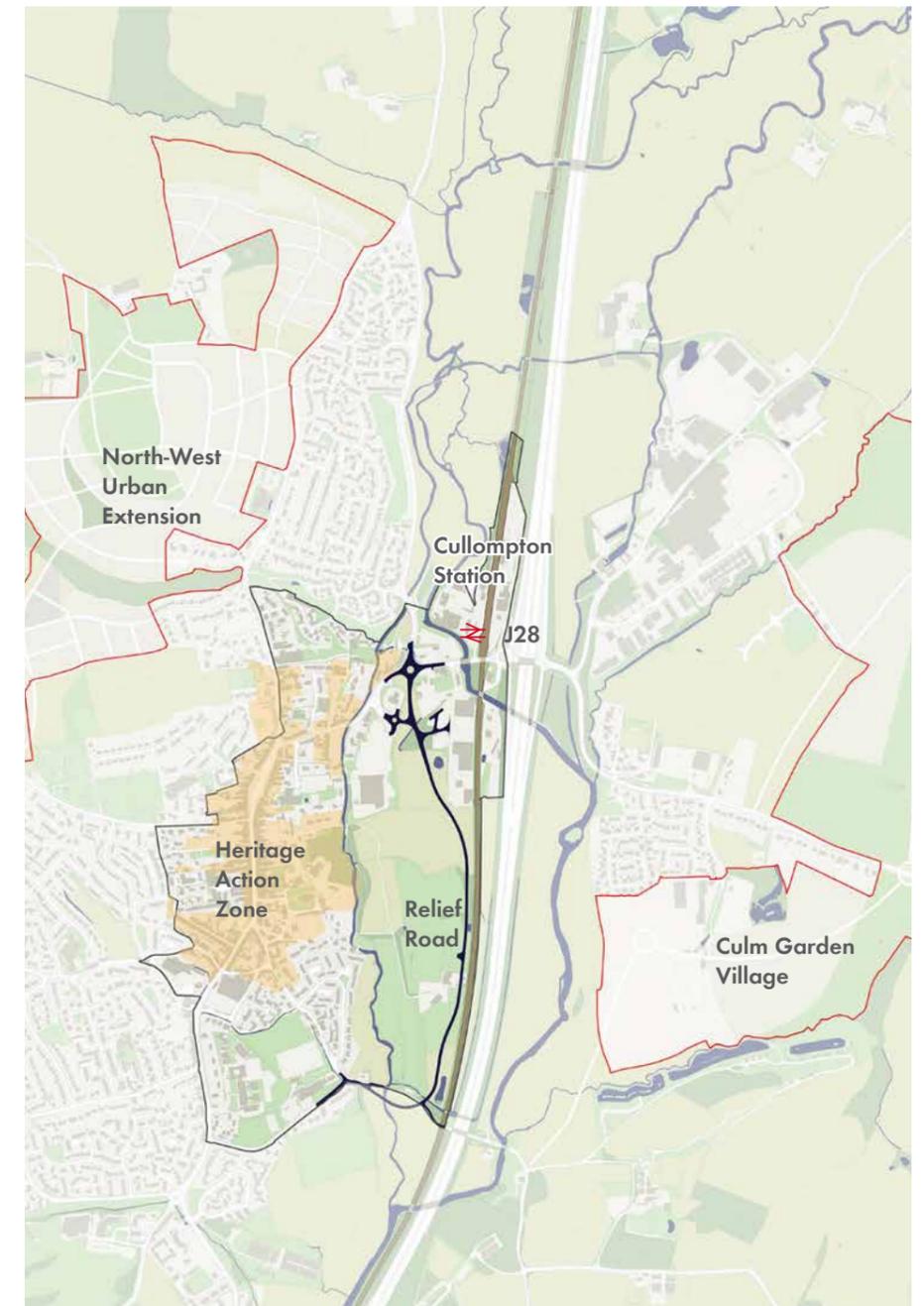


Figure 15 A plan of proposed projects

— masterplan study area

Interdependencies and key considerations

RELIEF ROAD		CULM GARDEN VILLAGE		NEW RAIL STATION		HERITAGE ACTION ZONE		CCA FIELDS		NORTH-WEST URBAN EXTENSION		J28	
CULM GARDEN VILLAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CGV initial stages are scheduled to come forward following the completion of the Relief Road. 												
NEW RAIL STATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to integrate public transport, access, parking and pedestrian / cycle connections Opportunity to improve the sense of arrival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The railway station will make a positive contribution to the emerging movement strategy for the CGV with benefits for the wider town. Good pedestrian / cycle connections are needed. 											
HERITAGE ACTION ZONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Relief Road takes cars off the High Street, reducing levels of pollution in the historic core of the town. The new streetscape of the high street should provide a sensitive context for historic assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The growth in population will benefit economic activity and private investment into the historic town centre. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The station could help to limit car use locally, reducing levels of pollution and related impact on the town centre and its heritage. Good signage and wayfinding and an improved arrival experience are needed between station and historic core of the town. 								
CCA FIELDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancement of the resulting re-configured green space for resident and visitor enjoyment. Enhancement through existing and new tree planting and management. Opportunities to improve pedestrian / cycle connections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good pedestrian and cycle links between the town centre and the CGV through the CCA fields will provide an attractive alternative to the use of the motor vehicle. This will need to include a link over the M5 / river / rail. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good cycle lanes and safe walking links through the CCA fields could support active travel to and from the train station if well designed. Cycle measures would need to consider integrating with other routes in the town and ensure safe crossing of Station Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancement of the laneways between Fore Street and CCA field will help to raise the profile and accessibility of the open space 							
NORTH-WEST URBAN EXTENSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The north west urban extension will contribute to traffic volumes in the town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Together, they will result in a large population increase for the town. The growing population has the potential to support shops and services in the town centre helping to bring historic buildings back into use. Strong connections via sustainable transport modes to the town centre are important. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an opportunity to enhance the walking / cycling route from the new development to the station, along the footpath between Willand Road and Millennium Way. Millennium Way currently has no footpath. If Alexandria Industrial Estate were to be developed, a continuation of this route could be considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The growing population has the potential to support shops and services helping to bring historic buildings back into use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The increased population will generate a greater use of the CCA fields and sports facilities. Pedestrian / cycle routes should be enhanced. 						
J28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of a relief Road will be the first stage of highway improvements in the area with Stage 2 including measures to address capacity constraints at J28. Opportunities to enhance connectivity for non-motorised modes of transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway measures to address the capacity constraints are required at J28 to facilitate the development of the garden village. Any highway improvement works will need to ensure the safe movement of pedestrian and cyclists across the motorway. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the long term, a new rail station should help to shift modes, decreasing traffic and alleviating pressure on J28. Highway measures to address capacity issues will need to consider how they would relate to each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic management measures in the town centre would need to keep pace with wider strategic highway interventions in the area. Good signage / wayfinding and an improved arrival experience are needed between Station Road and the historic centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to enhance pedestrian / cycle signage and wayfinding 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant developments will add to traffic volumes increasing the need for strategic highway improvements in the area. 			

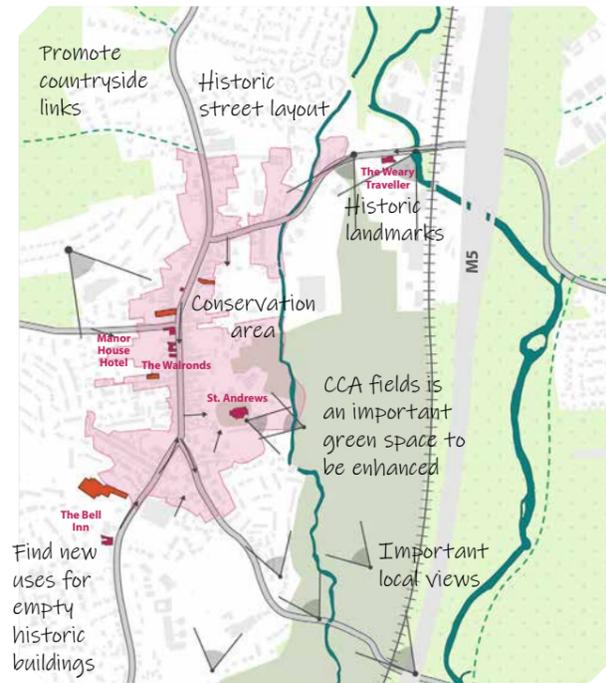
Key messages

- Cullompton's population is planned to grow significantly. This creates an opportunity to bring historic buildings back into use and to revitalise the town centre. Planning and investment should aim for new residents use the high street for their shops and services, travelling there on foot or by bicycle.
- Many of the planned projects (the Relief Road, new station, Culm Garden Village and J28 improvements) would place new demands on Station Road which is currently heavily trafficked. Station Road will need to be carefully designed to provide the required capacity, while also improving the arrival experience and making space for pedestrians and cyclists.
- There are a number of barriers between the proposed Culm Garden Village and the town centre: the M5, the River Culm, the CCA fields and the rail line. A number of the proposed projects have the potential to contribute further to this separation (the Relief Road and J28 improvements). A pedestrian and cycle crossing over these barriers is critical to the success of Culm Garden Village. A crossing should be prioritised and designed in now.

3 Vision and objectives

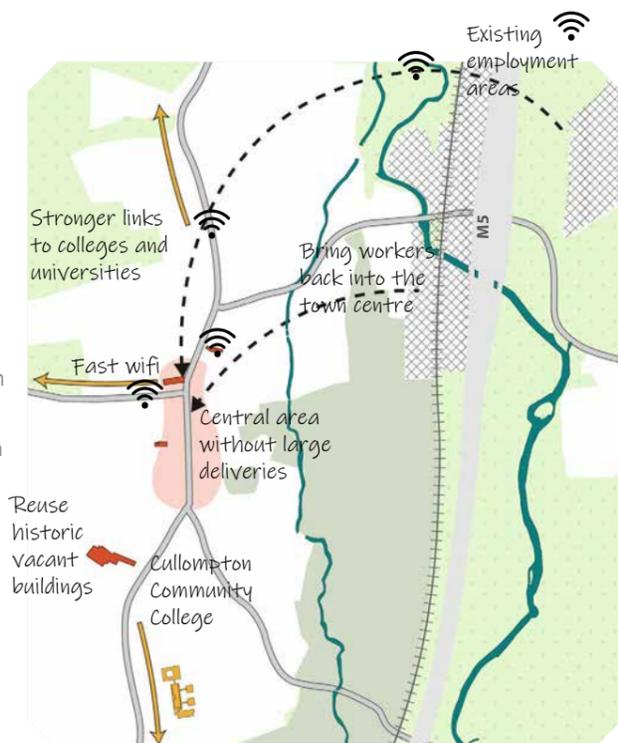
1 CULLOMPTON'S DISTINCTIVE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPE SHOULD BE ENHANCED AND RESTORED.

1. Find viable uses for empty historic buildings, including more and improved residential accommodation in the town centre.
2. Seek to improve the appearance and setting of the historic buildings through the planning process and through on-going repair and maintenance by private individuals.
3. Protect, enhance and create key views, green spaces and waterways, with consideration of their biodiversity and amenity roles. Seek to provide more green spaces.
4. Enhance the attractiveness, use and public enjoyment of the CCA fields following the delivery of the relief road.
5. Increasing Cullompton's attractiveness as a place to work, visit and enjoy.



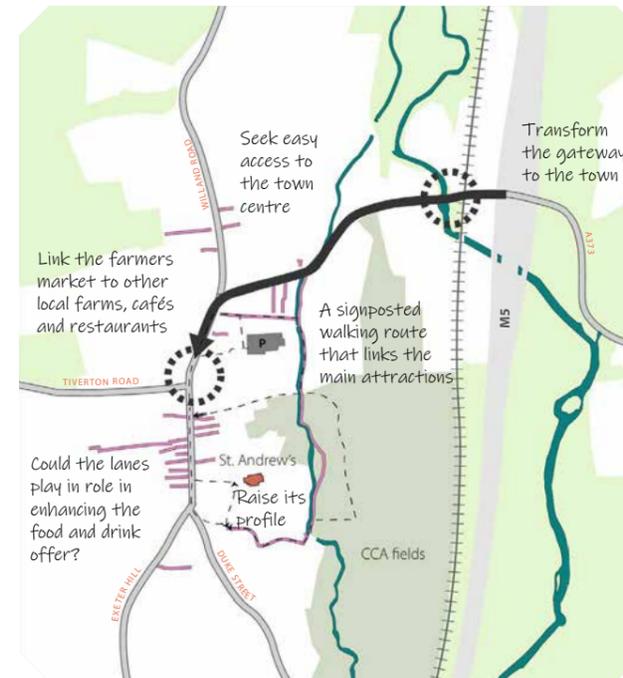
2 CULLOMPTON'S CENTRE SHOULD REDISCOVER ITS HISTORIC ROLE AS A PLACE OF WORK.

6. Seek out the potential of vacant and under used sites and buildings in the town centre to complement the existing employment offer and enhance town centre vitality. This could provide different types of work space that meet today's needs.
7. Celebrate the town's history and how it can contribute to Cullompton's identity and future offer. Potential opportunities exist to create a unique offer.
8. a) Enhance infrastructure to meet the needs of business including WiFi connectivity and speed with consideration of deliveries and servicing.
b) Secure the productive use of historic buildings through occupation that meets modern day requirements
9. Improve the town centre's attractiveness and offer to those working in Cullompton's peripheral employment areas including its accessibility via improvements to physical links.
10. Forge connections between businesses and nearby higher educational institutions.



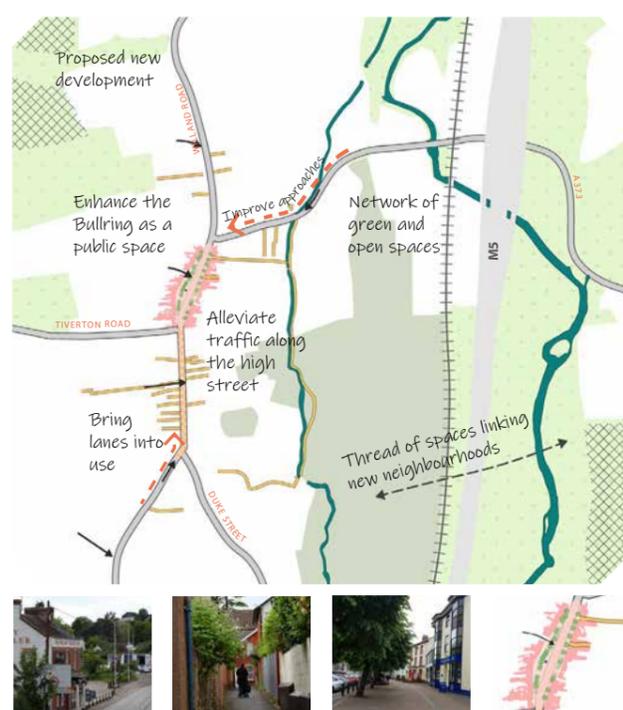
3 AN ENTICING EXPERIENCE FOR VISITORS WILL AIM TO DRAW PEOPLE INTO CULLOMPTON'S TOWN CENTRE.

11. a) Transform the 'gateway' into the town to create a positive first impression.
b) Encourage holiday-makers en-route to the south west to venture beyond the M5 service station.
12. Raise the profile and make use of Cullompton's main attractions, historic buildings, courts, lanes and open spaces.
13. Strengthen Cullompton as a food and drink destination promoting its cafe's, restaurants and Farmer's Market and forging links with producers in the local area.
14. Enhance the retail, leisure, food and drink offer within an improved historic environment to encourage visits and dwell time.
15. A holistic view of the town centres' parking provision and on-going requirements.



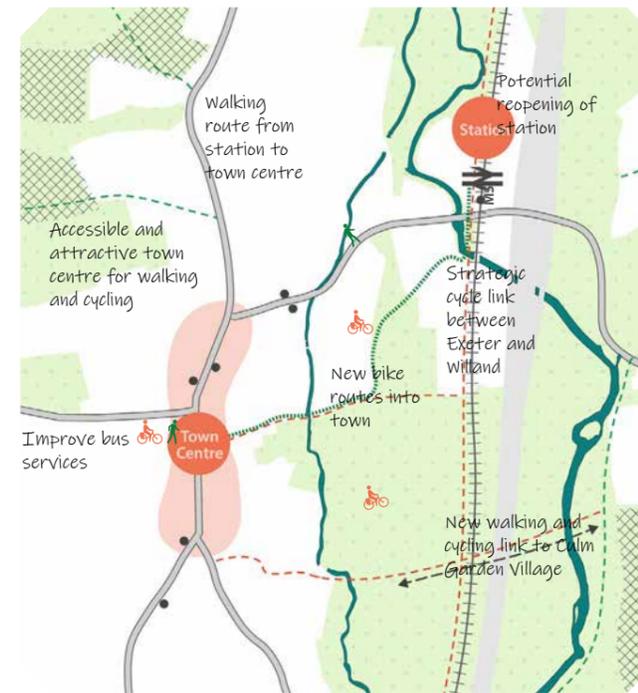
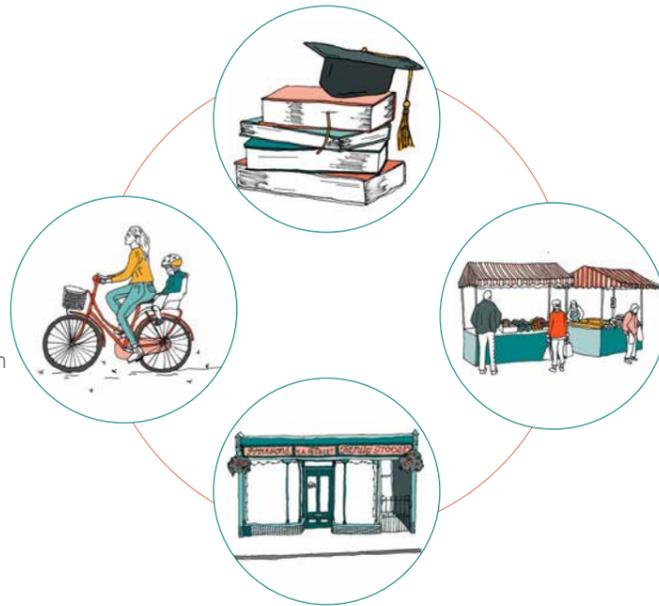
4 CULLOMPTON'S SPACES SHOULD BE RECLAIMED AND REDESIGNED TO SUPPORT A VIBRANT COMMUNITY LIFE.

16. Alleviate traffic along the high street and redesign the space creating a better pedestrian and cycle environment.
17. Establish the Bull Ring as the town's primary outdoor civic space framed by historic buildings enabling flexible use by the community.
18. Upgrade the approaches to the town centre including the leat path on Station Road and on Exeter Road in the area of the Hayridge.
19. Assess opportunities to bring the historic courts and passageways off Fore Street into use with signage, surfacing and lighting improvements.
20. Link new developments through a network of attractive spaces enhancing connectivity to the town centre and reinforcing its purpose.



5 CULLOMPTON SHOULD BE A SUSTAINABLE TOWN FOR ITS GROWING COMMUNITY: WITH HOMES, EDUCATION, COMMUNITY AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

21. Make it easy for all new residents to shop locally and identify with Cullompton as their home town.
22. Support Cullompton's schools outside the planning system to encourage opportunities for life-long learning.
23. Ensure recreational outdoor space and leisure facilities support healthy living and social interaction for all.
24. Support and expand Cullompton's popular street markets to cater for a growing community.
25. Provide new homes in the town centre to increase vitality, footfall and spend.
26. Explore the potential for the community and voluntary sector to forge partnerships to support community services.



6 IT WILL BE EASY TO MOVE AROUND ON FOOT, ON BICYCLE, BY BUS AND BY TRAIN.

27. Create high quality pedestrian and cycle links to the proposed train station, Culm Garden Village and other planned development.
28. Give more space and priority to people getting around on foot, on bicycle and by bus in Cullompton, including between the town centre and the proposed train station.
29. Encourage uses which are reliant on large delivery vehicles to relocate from the historic core where possible. Consider how servicing and delivery needs can be accommodated within an enhanced town centre pedestrian environment.
30. Improve links between Fore Street and the CCA fields.
31. Address points of conflict between road traffic, cyclists and pedestrians where possible.
32. Establish strategic cycle links between Cullompton and Willand with improved cycle access to Exeter.
33. Improve signage to encourage exploration around the town by foot and cycle.

4 Masterplan

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 This chapter sets out the spatial strategies that underpin the vision for Cullompton and provides planning and design guidance to achieve this vision.

A diagram showing the main areas of activity are set out to the left showing the key relationships and areas of focus within the town centre and its immediate environs.

Further detail on each of the spatial strategies is provided on the following pages. This covers:

- transport and movement
- open space public realm;
- activity and land use;
- and environment and sustainability.

4.1.2 A closer look is then taken into key sites, including:

- The Station/Gateway area
- The Tannery site

KEY

- Improved pedestrian /cycle routes
- Improved crossing
- Pocket spaces
- Primary route
- Secondary route
- Local route
- Potential new route - primary
- Potential new route - secondary
- Potential new route - local
- Industrial / employment core
- Proposed local centre
- Proposed commercial centres
- Highstreet town centre building
- Employment building
- Primary travel nodes
- Bullring flexible public space
- CCA Fields
- Potential industrial relocation

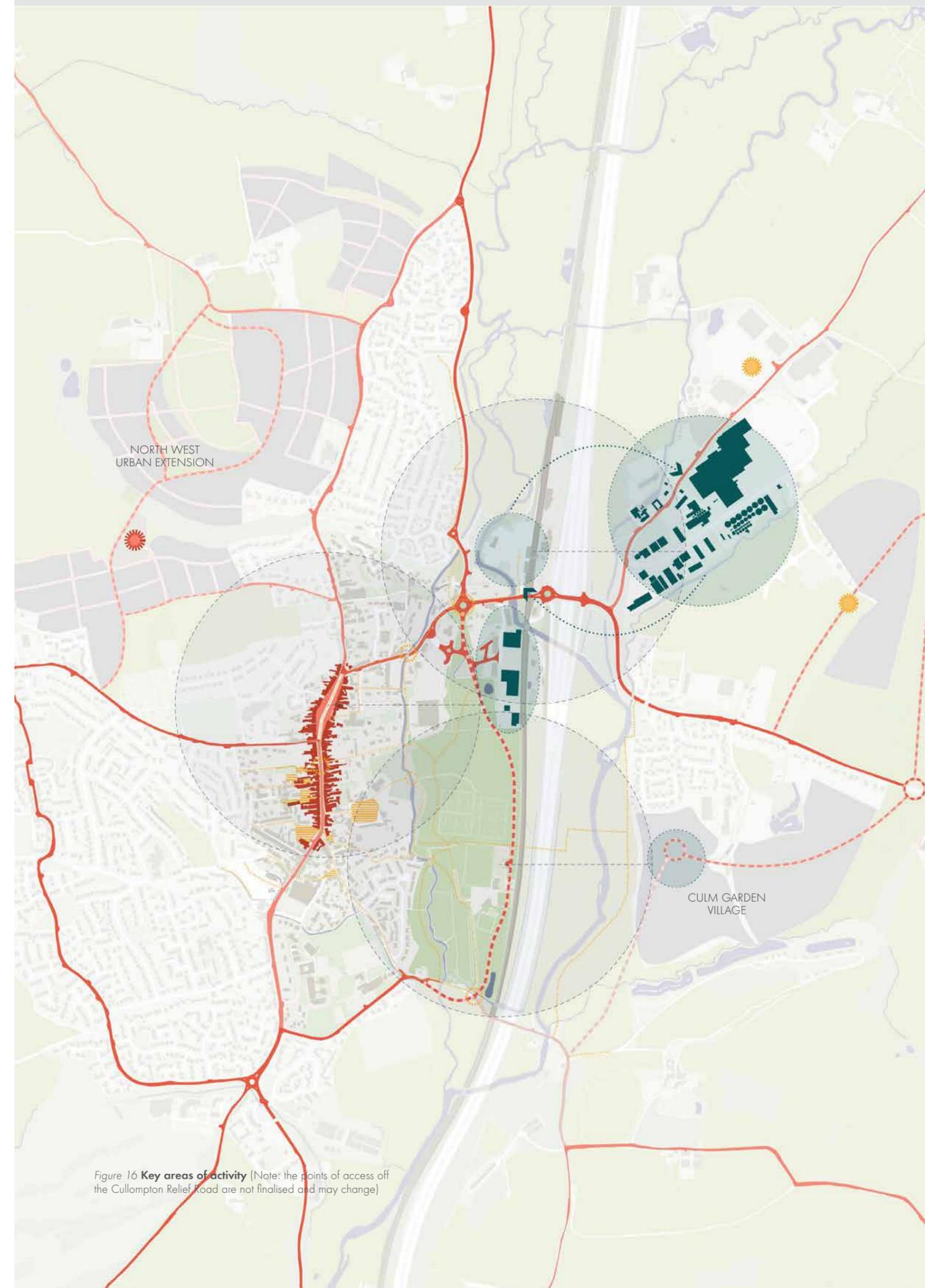


Figure 16 Key areas of activity (Note: the points of access off the Cullompton Relief Road are not finalised and may change)

4.2 Routes and movement

4.2.1 In line with national and local guidance, the masterplan looks to support a shift in travel modes, decreasing use of private vehicles and increasing walking, cycling and public transport. This shift would benefit Cullompton residents through decreasing town centre traffic, improving air quality, making travel more affordable, helping respond to the climate emergency as well as boosting the health and wellbeing of residents.

4.2.2 The masterplan's approach to movement is also shaped by a number of proposed projects: the Relief Road, the new station and J28 improvements.

4.2.3 This chapter sets out the routes and movement strategy in terms of:

- Pedestrian network
- Cycling network
- Public transport
- Vehicular network
- Parking strategy

KEY

- Primary route
- - - Proposed primary route
- Secondary route
- - - Potential secondary routes
- Tertiary route
- - - Potential tertiary route (NW extension)
- Local route
- - - Potential local routes
- Bus stop
- ⋯ Bus route
- Existing pedestrian route
- - - Proposed pedestrian route (subject to landowner agreement)
- Improved pedestrian crossing
- ★ Potential movement of services
- Proposed development
- Primary travel node
- P Existing public car park
- P Proposed parking (associated with relief road and station proposals)

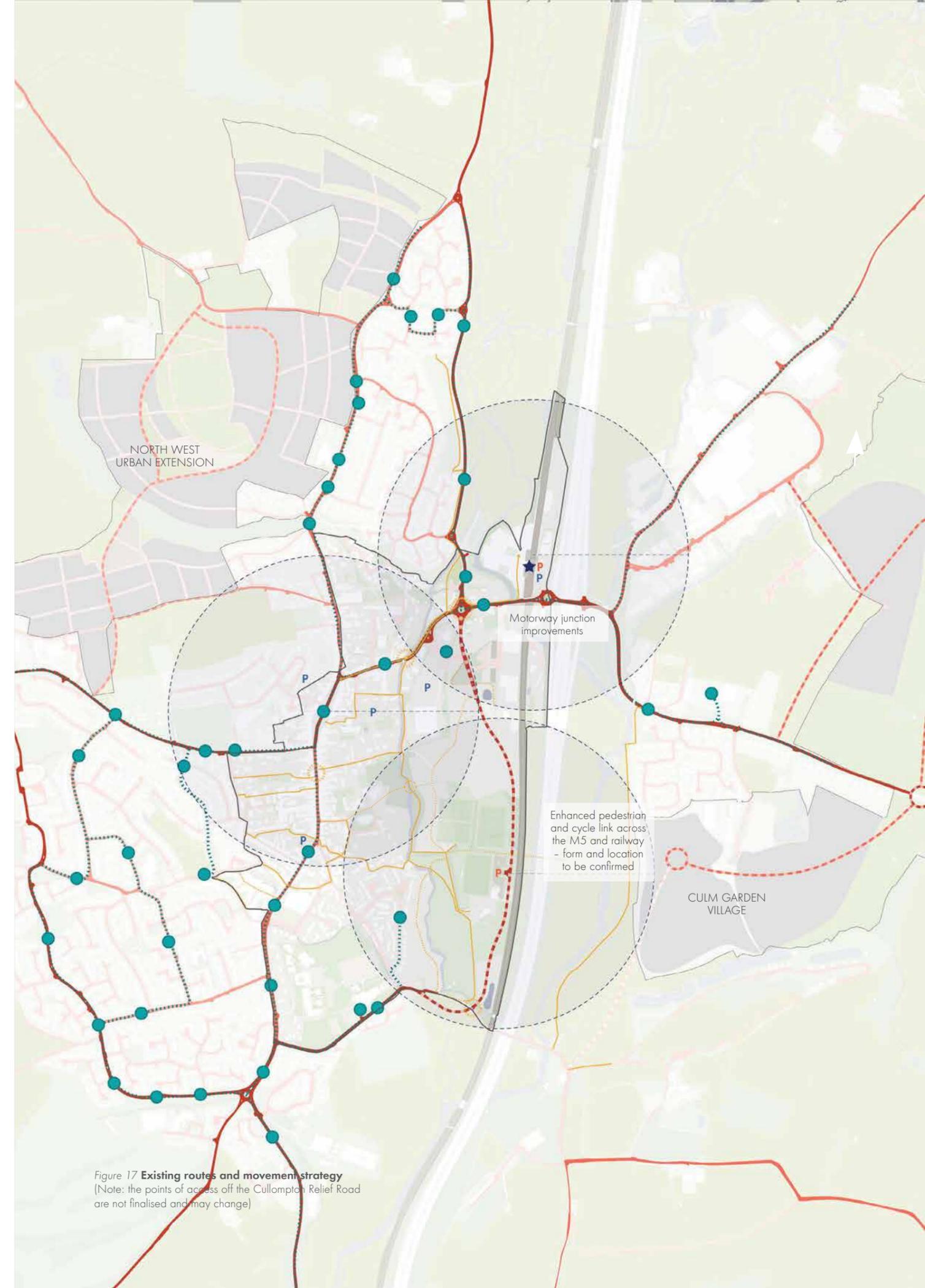


Figure 17 Existing routes and movement strategy
 (Note: the points of access off the Cullompton Relief Road are not finalised and may change)



Figure 18 **Proposed pedestrian network**
Includes existing routes and proposed routes (subject to landowner agreement) and reinstatement of former leat crossing)



Figure 19 **Pedestrian priority at side roads**



Figure 20 **Footway widths in the town centre** (pink under 2m / amber 2-3m / blue over 3m)

Pedestrian Network

4.2.4 The town centre provides an existing network of footways, lanes, shared and off-carriageway routes for pedestrians. However, the historic nature of much of the network and the domination of roads and parking spaces means that the network is compromised and incomplete. The town centre predates the motor car with use by horse and cart and pedestrians. The arrival of the motor car has resulted in competition for space, reduced air quality and amenity. Whilst some historic routes are commonly lightly trafficked and may operate as informal shared spaces, there are opportunities to improve pedestrian provision in the town centre for all users.

4.2.5 A significant proportion of footways around the town are <2m wide and our calculations show that, between Station Road and Cockpit Hill, 55% of the area of the main street is given-over to roads and parking spaces - a balance which needs to be tipped in favour of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport uses of town centre shops and facilities. The Covid - 19 crisis has prompted a re-focus on the quality of pedestrian space and connectivity.

The Bullring, High Street and Fore Street

4.2.6 The relief road proposals and associated reduction in traffic through the Bullring and Fore Street present a particular opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment. There is an opportunity to narrow the carriageway and widen footways for the length of the high street. Opportunities should be investigated to rationalise parking to increase pedestrian areas whilst still supporting business footfall and allowing deliveries to take place in defined lay-bys. Space could also be used flexibly for different purposes at

different times. The Bullring and Fore Street should be designed comprehensively to better control parking, enhance pedestrian areas and provide a more consistent use of surface materials. It also presents an opportunity to declutter the space from the proliferation of bollards, signage, lighting, seating, planters.

4.2.7 There is an opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment at side roads, prioritising pedestrians over turning traffic. There is also potential to narrow and tighten the junction of Bullring / St Andrews Road which is presently 19m wide as it meets the main road - this would reduce the speed of approaching vehicles, particularly from the High Street. The Fore Street / Cockpit Hill junction could be similarly amended, providing additional footway whilst enabling all vehicle turning movements at an appropriate speed. Side road should prioritise pedestrian movements across junctions.

4.2.8 There is the potential within the town centre to address the domination by motor vehicles. This could include providing opportunities to reclaim space for public use such as at the Bullring. The Bullring has carriageway widths of almost 11m in places, with significant parts of the area given over to perpendicular and echelon parking which generates reversing vehicle movements. Manual for Streets indicates that a carriageway width of 5.5m would generally enable two Heavy Goods Vehicles to pass, with 6.0m being suitable for two-way bus movements. This means a significant amount of space in the Bullring could be given over to pedestrians and cyclists, while maintaining two-way

vehicular access. As part of any works, attention should be given to the consistency of materials and street furniture; the location of parking / delivery spaces; and the management of signage and other potential 'clutter'.

4.2.9 There are four principal crossing points on Fore Street, High Street and the Bullring - two zebra crossings, a central pedestrian island and a signalised crossing at the Station Road junction. The four existing formal crossing points serve a section of road 420m in length, with an average distance between crossings of 105m. If the high street were to be improved there is an opportunity to integrate crossings at desire lines, for example between Middle Mill Lane and the lane which connects to the Methodist Church. Narrowing the carriageway would also help to improve the ability for people to cross the road. Careful use of materials and traffic calming measures should be used to reduce vehicle speeds and prioritise pedestrians.

Pedestrian network

4.2.10 The town centre is relatively well connected on a north-south axis and there are many smaller roads and lanes providing for east-west movements. However, these east-west movements through the town centre are more fragmented, often using narrower footways, lanes with variable surfacing, and requiring people to cross main roads.

4.2.11 The masterplan recognises the need to improve existing east-west movements through better way-finding, improved surfacing and footpath widening where possible. The conversion of narrower lanes to formal shared surfaces could also be considered i.e Ways Lane, Crow Green, New Street, Cockpit Hill and Queen Square. Enhancement works will need to meet latest Government guidance.

4.2.12 Pedestrian connectivity is also critical on key routes into the town centre including along Tiverton Road and on Station Road. On Tiverton Road, DCC is implementing schemes to provide 'missing links' between footways. At Station Road the new relief road roundabout is to include pedestrian crossing facilities to complement the existing Zebra crossing and provide connections to the potential new rail station to the north, reconnecting the town with the national rail network and enabling sustainable long distance trips from within and around Cullompton.

4.2.13 Away from the road network, the CCA fields accommodate public footpath links and provide a pleasant and convenient route along the eastern side of the town. Consideration to be given to upgrading current footpaths to accommodate those with mobility issues. This potentially could include greater use of stone or hoggin surfacing on less heavily used paths, whilst the flood impact of non-permeable materials such as tarmac or other hard wearing-course will need to be considered on other paths.

4.2.14 There is also an opportunity to reinstate the former ironbridge crossing over the leat close to St Andrew's Church. Subject to landowner agreement it could provide new and improved connections to the town centre.

4.2.15 Proposals for the Culm Garden Village will need east west pedestrian and cycle links across the M5 motorway to the town centre. These routes should be of a high standard of construction enabling their use throughout the year.

4.2.16 Footway improvements to the Culm Garden Village will include Meadow Lane and linkages at Duke Street / Old Hill.

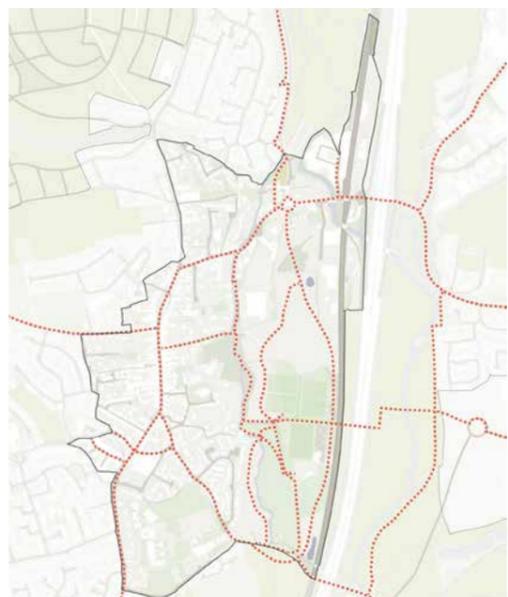


Figure 21 Proposed cycle network (includes existing and proposed routes)



Figure 23 Mini Holland scheme in Waltham Forest showing cycle lanes and zebra crossings



Figure 22 The CCA Fields could be brought up to standard for cycling and Cullompton could help close the gap becoming part of the National cycling Network.



Figure 24 Examples of cycle and footbridges. Clockwise from top left: Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Hassett Park Gollings, Luchtsingel Rotterdam and a green bridge at Mile End

Cycle Network and Cycle Parking

- 4.2.17 Given the size of the town, cycling should be an alternative to cars for short journeys. However, the current volume of motorised traffic in the town centre is a deterrent to many would-be cyclists.
- 4.2.18 There is no dedicated cycle provision in the town centre and this should be addressed in the design of the Bullring and Fore Street as part of future plans for the high street once the Relief Road is constructed. Given the width of the high street cycle lanes could be considered.
- 4.2.19 Cycle measures should also be implemented on Station Road, Willand Road and Tiverton Road where space permits. Cycle provision in the town centre will be viewed comprehensively within an enhanced pedestrian environment whilst ensuring vehicular traffic is adequately provided for. This will allow a connected in-town network which can then link to outlying villages.
- 4.2.20 Likewise, comprehensive cycle parking should be provided in convenient and safe locations around the town centre. The level of provision should take account of the growing population and emerging evidence of likely behavioural change during and post-Covid, including increased levels of cycling as a means of socially-distanced travel. Cycle parking should be located alongside existing public transport bus stops and travel nodes.
- 4.2.21 The relief road proposes a 2m footway along the western side. Pedestrians and cyclists will be encouraged to use the CCA fields. It is recommended

that existing and new paths through the CCA fields are upgraded / provided in accordance with recommendations of Local Transport Note 1/20 regarding cycle infrastructure design (Department for Transport, July 2020).

- 4.2.22 STRAVA data shows the wide network of direct routes (e.g B3181) and parallel country lanes, enable the 14 mile trip to Exeter to be undertaken by the more experienced cyclist. However, improvements to the National Cycle Network between Exeter and Cullompton could attract other less confident cyclists to cycle to Exeter.



Pedestrian/cycle crossing over the motorway

- 4.2.23 Culm Garden Village proposes up to 5,000 new homes on the opposite side of the M5 from Cullompton's town centre. While there will be small local centres and convenience shops, the aspiration is that these new residents and workers will also visit the historic town centre for services and shops. The two existing crossings are J28/Station Road, which currently has a very poor environment for pedestrians and cyclists, and Duke Street.
- 4.2.24 There are a number of barriers (existing and proposed) between the town centre and the proposed Culm Garden Village. From west to east there is: the proposed Relief Road, the railway line, the M5 and the River Culm. Work is required to understand what type of pedestrian and cycle-bridge would be feasible and if the bridge should span all of these barriers. For example, the bridge could land before or after the Relief Road to the west and the River Culm to the east where smaller crossings could be integrated.
- 4.2.25 Key considerations for the design of the crossing include:
 - The bridge should connect directly with pedestrian / cycle routes in the town.
 - The bridge and approaches should be wheelchair accessible and should allow cyclists to traverse without dismounting.

- The design of the bridge should result in a safe and comfortable environment, considering ascent/descent, noise, lighting and wind.
- The crossing should be in place at the earliest opportunity to embed sustainable habits for use of the town centre.
- If viability allows, the potential of creating a green bridge and/or wildlife crossing could be explored. This would mean integrating planting and green infrastructure and would provide an expansion for the CCA Fields, integrating them into the wider countryside. A green bridge has the potential to improve the character of the space, enhance the green network and to support the movement of wildlife.
- 4.2.26 A feasibility and design process should be undertaken as a next step.

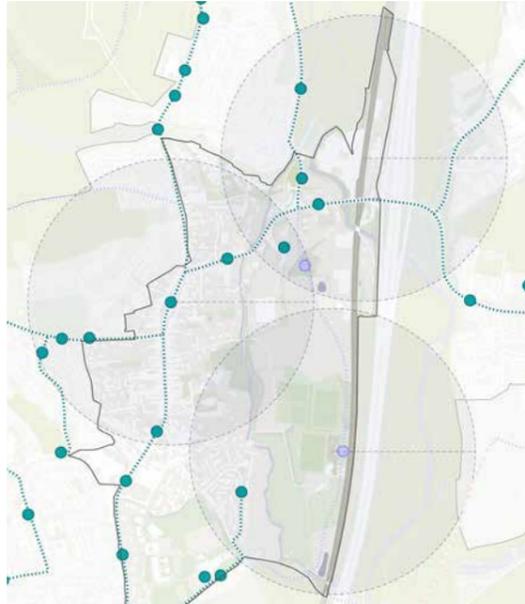


Figure 25 Proposed bus network



Figure 26 Photo of railway line from Tiverton Parkway



Public Transport - Bus

- 4.2.27 The town is served by buses including local and strategic services, focussed on well-used stops on the High Street. Cullompton is also served by the Plymouth - Bristol Airport Falcon coach service which travels along the M5 and can presently be accessed on Station Road opposite to the Weary Traveller Pub.
- 4.2.28 It is critical to the wellbeing of the town centre that buses are retained within the High Street. Any future traffic management will need to ensure that the provision of bus journeys are accommodated.
- 4.2.29 Bus provision should be extended to provide services to areas of new development including the North West Urban Extension and Culm Garden Village.
- 4.2.30 As regards to the Falcon, drop off / pick up moved to the northern side of Station Road early in 2020. Devon County Council are reviewing opportunities to provide a layby on the northern side of Station Road alongside relief Road works. This would integrate well with the proposed rail station and travel node.

Public Transport - Train

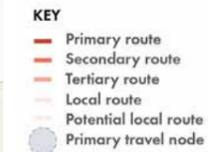
- 4.2.31 Both Cullompton and Wellington stations were closed in 1964 with the loss of a stopping train service; however both towns have grown in population since then and are the largest settlements between Exeter and Taunton. The Devon and Somerset Metro Partnership has been working towards the reinstatement of these stations. This partnership includes local authorities, the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, the two local

Members of Parliament and representatives from the rail industry. In 2019, Mid Devon District Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council became the Project Sponsors.

- 4.2.32 The rail mainline through Cullompton would provide onward travel to local stations such as Wellington, and also to the wider regional / national rail network serving Taunton, Exeter, Bristol and beyond. This would be a very positive advancement for the town, in particular in creating sustainable travel option for commuters, most of which travel to/from Exeter. The station area provides great opportunities to provide an interchange hub; facilitating rail, bus, car, walk and cycle mode transfer and co-location of cycle and vehicular parking. The proposals to re-open Cullompton Train Station is part of a wider project to improve rail services along the Bristol – Exeter corridor. Enhancement of rail services, including the reopening of new stations, is an important part of the multimodal approach to meeting the travel needs of the region.
- 4.2.33 Re-instating the train station aims to provide sustainable transport options for residents and visitors to Cullompton and contribute towards reducing carbon emissions, congestion and air quality in the town as well as cutting residents commuting times. Importantly in addition to improving rail accessibility to the key centres of Exeter and Taunton it will also open up economic opportunities for Cullompton and act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the town.
- 4.2.34 In February 2021 the Devon and Somerset Metro Board submitted its Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the Department for Transport to reopen



Figure 27 Proposed vehicular network



stations at Cullompton and Wellington. This work was funded through the Government's 'Restoring Your Railways Fund'. There is a great deal of support for the proposal and initial feedback from the Department for Transport is encouraging. Should the next stages of the scheme's development prove successful construction could take place in 2024, subject to funding.

Motor Vehicle Network

The Bullring, High Street and Fore Street

- 4.2.35 The Relief Road is proposed to be built by 2023 / 2024 to reduce traffic on the high street. Once in place, there is an opportunity to redesign the high street. Through the consultation process, residents were asked for their views. 90.5% of respondents thought that once the Relief Road is in place that restricting traffic is a good idea. When asked what they thought should be done, the most popular response was 'One-way working' followed by 'Access for homeowners/businesses only'.
- 4.2.36 Given this feedback, detailed assessments will be undertaken once the Relief Road has been constructed, to understand options available within the constraints, for example of space and existing rights of access.
- 4.2.37 Drivers should be encouraged to take the Relief Road instead of the High Street whenever possible. A gateway feature at the junction of Exeter Road / Meadow Way might encourage this. Drivers should also be motivated to drive slowly along the High Street. The carriage way could be narrowed in places to provide a more conducive pedestrian environment. Other traffic measures could include a lower speed

limit, a weight limit or the use of shared surfacing (to latest Department for Transport guidance).

- 4.2.38 During the preparation of the Masterplan roadworks were undertaken in Cullompton which closed the Fore Street / High Street route between Cockpit Hill and Tiverton Road. Traffic data shows that there was an overall reduction in vehicle trips through the town centre as a result, despite vehicles transferring onto alternative routes. During this time traffic analysis took place.

J28

- 4.2.39 Devon County Council is working with Highways England to identify longer term transport solutions to address capacity issues at J28, unlock housing growth and ensure smooth flow of traffic on and off the M5. This work is currently at strategic outline business case stage where a number of potential options are being investigated. As part of the scheme improved pedestrian / cycle movements will be developed.
- 4.2.40 In either case, it is understood that pedestrian and cycle facilities would be provided as part of the scheme, and there is an ongoing commitment to the early provision of a dedicated pedestrian / cycle bridge separate from the motorway junction. These sustainable transport facilities are needed in order to establish appropriate patterns of travel from the outset of occupation of the Garden Village.
- 4.2.41 Junction improvements will alleviate current delays to traffic in peak periods. Traffic in the town centre would be significantly improved with the construction of the Cullompton Relief Road

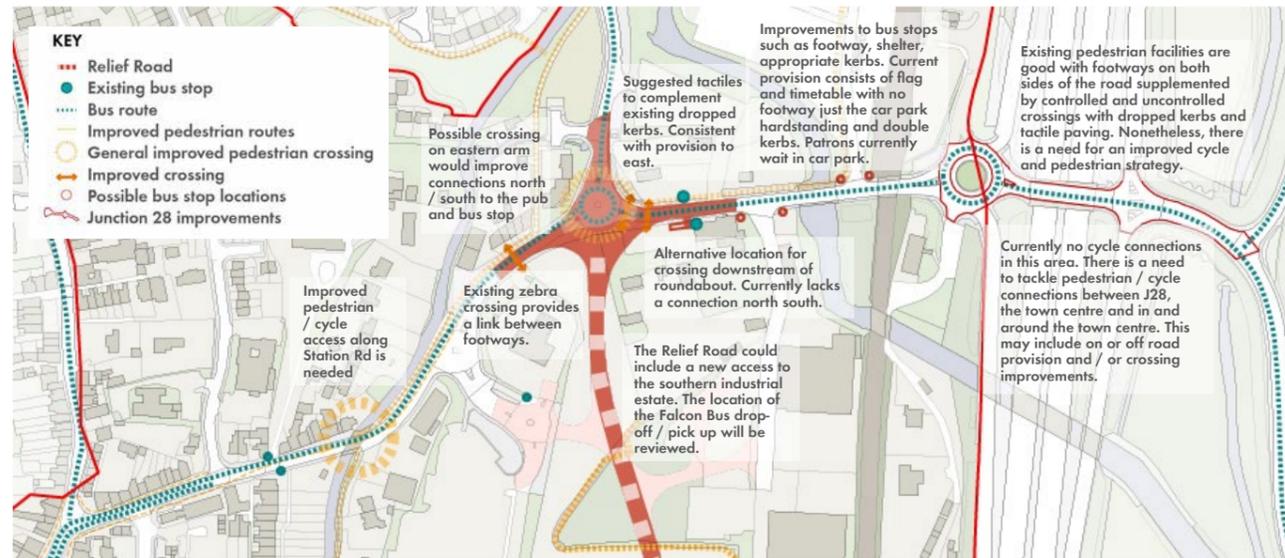


Figure 28 Potential pedestrian and cycle improvements at Station Road and M5 J28 (current layout)

and junction improvement works; reducing the environmental impact of queued and slow-moving vehicles.

4.2.42 Traffic accessing the town from the motorway should pass through distinct 'gateways' which demonstrate a change in character from a strategic highway route into a town centre area where pedestrian / cyclists have greater emphasis. These gateways will need to make it clear where drivers have entered a low speed area where priority is shared between users.

4.2.43 Existing pedestrian and cycle provision across town including along Station Road can be difficult; particularly where it is not continuous and where it is shared with vehicles. Further detailed analysis of cycle and pedestrian provision will be required. Of particular importance is the need to improve pedestrian / cycle access to and from the town, the new Railway Station and Culm Garden Village. This could include improved provision along Station Road, along with an investigation of alternative and complimentary east / west routings. Measures to be investigated could include a range of improvements including dedicated cycle and pedestrian routes, signing and installation of tactile paving where this is missing at access junctions.

COVID-19 and traffic patterns in Cullompton

4.2.44 Emerging evidence suggests that COVID-19 is likely to result in significant shifts in commuting by those that are able to work from home (a stated preference to work at home 40% of the week seems commonplace). This leads to key considerations including:

- The need for flexible work / meeting / collaboration / IT spaces in the town centre, in lieu of longer-distance commuting.
- Embedding the increase in walking and cycling, and embracing inclusive travel technologies that may include e-bikes and e-scooters in urban design.
- Supporting and maintaining local public transport through the Covid crisis and into a post-Covid future.
- A 'decide and provide' / 'vision and validate' approach to the assessment of travel demand, as opposed to outmoded 'predict and provide' techniques which serve largely to create the same sorts of transport environments and issues which have happened in the past.



Parking Strategy

- 4.2.45 The town's car parking provision is well used and for the most part well placed to intercept vehicles at arrival points in the town.
- 4.2.46 The masterplan recommends retaining sufficient delivery and disabled parking spaces in convenient locations within the town centre, whilst enhancing access to well-located carparks around the edge of the centre and increasing the level of use of 'interceptor' carparks at the northern and southern ends of the town centre.
- 4.2.47 This strategy enables the transformation of the Bull ring / Fore Street corridor into a more pedestrian focused space, whilst providing and improving access for people that need to use cars to access the town given its rural hinterland.
- 4.2.48 It is not proposed through this masterplan that additional parking is provided. Over provision of car parking undermines the strategy for sustainable transport movements and would be an inefficient use of land.
- 4.2.49 In general, car parking should prioritise disabled car parking spaces and electric car parking charging points.

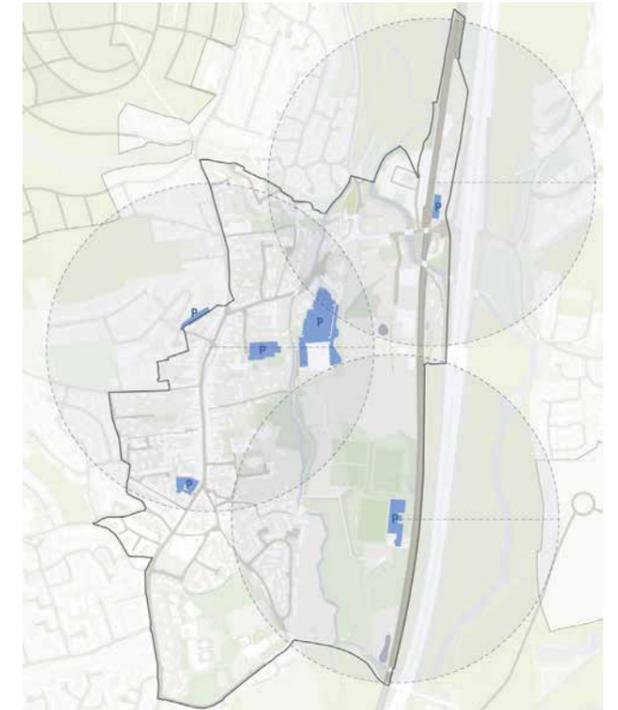


Figure 29 Plan showing public parking provision including provision as part of the relief road proposals. The circles show primary travel nodes.

4.3 Public realm and open space

4.3.1 Cullompton has a number of public and green spaces. However, the connections between them currently lack cohesion. The CCA fields are currently the town's primary green space. There is an opportunity for the lanes to provide strong and characterful pedestrian connections to the high street and beyond. Following the implementation of the Relief Road, the Bullring will be transformed into a public space that has the flexibility to hold markets and community events. Alongside wider improvements to make the high street more pedestrian friendly, a number of smaller spaces could be re-imagined as places to rest and play, whilst integrating nature.

- KEY**
- - - - - Existing public rights of way
 - - - - - Proposed informal foot/cyclepath
 - - - - - Improved town centre route
 - Station forecourt
 - - - - - Improved pedestrian and cycle connection to future station
 - ⊙ Improved pedestrian crossing
 - Proposed species rich grassland
 - Proposed wetland
 - Proposed seasonal bulb planting
 - Bullring flexible public space
 - Pocket spaces
 - Courts and lanes - potential for improvement
 - Improved frontage
 - Improving bullring / highstreet
 - Drainage ponds
 - - - - - Reinstatement of former leat crossing and proposed informal foot / cyclepath (subject to landowner agreement)

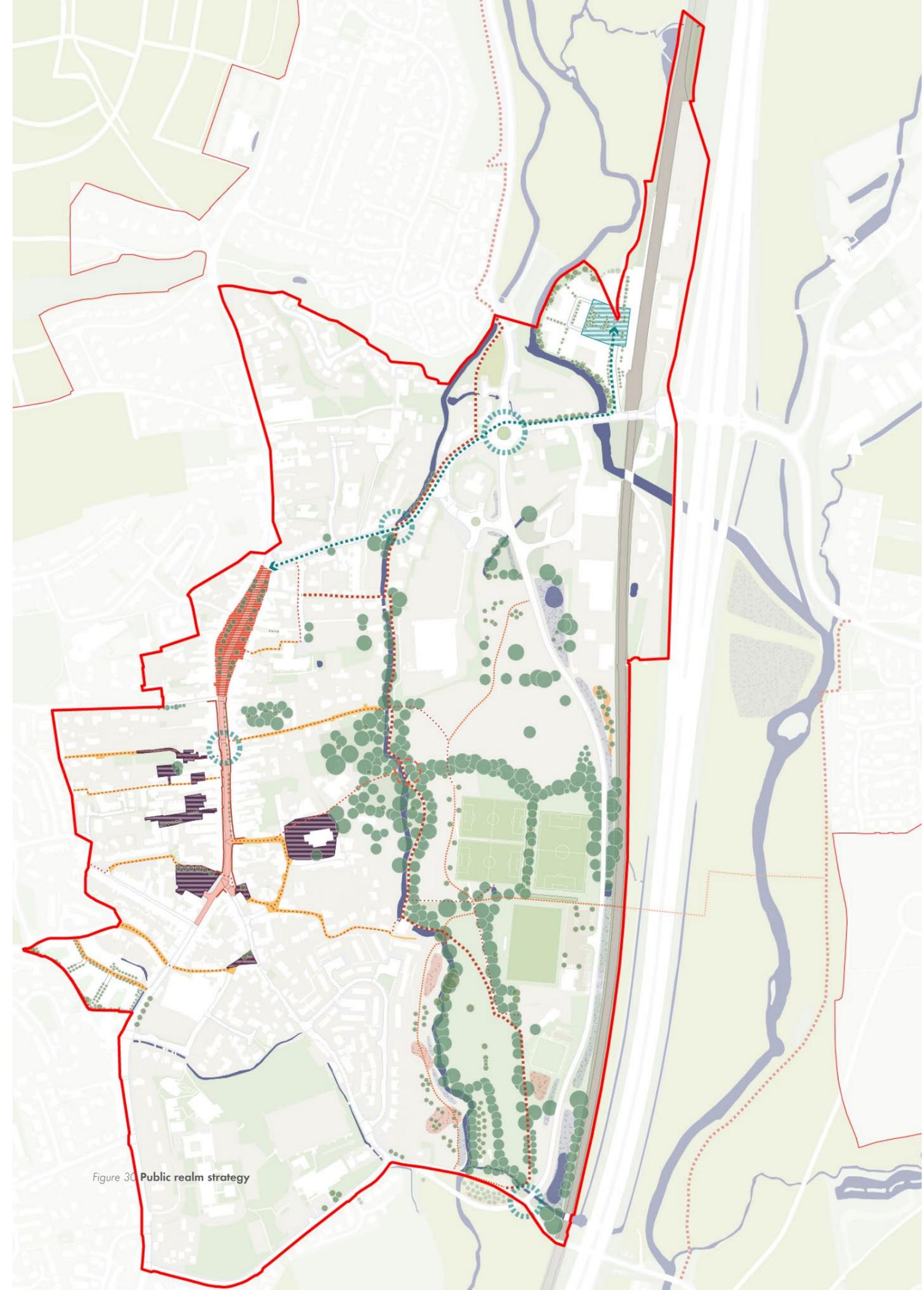


Figure 30 Public realm strategy



Figure 31 Stockbridge Water Meadows, an example of a green space investments and water course improvements.



Figure 32 The High Street in Lewes is one way with traffic calming measures. As a result the space is better for pedestrians and shops ©Google



Otley Street, Skipton provides a one way through route while giving wide pavements and a characterful environment ©Google

CCA Fields

4.3.2 Cullompton's principal green space is the Cullompton Community Association (CCA) Fields. The community owned CCA Fields provide a children's playground, a footpath along the leat, open fields/meadows and a home to the Rangers' Football Club and Cullompton Bowling Club. Being in an area of high flood risk, they also serve as the town's floodplains.

4.3.3 The CCA Fields are well integrated with the town, with access from Duke Street in the south, Lower Mill Lane, Middle Mill Lane and Higher Mill Lane from west, as well as from Station Road and Tesco in the north. While accessibility is good, the prominence of this green space could be better communicated to visitors through wayfinding and signage. There is also an opportunity to increase the number of connections between the CCA fields and the town centre through the reinstatement of the former leat crossing, close to St Andrew's Church. This is set out more fully in Chapter 4.6.

4.3.4 The town lacks connections to the east, with the railway line and motorway creating a barrier for both people and wildlife. There are opportunities to improve pedestrian / cycle connectivity to the proposed CGV to the east. The current Duke Street bridge could also potentially assist in improving pedestrian / cycle connectivity as well as providing a wildlife east / west corridor.

4.3.5 The Relief Road proposals reconfigure the sports facilities, including provision of new car parking and adjustments to the CCA boundaries to reflect compensatory land utilised as a result of the relief road scheme. The sports facilities will be well integrated within the CCA fields and as such will benefit from the existing network of paths. Measures are proposed to create biodiversity gain and mitigate the road's impacts on the green space.

4.3.6 The Culm Garden Village proposals will deliver a new neighbourhood on the opposite side of the motorway. There will be a need for better connections between the new development and the town centre. The solution could be the construction of a bridge. However, more detailed analysis is required to understand the most appropriate solution; whether it be a new bridge, enhancement of existing whilst considering the most appropriate location for the improved connections.

Improving the High Street

4.3.7 Cullompton's high street (Bullring and Fore Street) is heavily trafficked with narrow pavements, making it unappealing to spend time there and limiting the commercial potential of the shops. A key step in reviving the town centre is a shift from being 'a place to go through', to 'a place to go to'. The implementation of the Relief Road will relieve the High Street of traffic. This change creates the opportunity to transform the character and function of the High Street.

4.3.8 A key ambition for the transformation of the high street is to rebalance the street space given to pedestrians and cyclists. The relief road proposals and associated reduction in traffic through the high street present a particular opportunity to review the pedestrian environment. Opportunities should be investigated to reclaim space for pedestrians / cyclists whilst still supporting business footfall and deliveries but ensuring traffic is adequately provided for. There is potential to transfer informal off-street carriageway parking to footway. Better and more consistent use of materials could control footway parking by design, whilst providing an opportunity to declutter the space from the proliferation of bollards, signage, lighting, seating, planters. Side roads would need to adopt a standard DCC treatment which could prioritise pedestrian movements across junctions. Where possible junction radii should be reduced to make it easier to cross, for example at the St Andrew's Hill junction.

4.3.9 Given the size of the town, cycling offers a promising alternative to cars for short journeys. Integrating segregated cycling lanes along the length of the high street should be explored to improve comfort-levels

for non-seasoned cyclists. The high street cycle provision should be designed to enhance connections to the future Station, to Tiverton Road and to the Community College. The route could also provide connection onto the town's lanes and courts which are already largely car-free routes. Cycle parking should be provided in locations which provide easy access to shops without cluttering pedestrian routes, such as the Bullring and the Hayridge Centre.

4.3.10 Bus stops are very well used on the high street. Public transport should be retained and given pride of place in the town centre once the relief road is in place. Space around bus stops could be enhanced for comfortable waiting.

4.3.11 Drivers should be encouraged to take the Relief Road instead of the high street whenever possible, as well as to drive slowly along the high street. At the design stage of the enhancement of Fore Street, a review of access (one way, business and resident access only) could be considered. Traffic calming measures such as timed delivery restrictions, lower speed and weight limits, narrowing of the carriageway and different surfacing are all elements that could be considered. A design process with modelling and consultation will be needed to determine the future layout of the high street.

4.3.12 Cullompton's high street contains buildings of historic merit and architectural quality, however many of these are in a state of disrepair and they often suffer from a poor streetscape setting. The HAZ project will provide a programme of works to improve the heritage of the town. This wider project will include shop front improvements and public realm works to help unify the character of the High Street and restore original architectural features and shop fronts (see section 5).



Figure 33
Reigate High Street still has traffic through it but wider pavements near the market building ©Google



Figure 34
Lewes High Street has a wider section which can close to traffic to support the town's markets and events. Image copyright: Editor5807, CC BY 3.0



- KEY**
- Existing public rights of way
 - Proposed informal foot/cyclepath
 - Improved town centre route
 - Improved pedestrian crossing
 - Bullring flexible public space
 - Pocket spaces
 - Courts and lanes - potential for improvement
 - Improved frontage
 - Improving bullring / highstreet
 - Proposed development
 - Drainage ponds



Figure 36
Top left: Oswestry, an examples of a lane improved through lighting
Left: Kendal, an example of distinctive surfacing at entry points
Above: Holt, an example of a planted lane.

The Bullring

4.3.13 As its name suggests, the Bullring has long been the location of the town's market. However its current use as the principle north-south route has meant the space feels more like a road than a market square. Alongside the changes to the wider high street, with implementation of the Relief Road the Bullring has the potential to be reimagined as a flexible public space which supports markets and events.

4.3.14 At the design stage for the enhancement of the Bullring as a flexible public space, consideration could be given to the area as a shared surface or level area that brings together the whole of the Bullring – pavements, parking, carriageway – as one larger space. This space could adapt flexibly to accommodate events of different scales. For example, for smaller events car parking could be suspended with vehicular access remaining, while the street could be closed off to traffic entirely for larger events. Electricity and water access should be integrated to better support the market and events. A cohesive approach to surfacing and materials would enable the space to support a variety of functions, while being read as one.

4.3.15 Consideration should be given to how the space could be used at different times. There is potential for the space to be brought to life by local businesses, including outdoor seating for restaurants, pubs and cafes, as well as displays by local shops. Pop-ups and kiosks could also be used to generate more activity with additional festivals and events.

4.3.16 Opportunities will be explored to provide sustainable drainage to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, to provide treatment of the runoff and to increase biodiversity.

4.3.17 There are currently 36 car parking spaces in the Bullring. They are arranged perpendicular or echelon to the carriageway for one hour maximum use. Subject to capacity, the nearby car parks at St Andrews and Forge Way could facilitate additional parking, such that the Bullring could be redesigned to reduce the number of spaces provided, giving over more space to more active town centre uses such as the market, pop up uses, café seating and cycle parking. Remaining car parking spaces could be provided as parallel or diagonal bays and should prioritise disabled people.



Figure 35
Ashwin Street, Dalston, an example of activation of the space through SUDS planting and spill out of local businesses.

Improving the Courts and Lanes

4.3.18 The Courts and Lanes off the High Street provide permeable, less trafficked routes. However, they are poorly signed and have inconsistent, low grade surfacing.

4.3.19 A wayfinding and signage strategy should be implemented for the Lanes, raising the prominence of through routes and directing people towards landmarks or public space. This wayfinding could communicate a visitor's loop - along the Leat, Lower Mill Lane, High Street, Higher Mill Lane taking in St Andrew's Church. There is also an opportunity for historic interpretation signage, helping to tell Cullompton's story.

4.3.20 Lanes could also be improved by upgrading the surfacing to a common palette of materials. Subtle cues in the surfacing could help with legibility of these routes from the high street. Rain gardens which allow for sustainable urban drainage could be integrated where space allows. Resident and servicing access should be maintained.



Figure 37
Above: signage currently discourages use of the lanes
Below: the lanes have potential to become characterful routes and spaces.



Figure 38 Barneveld Noord Station in the Netherlands uses shipping containers to make a very light touch and cost effective facility. Image Copyright: Spoorjan, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Figure 39 Adopted policies map (July 2020) showing safeguarded area for railway station (red hatching)

The Future Railway Station

4.3.21 An important part of the station project will be ensuring an attractive sense of arrival with pleasant outdoor spaces. The detailed design of the station would also need to provide for adequate pedestrian and cycle movements, parking and other public transport provision.



Figure 40 Top left: Holt, a bench and some planting create a quiet space to rest in the town. Left: Hackney Downs Studios, terraced steps built into an awkward corner give people a place to catch the evening sun. Above: Walthamstow street corner planted informally.

Developing a network of 'pocket parks'

- 4.3.22 Public spaces can play a multitude of roles for local people, they can provide places to sit and rest; places to experience nature; places for children to play; places to experience art or culture; or places to socialise. Cullompton lacks connections between its areas of public open space.
- 4.3.23 There are a number of small scale spaces in the town which have the potential to be enhanced as active public spaces, including;
- Pound Square and the area in front of the Hayridge Centre Car Park
 - The space in front of the Methodist Church
 - Part of the Community Centre Car Park
- 4.3.24 The masterplan proposes these are transformed into 'pocket parks', providing doorstep play (a play space within sight of home, where children can play within view of known adults), public seating, pop up activities, tree planting and/or rain gardens.
- 4.3.25 There are examples in the town of where this has already been done successfully, including the gardens of the Walronds and the corner of Cockpit Hill and the high street.



Figure 41 Above: the Walronds garden Right: the Corner of Cockpit Lane



Figure 42 Plan showing access from Cullompton to the countryside and nearby cultural and historic landmarks. There are also a range of smaller privately owned facilities including, for example, farmshops and country pubs, glamping and wineries.

Strengthening access to the countryside

4.3.26 Cullompton residents also benefit from its rural setting with access to the countryside. There are a number of popular routes from the town for walking, cycling and running along country roads and public rights of way. In addition to these, there are popular destinations within short reach of the town including Blackdown Hills AONB, East Devon AONB, Killerton, Knightshayes Court, Ashclyst Forest, Grand Western Canal Country Park and Broadhembury Hill Fort.

4.3.27 This access to the countryside provides high quality walking/cycling routes, as well as the many positive benefits of contact with nature. There are a number of opportunities to improve and enhance access to the countryside for Cullompton residents, including:

- The M5 represents a significant barrier to the east of the town. Old Hill Road, including the bridge over the M5 will be required to carry vehicular traffic. However, opportunities should be embraced for Duke Street and Old Hill to help improve accessibility as a high quality route for people on foot and cycle as a means to provide a high quality crossing over the M5 which links the town and CCA fields to the Culm Garden Village and beyond.
- New developments should respect existing rights of way and integrate and enhance connections to the countryside. Routes for walking and cycling should be prioritised over vehicular routes. They should link housing to schools, shops, employment areas, recreational/sports facilities and rights of way/countryside to encourage healthier lifestyles and minimise car use.

- There is an opportunity to develop cycling routes which join with the National Cycling Network. There is a strategic gap between route 3 (Tiverton, Halberton, Willand) and route 34 (Exeter, Topsham) which Cullompton could play a role in connecting. This would both provide residents access to safe, enjoyable cycling routes as well as draw visitors into the town for a stop on their journey.
- Key exit/entry points from the town could be upgraded to better serve pedestrians and cyclists, with wider pavements, higher priority at junctions and improved signage. This includes Tiverton Road, Five Bridges and Station Road/Millennium Way.

4.4 Activity and land use



Figure 43
Examples of vacant and historic shop fronts being brought back into use for temporary/pop up uses. Left, Glasgow City Council's transformation of Saltmarket and right, Meanwhile Space and Harrow Council's transformation of a key shopfront in Harrow.

Homes

- 4.4.1 A significant number of new homes is planned for Cullompton, including on two large strategic sites. The NW Cullompton Urban Extension proposes 600 homes in the first phase and 750 in the second. The East Cullompton Local Plan allocation proposes 2,600 homes and is intended to form the first phase of Culm Garden Village, which could see the delivery of up to 5,000 new homes.
- 4.4.2 New developments should integrate with existing rights of way and enhance connections to the town centre and the countryside, as well as providing attractive walking and cycling routes to schools, shops, employment areas, recreational and sports facilities to encourage healthier lifestyles and minimise car use.
- 4.4.3 Cullompton's town centre should remain the retail and civic centre for the growing population. Retail facilities in new developments should complement rather than compete with the town centre.
- 4.4.4 Given the high rate of town centre vacancy, there is also an opportunity for upper storeys of buildings to be converted into high quality homes. Additional town centre living both increases the footfall on the high street and adds to the diversity of types of homes on the market.

Shops and services

- 4.4.5 Cullompton is the shopping and civic centre supporting residents of the town and the surrounding villages and countryside. The high street includes a high proportion of shops, cafes and restaurants (65% of occupiers are A1-5), with a small proportion of offices (6% B1) and leisure (7% D1). In recent years, there has been a surge in cafes, dog grooming salons, charity shops and health related uses (chiropractors, dentists, etc).
- 4.4.6 Many towns in the UK have been subject in recent years to a homogenization of both the types of shops and the general uses in town centres. Cullompton, in contrast, has remained highly independent in its offer. Just 10% of current occupiers are classed as 'national', 6% are 'regional', while the remaining 84% are 'local; independents or smaller chains. These local businesses are an asset to the town, being more agile than larger chains to respond to the changing market and contributing to the town's unique appeal.
- 4.4.7 Across the UK, High Street retail has suffered in recent years, largely due to the rise in internet shopping. The decline in High Street shopping has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Cullompton, there are a number of notable vacancies, though comparatively the vacancy rate is not overly high (7% compared to the pre pandemic national average of 10.3%). This may be an example of Cullompton's ability to adapt flexibly, with 10% of retail units with frontage onto the high street area having been converted to residential use.

Covid-19 recovery focus



- 4.4.8 While the vacancy rate is not overly high, there has been a decline in the quality and variety of businesses along the high street. It may be that landlords have taken the first tenant possible in order to start the rental flow quickly. Longer term over a wider area, this becomes a self-perpetuating trend, where the lower-quality tenants tend to put off stronger tenants, leading to lower demand for property, lower rents and little reinvestment. Opportunities could be explored to break this cycle so Cullompton can more readily diversify its offer.
- 4.4.9 In terms of national retailers, Tesco, Aldi and Home Bargains are located on the edges of the town centre. On one hand, these larger supermarkets generally attract visitors from other locations in mid Devon, but they also compete with the high street businesses. Changes to the high street should focus on creating linked trips and increasing dwell time, to benefit more from the presence of these larger chains.
- 4.4.10 Cullompton is serviced by a local post office branch at the Pillar Box. In recent years, the town has experienced the loss of a number of the high street banks. Banks have more recently been required to have a more centralised provision with a reduction in their high street portfolio. Given this, it is unlikely that banks will look to locate back into the high street.
- 4.4.11 The Masterplan aims to increase the vibrancy of shops and services. This can be facilitated through the following:
- encouraging greater footfall on the high street
 - broadening Cullompton's offer
 - enhancing the visitor economy
 - A Business Improvement District (BID). Other towns have benefitted from the creation of a BID. This might be something that the town wants to consider.

Encouraging more footfall on the high street

- 4.4.12 The commercial potential of shops is closely related to the number of people visiting the high street. The proposals to improve the physical environment will be critical to draw people to the town centre. The future designs for this space should prioritise creating a comfortable and enjoyable environment for people on foot, to make shopping in Cullompton an obvious choice. This includes: widening pavements, tackling car domination and associated air pollution, tree planting and shopfront improvements. In addition to the public realm improvements, there are a number of other ways that more people can be attracted to the high street:
- The masterplan proposes connections to and from the Alexandria Business Park. Connections to Kingsmill Industrial Estate will need to form part of a wider review of measures to address issues at Junction 28.
 - The town is forecast to grow in population over the coming years which it is hoped will give a boost to the high street area and the viability of retailers. It will be important that a strong relationship is established between the town centre and Culm Garden Village so that new residents use Cullompton as their town centre for shops and services. To these ends, strong cycling and walking routes (in particular over the M5/river/rail) will be needed to support active travel for trips. It will also be important that Culm Garden Village does not provide any significant retail as to not draw people away from the town centre.
 - One further way that footfall can be enhanced is to prioritise workspace and/or homes in the development of any town centre developments or conversions. More people working and living within the town centre means more customers for whom high street shops, restaurants, pubs and cafes are an obvious choice. See Page 58 for more on employment provision.



Figure 44
The Low Line, London. An example of a wayfindings strategy and visitors loop.



Figure 45
An example of an outdoor coffee cart improving provision for visitors.



Figure 46
Church of St Mary the Great, Cambridge © Mat Fascione. An active church which is also a tourist attraction, allowing visitors to climb the bell tower.



Figure 47
An example of how motorway signage can help attract visitors into the town. Photo copyright David Smith.



Figure 48
Gloucestershire farm shop motorway services. An example of how local produce and a niche offer can attract visitors. Photo copyright Anthony O'Neil.

Broadening Cullompton's offer

4.4.13 While there are a number of unique and thriving local businesses, there has been a downward trend in the variety and the quality of shops in the town centre. Across the country, demand for retail property is down, with the focus shifting to "experience" retail, where customer service, activities or food and beverage become significant drivers of a shopping trip. In order to compete with surrounding centres and to attract more people into the town centre, Cullompton would benefit from a diversity of traders on the high street. There are a number of sectors that would benefit its appeal.

4.4.14 Cullompton has a good food or drink offer and growing 'cafe culture'. While the town is currently well provided for, as the population of Cullompton grows it is anticipated that cafés, restaurants and bars will become a more viable proposition, which would also benefit from proposed public realm improvements. These businesses would be complemented by other evening based activities starting up in the town, such as a cultural venue (ie. live music venue, small cinema or gallery space).

4.4.15 Looking at the town's demographics, there is a growing eastern European population in Cullompton with the potential to support Cullompton's wider multi-cultural appeal.

4.4.16 Cullompton would benefit from developing its own readily identifiable niche. This would attract interest, draw footfall, helping Cullompton to remain viable.

4.4.17 The vacant premises in the town centre present an opportunity for Cullompton to host pop-ups and temporary shops. Affordability of the premises will play a key role in the success of a pop-up shop scheme.

Enhancing the visitor economy

4.4.18 Cullompton is conveniently located just off of the M5, a key route for tourists heading to south Devon and Cornwall's holiday destinations. This location presents a strong opportunity for Cullompton to establish itself as a stopping point on route, drawing people beyond the motorway services and into the town centre. Cullompton already has a number of key components: car parking which is easily accessed from the motorway; en route petrol stations; the CCA Fields where people can walk their dog; and a characterful High Street with shops, cafes and restaurants. Some ways Cullompton could attract more visitors in town include:

- A visitor's 'loop' could be promoted to visitors through signage and marketing, along the Leat, Lower Mill Lane, High Street, Higher Mill Lane taking in St Andrew's Church. There is also an opportunity for historic interpretation signage, helping to tell Cullompton's story, for example the town's milling history. Public realm improvements could help make this route feel cohesive and welcoming.
- Celebrating the town's heritage could be used to attract visitors into the town. Appropriate signposting from the motorway and information about the town's history and architecture are simple measures to increase visitor numbers. Town centre destinations include the Grade 1* listed St Andrew's Church, a key landmark building and rated among the top 1000 churches in Britain, the Grade II* listed Manor House Hotel and the Grade 1 listed Walronds.

Exploring the potential of creating a Business Improvement District (BID)

4.4.19 Cullompton has a large number of traders which are operating very effectively but potentially in isolation from one another. An assessment of freehold ownership of the high street area shows that just 17 of the 98 properties fronting high street are owned by companies instead of individuals. Where the ownership is by individuals, there is often less of an ability for a cohesive management plan across an area. It could be beneficial for all businesses in the town centre for a Business Improvement District (BID) to be created in the centre. This would enable a number of common priorities to be identified by the businesses in the town centre, such as public realm improvements, shop front improvements, curation of Cullompton's offer and marketing and promotional activities.

4.4.20 A BID scheme is designed to be operated by the local businesses, requiring initial support and occasional input thereafter from the local authority. Its function is to develop projects and services that will benefit the trading environment within the boundary of a clearly defined commercial area. A vote on whether or not to establish a BID is open to tenants and if a majority, both by number and by rateable value, approve the proposal, all ratepayers will contribute through a small levy (identified by local businesses i.e. 0.5%, 1%, 2% etc) on their business rates.

4.4.21 Once voted for, the levy becomes mandatory on all defined ratepayers. The BID has a lifespan of five years and any further proposals will have to be reaffirmed through a subsequent vote. The District Council and Town Council can help traders should they wish to pursue a BID.

4.4.22 BID gives local businesses the power to effect changes that will benefit them in their local community. Improvements may include cleaning and environmental measures, improved promotion of the

area, improved events, and greater advocacy on key issues, but the legislation does not put a limit on what products or services are provided.



Figure 49
Signature Brewery, an example of an industrial use taking on a customer-facing activities by opening a taproom at weekends.



Figure 50
Qworky in Skipton is an example of a high street building conversion into co-working, creating 12 desks for hire. This helps to bring vacant buildings back into use and contributes to footfall on the high street.

Employment

Industry and making

4.4.23 Historically, Cullompton has been a place of making; its economy was founded on weavers who used the river's power and water to produce cloth. The masterplan seeks to reinforce this strand of Cullompton's identity and to strengthen the town as a place for industry and making. Industrial and warehousing property is in good demand, evidenced by the lack of availability and number of developers looking to deliver more space in the area. Alexandria Business Park, Longbridge Meadow and the Kingsmill Industrial Estate are thriving and there is potential to intensify these areas to provide additional floorspace. All three of these estates are well positioned off of the motorway and there is also an opportunity to create better provision for people to walk, cycle and take public transport, enabling local people to commute to work and workers to use the town centre's shops and services without driving.

4.4.24 The proposed future Station location is adjacent to the Alexandria Business Park. If funding is secured and the new station goes ahead, it will change the context significantly. In terms of industrial and business space, it is anticipated that existing businesses which can sit comfortably alongside other uses (lighter industry, fewer vehicular movements, little noise/smell) could be rehoused on the same site. This would be part of a redevelopment to create

a positive station arrival experience and intensify the use of the land given the changing market context that the station brings.

Office and co-working space

4.4.25 The supply of office space is limited in the town. The Nook, a local success story, draws occupiers from across Devon. The Nook offers flexible workspace for those predominantly working from home including entrepreneurs, freelancers and business owners. Situated in a converted factory in Kingsmill Estate, the characterful setting and proximity to the motorway are ingredients for its success; to the extent that demand exceeds the amount of office space available.

4.4.26 The COVID-19 pandemic has led to changing working patterns which is likely to create new demand for small and flexible workspace. Many companies are exploring 'hub and spoke' office models, rather than having their staff commute into large centres. For many, working from home has become a new reality; as the Covid-19 pandemic subsides, people will reconsider their working patterns finding a balance between commuting and working from home. Hiring a desk-space locally, on a flexible basis, can provide a delineation between work and home which can be advantageous. Similarly, it can reduce commuting times helping work life balance.

4.4.27 There could be an opportunity for Cullompton to benefit from changing working habits and to build on the success of the Nook, by creating a small, flexible workspace in the town centre, run either by the Nook or a competitor. The presence of office space near the high street area could also act as a catalyst for related economies, with cafes, pubs and restaurants all benefiting from having a new workforce centrally.

Securing high-speed broadband connectivity for Cullompton

4.4.28 High-speed broadband signal is an increasingly important factor in the decision of where people want to live and work. This trend has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, during which lockdown made us more dependent than ever on our internet signal for all parts of our lives from working to learning to socialising. Faster internet connectivity helps to promote business development (e.g access to on-line learning programmes) and would attract inward investment to Cullompton. It would also equip education, social and community groups with access to technology that will enable them to expand their programme and improve their effectiveness.

4.4.29 In recognition of the poor broadband connectivity across the sub-region, local authorities have developed the Connecting Devon and Somerset Initiative. The project is working to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the market has failed to invest.

Closing the skill gap

4.4.30 There remain pockets of acute deprivation in Cullompton and the population has lower than average skills, qualifications and income. Utilising key players that make up a strong community infrastructure network, there is an opportunity to create structured links between local businesses, high learning organisations and members of the local community not in employment, education or training. Mid-Devon District Council, Cullompton Community College and Cullompton Community Centre could work together to help address this gap.

4.4.31 Cullompton Community College educates approximately 750 students aged 11-16, a key age group for forging aspirations for the future. Exposure to people in high skilled jobs can help to give students inspiration and open up options for their future. This could include involvement with programmes like STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths), through which STEM ambassadors volunteer their time and visit schools, helping to bring STEM subjects to life and demonstrate the value of them in life and careers. There is also an opportunity for students to be involved in some of the upcoming developments in the town, for example working with engineers, developers, architects and planners on the design and delivery of the rail project and/or Culm Garden Village. Additionally, with Exeter University only a half an hour drive away, it would be fruitful for the Community College to forge a strong relationship with this reputable higher learning organisation. For example, there could be an annual trip for students to visit the University Campus and to be exposed to university life and the breadth of subjects they could go on to study.

4.4.32 Mid-Devon District Council is part of the Government's apprenticeship scheme, subsidising and matching businesses to those looking for skilled work with on the job training and development. The



"The Nook has become an iconic and beloved place to work in the South West, not only because of the unique, quirky office spaces born from its creators' vision, but due to the community of 'nooksters' who work within the walls of the building."

James and Vicki were presented with the opportunity to take on their Father's truck factory in Cullompton in 2016. They saw huge potential to develop the large space into something really special."

Extract from the Nook's website



National Apprenticeship Service has reported that nearly every employer that takes on an apprentice (96%) reports benefits to their business, with 72% of businesses reporting improved productivity. With a flourishing business community around the Kingsmill Industrial Estate, the Alexandria Business Park and at Longbridge Meadow, there is potential for more local businesses to be recruited to the scheme, in turn offering apprenticeships to local people who are out of work. This would be a benefit to local businesses, while also helping to improve the skills and employability of local people.

Community and civic uses

4.4.33 Community, culture and civic uses play an important role in attracting people into the town centre; supporting a vibrant and fulfilling town life. Having them centrally located supports footfall, other commercial uses and activities. There are a number of facilities in the town centre including Cullompton Community Centre, Culm Valley Sports Centre, the sports clubs at the CCA Fields and the Hayridge Centre. The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of town centre-based arts, cultural and leisure activities and its role in promoting a visitor and evening economy. The creation and enhancement of outdoor performance space including for example at the Bull Ring and the construction of a swimming pool within the north west urban extension will bring significant gains.



Figure 51
Saffron Screen cinema in Saffron Walden doubles as an auditorium for the secondary school in the weekday.



Figure 52
The Depot, Lewes is a former brewery and vacant historic building which was converted into a community cinema.

4.5 Environment and sustainability

Biodiversity and green space investment

- 4.5.1 The regeneration of Cullompton should seek to maximise opportunities to tackle climate change at a local level. This fits well with the District Council's Climate Emergency declaration aims and the government's aspiration to build back better in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 4.5.2 Culm Garden Village will be planned and delivered to ensure it is sustainable and positively contributes to combating challenges associated with climate change. A sustainability strategy will set out how the garden village will deliver a low carbon, environmentally sensitive development. The sustainability strategy will also encourage healthy lifestyles and a shift to active (pedestrian / cycle) travel modes.
- 4.5.3 In terms of the new developments (Culm Garden Village and the North West Urban Extension) design will be landscape-led retaining and enhancing existing green infrastructure wherever possible. They will create places that contribute to net biodiversity gain.
- 4.5.4 The Relief Road proposal includes measures to prevent biodiversity loss and mitigates the impact of the road on the CCA fields including:
- Pre-development surveys including ecological assessments;
 - Maintaining green infrastructure wherever possible,
 - Measures to address and prevent water pollution;
 - Additional and planting to create a number of different habitats including shrubs, trees, hedges, grassland / wildflower and wetland,
 - Maximising the biodiversity potential of the two proposed highway drainage ponds;
 - Installing bat and bird boxes; and
 - Wildlife passages for bats, birds and otters.

- 4.5.5 There is an opportunity to enhance biodiversity and mitigate against climate change within the town centre. This may include:
- Installing bat and bird boxes perhaps with an emphasis on a particular species e.g. swifts,
 - Pocket parks with an emphasis on foraging bird or insect species,
 - Retention and enhancement of green infrastructure links to support ecological connectivity across and around the town for species that would benefit from wildlife commuting zones such as amphibians, bats and hedgehogs;
 - Environmental improvements that benefit people and nature - such as energy saving measures to lessen climate impact and reduce light pollution;
 - Infrastructure to support electric vehicle charging;
 - Improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity including installation of cycle lanes, bike stands and seating;
 - Retrofit projects to support the town centre's greener future e.g. energy efficiency measures; and
 - Encourage the use of sustainable construction designs, methods and materials that complement and highlight the town's heritage.

Sustainable transport

- 4.5.6 The masterplan encourages a modal shift away from private motor vehicles, towards sustainable transport modes. This highway approach is consistent with national policy and the stance taken by Highways England.
- 4.5.7 To these ends, a key ambition for the transformation of the high street following the construction of the Relief Road is:
- to rebalance the street space given to pedestrians and cyclists whilst still supporting business footfall, deliveries and ensuring traffic is adequately provided for. This is anticipated to result in reduced air pollution.



- The improved pedestrian and cycle environment making these modes the obvious choice for short journeys.
 - The retention of buses in the High Street with any future traffic management needing to ensure that the provision of bus journeys are accommodated.
- 4.5.8 Section 4.2 sets out guidance for the improvement of walking and cycling provision.
- 4.5.9 The re-opening of Cullompton rail station would also help to increase the uptake of sustainable travel to and from the town. The majority of Cullompton residents currently commute out of the town by car, and the rail station has the greatest potential to reduce the level of vehicular outbound commuting.
- 4.5.10 Publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points could be established in the town centre car parks.
- 4.5.11 New developments should be well connected to sustainable travel routes to allow sustainable travel patterns. In the case of the Culm Garden Village, critical to this is a crossing over the M5 and railway line. New developments could look to explore how proposed driveways and / or street parking can be adapted to open / green space, should demand for them fall over time. Flood risk management
- 4.5.12 There is a long history of flooding in Cullompton from the River Culm, its tributaries and from surface water flooding. Any redesign of the high street should seek out opportunities to provide sustainable drainage techniques to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, to provide treatment of the runoff and to provide habitat for biodiversity as well as amenity space for residents and visitors.
- 4.5.13 Opportunities to enhance the watercourses in the area should be sought. Any new housing developments, any new town centre parking areas or pedestrian cycle links should use sustainable

drainage techniques as per the SuDS for Devon Guidance (2017). Historic courts and passageways off Fore Street could consider permeable surfaces where appropriate to mitigate the speed of water run off and water quality. Similarly, measures could also include features such as rain gardens.

Guidance for new buildings

- 4.5.14 For new homes and commercial buildings, designs should explore and provide opportunities for best practice in Net Zero design, manufacture, construction and performance. New developments will be expected to demonstrate how household efficiency and waste management will create demonstrably lower domestic energy use, reduced utility bills and increased rates of recycling. New development should include appropriate internal and external storage for recycling and landfill waste.



4.6 Key opportunities

4.6.1 Cullompton is a compact market town with a sensitive historic environment that is one of its greatest assets. This presents both an opportunity and a constraint. The town is located alongside the River Culm and its associated leats. These waterways provide an attractive natural environment in close proximity to the town centre yet also present a flood risk for existing and new homes, work spaces or community venues in close proximity.

4.6.2 New development within the town will need to give consideration to the constraints imposed by the historic environment and flood risk. Any new development must enhance the character and function of the town centre whilst making a positive contribution towards climate change.

4.6.3 In order to enhance the role of the town centre, a number of transformational opportunity sites have been identified. This document outlines the potential for each site but these would be subject to further discussion with landowners and partners.

4.6.4 The opportunity sites should be read in the context of broader proposals for the area. To the north of the town, strategic proposals for new homes, jobs and community space are proposed. Such proposals will result in a population increase of approximately 18,000 people within Cullompton. These strategic developments increase the footfall for the town centre and will help enhance the town's vitality and viability.

4.6.5 These strategic developments including the CGV and infrastructure projects such as Relief Road, the railway and J28 improvements present an opportunity to improve connections across town, the public realm, as well as the economic and social life of the town centre and Cullompton's valuable heritage.

- 1 Alexandria Industrial Estate
- 2 Railway Station
- 3 Tannery Site
- 4 Higher Bullring
- 5 Improvements to cycling between proposed new rail station and the town centre
- 6 Fore Street enhancement
- 7 Leat footbridge
- 8 The Old Cinema site

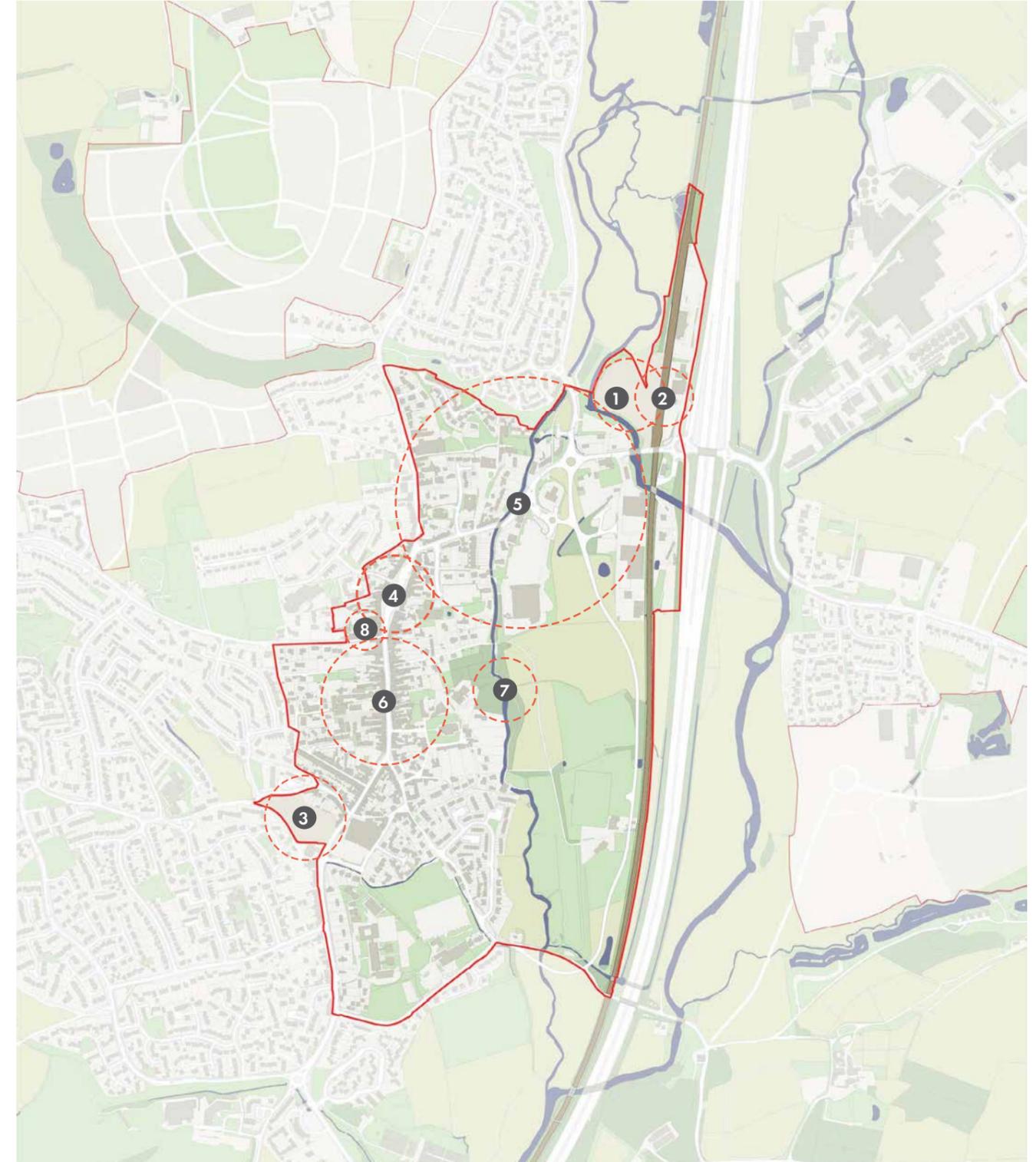


Figure 53 Plan showing approximate locations of key opportunity sites

Context

4.6.6 There is a recognition that the approach to Cullompton from Station Road has scope for enhancement. The Alexandria Industrial Estate has potential for enhancement particularly given its close proximity to the proposed new railway station.

4.6.7 Should the railway station get government funding it is likely that would be for basic railway infrastructure including ticket machine, shelters and benches with a pedestrian / cycle and wheelchair accessible overbridge.

4.6.8 There is therefore an opportunity to supplement this provision in the immediate vicinity. This could include footway / cycleway improvements, electric bike and car hire, improvements to the public realm and other complimentary uses.

4.6.9 The River Culm flows to the west of Alexandria Industrial Estate and presents an opportunity for an enhanced environment. Notwithstanding this, parts of the Industrial Estate lie within flood Zone 3 which limits the scope of land uses that can be provided including residential.

Objectives

4.6.10 Alexandria Industrial Estate is identified as a Regeneration and Enhancement Area. Key objectives for any future approach will consider the following:

- Provide a positive arrival point for Cullompton and walking and cycling access to a new rail station
- Enhance pedestrian and cycle links through the estate between the new railway station and town centre including investigation of the potential for a new cycle / pedestrian route via Millennium Way
- Establish a more positive relationship with the River Culm, as a valuable natural asset and amenity space

- Establish an enhanced sense of arrival at the new railway station and investigate opportunities for a small station square and shop to the west of the railway lines
- To minimise additional vehicular traffic on to Alexandria Industrial Estate / Station Road junction
- Develop a scheme that helps enhance and regenerate the Industrial Estate whilst being complimentary to the railway station proposal

Next steps

4.6.11 Next steps will require:

- A review of flood risk associated with the site.
- Further liaison with landowners regarding redevelopment of the site including uses, building form and layout.
- Design and layout to be developed in response and informed by emerging plans for the railway station.
- A detailed review of improved cycle and pedestrian links between the town and the railway station including consideration of a Millennium Way route over the River Culm.
- A review of the visual, public realm and wildlife benefits that may be achieved adjacent to the River Culm.

DIAGRAM TO BE INCLUDED HERE

Figure 54 Diagram showing design principles for the Alexandria Industrial Estate

Context

- 4.6.12 Mid Devon District Council is in the process of preparing a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) and applying for funding to reinstate the former Cullompton train station. The proposal is progressing well and at some pace. This proposal is likely to include a ticket office, shelters and benches with a pedestrian footbridge over the tracks.
- 4.6.13 The station proposal lies in close proximity to Alexandria Industrial Estate which is identified as a Regeneration and Enhancement Area. It has the ability to enhance the setting and sense of arrival to the railway station.
- 4.6.14 It is important to ensure that the railway station provides opportunities for multi modal travel i.e bus, cycle and pedestrian access. Transport interchange facilities will need to complement the provision of the station.

Objectives

- 4.6.15 Key objectives for the future delivery of the railway station will consider the following:
- An improved setting to the area of the proposed railway station including an improved sense of arrival that may include tree planting, public seating, cycle parking, drop-off and pick-up space.
 - An improved sense of arrival into the town from the railway station.
 - Station parking to consider future forms of mobility. Station parking to include bike / scooter hire, car club schemes and infrastructure such as electric charging.
 - Improved pedestrian and cycle connections between the railway station, the town centre and its hinterlands.

Next Steps

- 4.6.16 Next steps will require:
- Detailed review of design and layout in response to the emerging railway scheme.
 - A detailed review for improved cycle and pedestrian links to and from the station.
 - Continued liaison with landowners and partners.

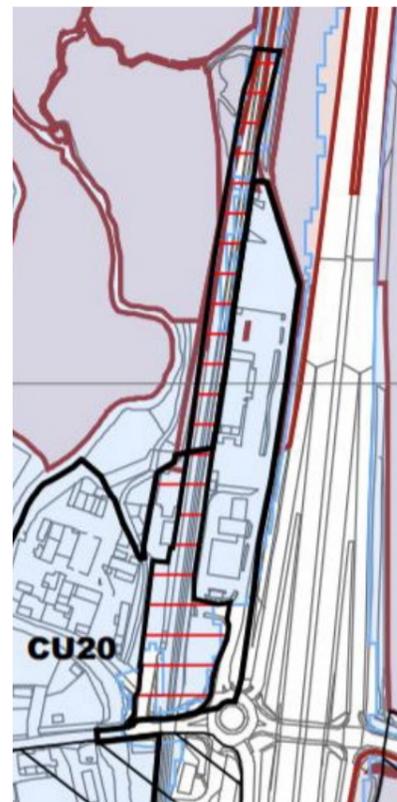


DIAGRAM TO BE INCLUDED HERE

Figure 56 Diagram showing key design principles for the Railway Station area

Context

- 4.6.17 The former Tannery site covers an area of land between Exeter Hill and Crow Green. A greater part of the site lies vacant and presents an opportunity for a mixed use redevelopment.
- 4.6.18 Opportunities should seek to retain the antiques centre building and seek to retain the soft play provision on the site. However, the site is currently underused with vacant and / or areas of 'left-over-space'. This presents an opportunity for a mixed use redevelopment scheme incorporating and raising the profile of both the antiques centre and soft play provision.
- 4.6.19 The waterway to the south of the site provides an opportunity for an enhanced wildlife corridor. Whilst the area is in Flood Zone 2, this does not preclude development options.
- 4.6.20 Whilst development would need to be in-keeping with the surrounding scale and character of buildings, redevelopment presents an opportunity for an innovative scheme with the potential to incorporate zero-carbon built forms of development. The site has the ability to improve the sense of arrival into the town via Exeter Road whilst improving pedestrian and cycle links across the site to Crow Green. Active frontages on to Crow Green and Exeter Road will enliven the approaches to the site.

Objectives

- 4.6.21 Key objectives for the redevelopment of the Former Tannery site will consider the following:
- Establish a mixed use development that is within the town centre; supporting local shops and services.

- Establish active frontage through main entrances onto Crow Green and Exeter Hill to provide a better sense of arrival into the town centre.
- Explore opportunities for alternative forms of development such as zero carbon. development or similar standards. This could be an exemplar scheme for Mid Devon.
- Retain the historic antiques building, rehoming the soft play elsewhere within the site.
- Seek opportunities to relocate any uses such as storage to peripheral town centre locations.
- Enhance the water course for visual and wildlife benefits whilst integrating new cycle and pedestrian routes into the existing town centre wide network of routes.

Next steps

- 4.6.22 Next steps will require:
- A review of flood risk considerations.
 - Liaison with landowners exploring options for redevelopment including uses, building form and layout.
 - A detailed review of improved cycle and pedestrian through the site.
 - A review of the visual, public realm and wildlife benefits that may be achieved adjacent to the waterway.
 - A review of the relocation / rehoming of existing uses as required.

DIAGRAM TO BE INCLUDED HERE

Figure 57 Diagram showing key design principles for The Tannery site

4

Higher Bullring

Context

4.6.23 The Higher Bullring has long been the location of the town's market. However, in more recent years the space has felt less of a market square and more of a primary traffic route for those travelling through the town centre. The Higher Bullring has the potential to be reimagined as a flexible public space, with the creation of a larger, level, shared use area. Detailed design and layout will ensure its safe and accessible use for all members of the public including those that may be visually impaired.

4.6.24 Redesign of the space will allow it to be used flexibly to accommodate different events of different scales. Reconfiguration of the parking may allow for the temporary suspension of parking during event days. A comprehensive approach to surfacing, materials, street furniture and utilities such as water and electricity would allow for a co-ordinated approach. This would better facilitate a range of day time and evening uses, including outdoor seating that would contribute to the level and activity and vibrancy in the town centre.

4.6.25 The existing trees are a valuable asset to the appearance of the Higher Bullring, to the surrounding historic buildings and their setting.

Objectives

4.6.26 Key objectives for the redevelopment of the Higher Bullring will consider the following:

- Enhancement of the space for use by a variety of activities
- Comprehensive redesign of the space as a larger, level, shared use area that will meet all standards for safe use
- Review a reconfiguration of the parking

- Design and layout to include a comprehensive use of materials and street furniture
- Retention of trees and integration of other biodiversity benefits
- Enhanced sense of arrival into the town centre

Next steps

4.6.27 Next steps will require:

- Survey and other preparatory work- utilities, archaeology etc
- Traffic surveys
- Preparation of a landscape design
- Liaison with landowners, stakeholders and other interested parties.

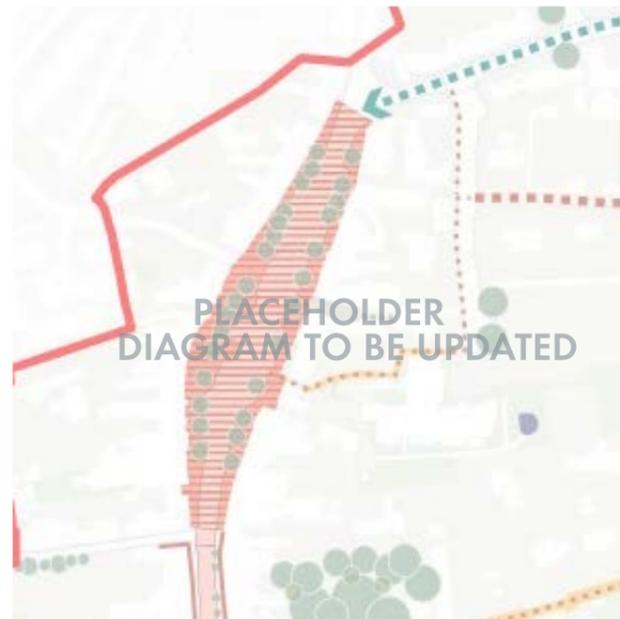


Figure 58 Diagram showing key design principles for the Higher Bullring

5

Improvements to cycling between proposed new rail station and the town centre

Context

4.6.28 Existing pedestrian and cycle provision across town including along Station Road can be difficult; particularly where it is shared with other vehicles and its uninviting due to a lack of dedicated provision. Given the proposal for a new railway station, Culm Garden Village, aspirations to enhance opportunities at Alexandria Industrial Estate and recognition of trips to the facilities at the service station there is a need to enhance pedestrian and cycle provision along this corridor.

4.6.29 A number of partner organisations including Devon County Council and Highways England are investigating longer term transport solutions to address capacity issues in and around Cullompton including looking to address capacity issues at Junction 28. There is an ambition to bring forward pedestrian and cycle provision along this corridor at the earliest opportunity, subject to funding.

4.6.30 Improvements in cycle and pedestrian provision to and from the railway station and town centre will need to be considered in close association with the construction of the Relief Road and Culm Garden Village, as well as with existing routes including those through the CCA Fields.

Objectives

4.6.31 Key objectives to improve the ability to cycle between the proposed new railway station and the town centre will consider the following:

- Improved pedestrian / cycle crossings north and south of Station Road.
- Installation of signage and tactile paving where missing at junctions.
- Investigation of a new cycle route through Alexandria Industrial Estate linking to Millennium Way.

- Integration of the CCA pedestrian / cycle ways into proposals for Station Road.
- Provision of appropriate signage
- Cycle parking provision at the new railway station and in the town centre.

Next Steps

4.6.32 Next steps will require:

- Detailed analysis of cycle and pedestrian options and other related works
- Preparation of detailed design
- Liaison with landowners, stakeholders and other interested parties.

Context

4.6.33 Following construction of the Relief Road (2023 – 2024) there is an opportunity to redesign Fore Street. The construction of the Relief Road creates an opportunity to transform the character and function of the high street to the benefit of existing businesses, residents and visitors as well as enhancing the setting of the historic environment.

4.6.34 The need for two way traffic through Fore Street cannot be discounted at this stage and will be the subject of further investigation by Devon County Council. The construction of the Relief Road and the associated reduction in traffic through the high street presents a particular opportunity for the pedestrian environment; an opportunity to rebalance the space given to pedestrians and cyclists versus the car. This can be achieved through a number of measures.

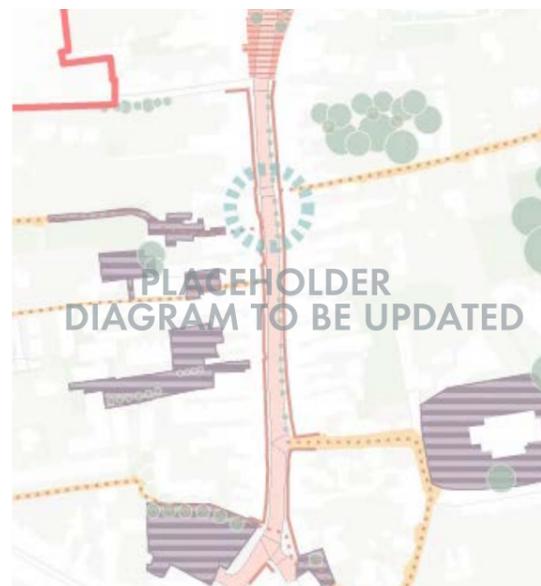
Objectives

- To rebalance the street space given to pedestrians and cyclists versus the car.
- To reclaim space for pedestrians / cyclists and thereby create an environment conducive with supporting local businesses.
- To have a consistent use of materials.
- Consolidation and decluttering of the high street of street furniture.
- Integrated cycle provision along the high street.
- Retention of public transport within the high street including bus stops.
- Designed measures to reduce traffic speeds including narrowing of the carriageway, surface treatments.
- Prioritise pedestrian movement where possible.

Next Steps

4.6.35 Next steps will require:

- Traffic surveys and modelling.
- Liaison with landowners, stakeholders and other interested parties.
- Scheme option development and design.



KEY

- Existing public rights of way
- Proposed informal foot/cyclepath
- Improved town centre route
- Improved pedestrian crossing
- Bulking flexible public space
- Pocket spaces
- Courts and lanes - potential for improvement
- Improved frontage
- Improving bulking / highstreet

Context

4.6.36 Cullompton's principal green open space is the CCA Fields. These community owned fields are bounded towards their western edge by the leat. This historic landscape feature is an important relic of the town's industrial past and growth; providing water to power the town's three mills.

4.6.37 The leat provides a natural, wooded retreat serving as an important wildlife corridor and recreational destination. The well-used footpath on its eastern bank is connected to the lanes behind the high street by bridges.

4.6.38 This proposal seeks to reinstate a former crossing over the leat. Subject to landowner agreement it presents an opportunity for new and improved connections to the town centre.

Objectives

- To reinstate a former crossing over the leat.
- To seek opportunities for new and improved pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre.
- To achieve an enhanced setting to the leat.
- To enhance the use and enjoyment of the leat in association with the CCA Fields

Next Steps

4.6.39 Next steps will require:

- Survey and other preparatory work including health and safety.
- Preparation of a detailed design
- Liaison with landowners, stakeholders and other interested parties including the Environment Agency.



Figure 59 Aerial imagery showing approximate location of former crossing ©Google Earth

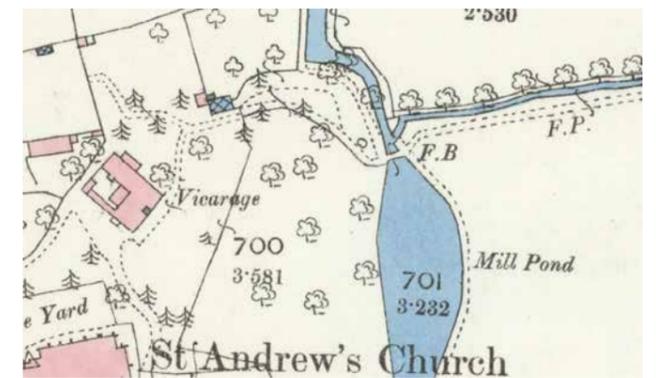


Figure 60 Historic map showing location of footbridge over the leat ©NLS



Figure 61 Historic photo showing footbridge c1950s

Context

4.6.40 The former Regal cinema, located close to the Higher Bull Ring, opened in the early 1930's, with a seating capacity for some 350 people. It remained open until 1975 when the main frontage of the building was remodelled into two retail units. The only real visible evidence of its former use, is the wide opening on the frontage of the building, leading down an enclosed passageway to what would have been the auditorium. It is behind the two retail units on the frontage, that the former cinema building presents an opportunity site. Subject to landowner agreement it presents an opportunity for enhancement and more productive use.

Objective

- To seek opportunities in partnership with landowner agreement to bring forward development opportunities and enhancement proposals.

Next Step

- 4.6.41 The next step will require:
- Development options and feasibility.



Figure 62 Location of the Cinema Site ©Google Earth



5 Heritage Strategy

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Cullompton has a fascinating, diverse past - its history reflected in the great number of designated heritage assets in town. The centre of Cullompton was designated a conservation area in 1977, and within the conservation area there are over 50 listed buildings, including the Grade I St Andrews Church; the Grade II Trots Almshouse and the Grade I Walronds. There are also several important unlisted buildings and features that make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the town centre. Taking care of Cullompton's heritage will play a crucial part in the regeneration of the town. By protecting and improving Cullompton's old buildings, streets and historic landscape setting, Cullompton's identity will be strengthened; rooted in its history as a market town and as a place of work and business.

5.1.2 The Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted in 2003 as a Supplementary Planning Document and the Management Plan was published in 2009. These documents are currently being updated. In 2019 Historic England awarded funding following a successful Heritage Action Zone bid to support heritage-led regeneration projects in the town. This represents an invaluable opportunity for the town's heritage to be a catalyst for Cullompton to realise its former past as a vibrant, diverse and prosperous town. A key part of the masterplan's vision is that Cullompton's unique heritage will be celebrated and enhanced.

5.1.3 This part of the masterplan sets out a heritage strategy for Cullompton town centre. It develops the masterplan principles at Part 3 of this document into a strategy for the preservation and enhancement of the town's historic features. It sets out what makes Cullompton's heritage special and what challenges it currently faces. It explores the benefits heritage can bring to the town and the different organisations that can play their part in realising these benefits. It provides aims and actions for improving the historic environment and a strategy for implementing them.

5.2 Summary of significance

5.2.1 Over its long history Cullompton's fortunes have waxed and waned but its steady growth has resulted in an exceptionally well-preserved street pattern, with its medieval market spaces and squares still evident. Burgage plots are traceable through long narrow plots, emphasised by multiple lanes (courts) extending laterally on both sides of the High Street and Fore Street. Multiple fires over the centuries including an especially catastrophic fire in 1838 means that there are surprisingly few buildings from before the Victorian period. But those that do survive are of high quality and include the timber framed Manor House, and its Jacobean neighbour - the newly restored Walronds. The Parish Church of St Andrew's is one of the finest churches in Devon with an exceptionally rich interior.

5.2.2 Cullompton's key historic qualities are set out on the opposite page.

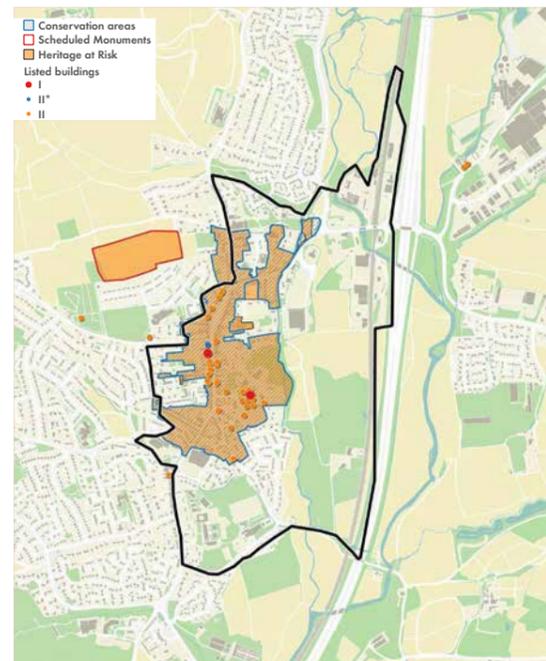


Figure 63 Designated heritage assets



COHERENT STREET PATTERN
A coherent street pattern of at least medieval origins with a tight urban grain.



RICH AND VARIED LANDSCAPE
A rich and varied landscape, stemming from buildings of different periods and the gently meandering line of the main street.



HISTORIC LANDSCAPE SETTING
Nestled in a valley with views to the surrounding countryside and Blackdown Hills AONB.



OUTSTANDING BUILDINGS
Some outstanding buildings especially St. Andrew's Church and the Walronds



ST. ANDREW'S TOWER
Landmark quality of St Andrew's tower with views to it from across Cullompton.



OTHER HISTORIC BUILDINGS
Other listed buildings and buildings of local interest, many of group value.



NETWORK OF YARDS AND PASSAGES
Interesting and important network of yards and passages, reflecting former burgage plots.



TRACES OF FORMER INDUSTRIES
Traces of Cullompton's former industries, including evidence of three mills on the Leat.



WEEKLY MARKET
Weekly market, still in use on the original livestock market site at the Upper Bulling.



19TH AND 20TH CENTURY SHOPFRONTS
Surviving 19th and early 20th century shopfronts.



INTIMATE AND WALKABLE
A compact town with an intimate feel, easy to get around by foot.



INDEPENDENT SHOPS
High number of independent retailers contributing to the town's distinctiveness.

Figure 64 A summary of the key qualities of Cullompton's historic environment

5.3 Local aspirations for heritage

5.3.1 Cullompton's heritage is considered by local people to be the town's best characteristic - its mix of historic buildings, the Bullring, the town's important involvement in the wool trade and its historic landscape setting all contribute to Cullompton's special character and identity. When testing the masterplan principles with local people in Spring 2020, the principles to 'repair historic buildings and setting' and 'find viable uses for empty historic buildings' were two of the five most strongly supported principles (90% either strongly agreed or agreed). Taking care of heritage is important to the people of Cullompton.

5.3.2 The heritage strategy is informed by the aspirations of local people, many of whom acknowledge the key role of heritage for the town's future. As part of the consultation on the masterplan in Spring 2020, local people were asked 'What are your priorities for making the most of Cullompton's heritage?'. There were 40 responses to the question, with 40% of responses relating to the restoration of historic buildings. The second most popular response related to showcasing Cullompton's history by providing more information in public spaces. Other responses included protecting and restoring other historic features, reducing traffic along the High Street and bringing vacant buildings back into use.



"The mix of historic unspoilt buildings."

"Close to rural areas."

"History and the Main Street of ancient buildings and the history of the wool trade. Of course the people are lovely too."

"It has huge potential to be a beautiful high street, distinct as a town from the rural environment surrounding it."

"The church and the Tudor buildings."

"Old buildings, CCA fields, friendly people."

"The old buildings and the Bullring."

"The historic buildings are beautiful but need upkeep and preservation. Also very friendly feeling about the town."

"Bull Ring is a great market and meeting place."

"Walronds and Merchants house."

"That it's an old town."

Answers to the question 'What do you think is Cullompton's best characteristic?'

"Improve the look of Fore Street by smartening up those buildings and shop fronts which currently look so scruffy, and by putting in some greenery."

"Create a style guide for shop frontage to ensure buildings look good quality."



Answers to the question 'What are your priorities for making the most of Cullompton's heritage?'

5.4 Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

The SWOT analysis below identifies the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to heritage in Cullompton.

STRENGTHS

- Strong historic identity with many heritage assets including several high status listed buildings in the heart of town
- Fore Street / High Street has a great number of historic buildings with group value and little infill development along it
- Survival of ancient street pattern and yards
- Proximity to Blackdown Hills AONB
- Large number of independent traders
- Regular farmers' market
- Strong and active community organisations including those interested in heritage e.g. Cullompton Walronds Preservation Trust
- Local people who care about heritage



WEAKNESSES

- Buildings in poor condition and poorly maintained
- Unsympathetic alterations and extensions to historic buildings, especially along Fore Street / High Street
- Use of inappropriate materials on historic buildings
- Vacant properties in need of investment and loss of key services e.g. high street banks / pharmacy
- Very limited leisure and retail offer - little to attract shoppers
- Impact of heavy through traffic on condition of historic buildings;
- Poor environment for pedestrians along Fore Street / High Street - narrow pavements and high traffic volumes
- Visual clutter (poles, signs, overhead wires)
- Some lanes and courts are in poor condition - bins clutter pavements and block access
- Lack of planting / greenery in places
- Poor frontage design



OPPORTUNITIES

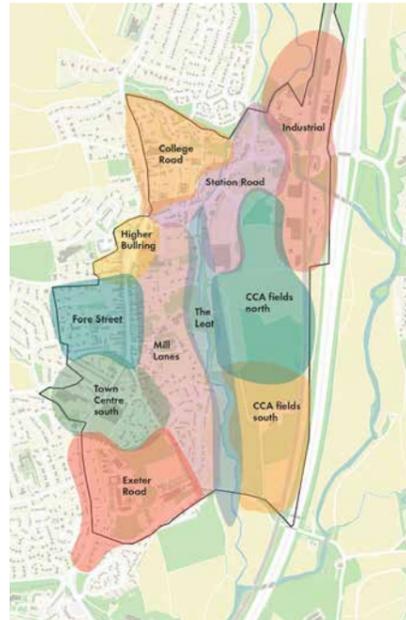
- Identification as a Heritage Action Zone with associated funding for enhancement and regeneration.
- Planned residential expansion of Cullompton, bringing new demand and increased spending and an opportunity for heritage-led regeneration
- Construction of the relief road and associated reduction in traffic through the centre of the town.
- Other planned investments including the new railway station.
- Opportunity to transform the Higher Bullring into a high quality public space as well as opportunities to improve other public spaces
- Opportunities for an increase in public access into historic buildings, the restoration and repurposing of vacant buildings.
- Promoting the town's heritage including interpretation panels in historically significant locations.
- Covid-19 and a new focus on 'local' - working from home, shopping locally, importance of nearby green spaces, active travel etc.

THREATS

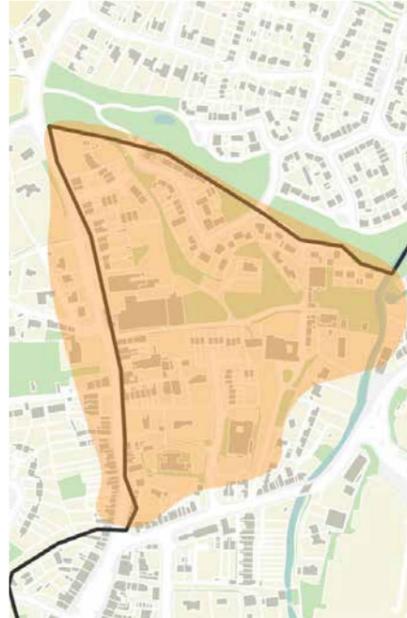
- Incremental alterations e.g. inappropriate repairs / redecoration eroding the historic character and appearance of the conservation area
- Lack of investment in the fabric of buildings - extra cost of restoring heritage buildings mean landlords are reluctant to invest
- Low landlord investments in shopfronts
- Changes in the nature of retail
- Possible Covid-19 harmful impacts on local businesses, residents and broader investment opportunities



5.5 Character areas



College Road



Station Road



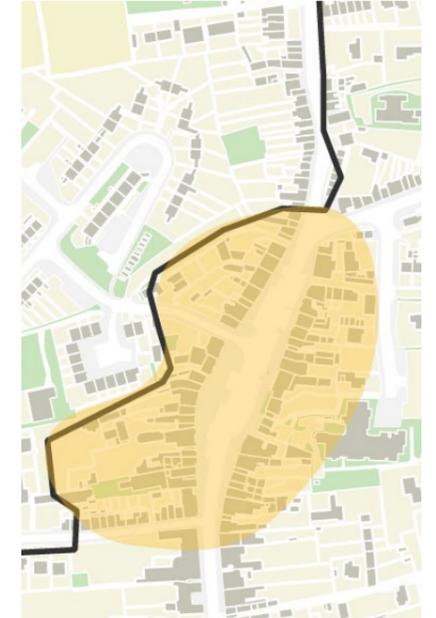
Industry



CCA Fields North



Higher Bullring



5.5.1 Cullompton's character is diverse and extends beyond the conservation area and its designated heritage assets. To assist our understanding of heritage, the study area can be considered through several overlapping character areas. The boundaries are not definitive but have been drawn up on the basis of predominant land use, building type or historical associations.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS

- Grade II Trots Almshouses
- 19th century cottages and industry
- Historically Higher Street was the northern route out of town
- Almshouses prominent in views from the Bullring and Station Road
- Views towards St Andrew's Church

- Arrival point into Cullompton
- Historically important Weary Traveller pub
- Commercial area
- Improving pedestrian experience i.e more places to cross
- The leat is an important feature

- KEY ISSUES**
- Traffic dominated environment along Willand Road
 - Narrow pavements and few crossing points along this stretch
 - Incremental changes to buildings - loss of historic features, proliferation of satellite dishes and other accretions

- Traffic and highways dominated - poor pedestrian experience
- Access to the river limited and setting could be improved
- Visually prominent commercial buildings
- Large car parking areas

OBJECTIVES FOR HERITAGE

- To protect and enhance the Grade II listed almshouses and their setting
- To reduce the impact of through traffic
- To improve the pedestrian experience - introduce crossings and planting etc.

- Improving the arrival experience into town - role of historic buildings in strengthening identity of the town
- Improving pedestrian accessibility and experience i.e more places to cross
- Open up access and improve environment along the leat



5.5.2 To help inform the heritage strategy, we have considered what each area's key characteristics are, the main issues facing each area and the key objectives for heritage.

- Arrival point into Cullompton
- Mainly industrial and commercial uses alongside the railway line
- River Culm a key characteristic

- Open, green character
- Tree lined footpaths
- Informal and meadow like
- Views to the parish church and other parts of the town
- Maintained by The Cullompton Community Association

- Disconnected from the heart of town
- Impact of junction 28 improvements and construction of relief road

- Footpath surfacing
- Littering and dog fouling

- Reopening of railway station
- Retaining and enhancing historic industrial buildings and promoting mix of uses including industry
- Improving the arrival experience into town - role of historic buildings in strengthening identity of the town
- Improving pedestrian experience i.e more places to cross
- Opportunities for improved public access and environmental enhancements along the River Culm to be explored

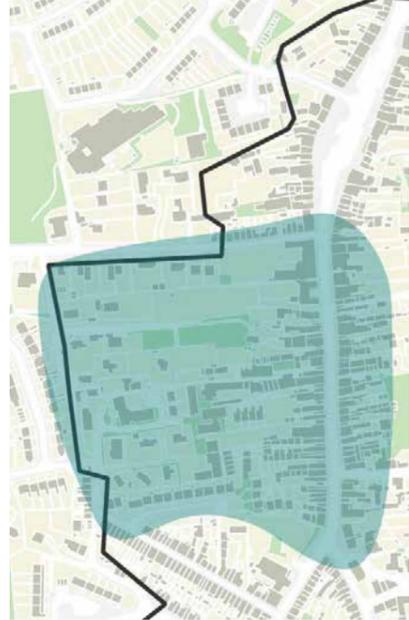
- Capitalise on the construction of the relief road to raise the quality of the open space and connections to and from it

- Principal open space in the town centre
- Its widened form indicating its long history and function as a market place
- Trees make an important contribution
- Listed war memorial provide civic role
- Large, historic properties front the space including several listed buildings that retain their historic features / materials e.g windows

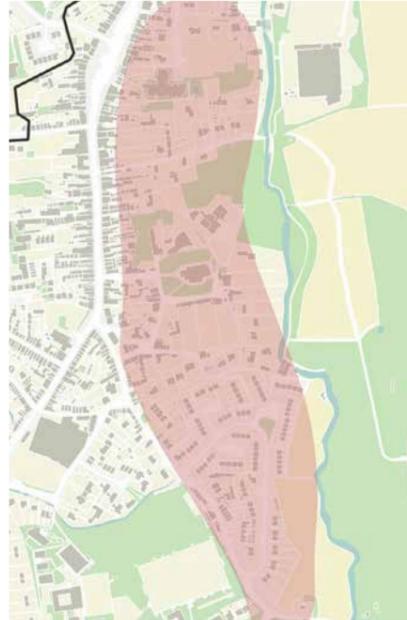
- Through traffic has a negative impact on historic fabric and environment
- Low quality public realm in places
- Loss of historic features and materials
- Potential vacancy issues

- Establish a new focal point for the town through the creation of a public space for events and other activities and to improve the setting of the historic buildings
- Review opportunities to repurpose and refurbish old buildings for new uses or to support existing uses better
- Seek to improve the pedestrian environment through planting, crossings and reduced traffic

Fore Street



Mill Lanes



The Leat



CCA Fields South



Town Centre South



Exeter Road



IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS

- Main historic street through town
- Concentration of Cullompton's oldest and most notable buildings (most 19th C)
- Varied and eclectic architectural styles
- Historic lanes and courts leading off
- Listed buildings including Walronds and the Manor House Hotel

- Courts and lanes that thread from the west side of High Street and Fore Street
- High walls and curving streets
- St Andrew's Church and views to it
- Tranquil enclave around the parish church with its stone boundary walls and cluster of listed houses is particularly special

- Historic landscape feature important to the town's growth - stream provided water power for three mills
- Natural, wooded and enclosed feel
- Mature trees and planting on either side
- Well used footpath on its eastern bank connected by bridges to the lanes behind High Street

- Open and green character
- Views to the parish church and other parts of the town
- Sports pitches and enclosed children's play area
- Maintained by The Cullompton Community Association
- Tree lined footpaths

- Historic route through town
- Hayridge Centre a key community asset
- New Road a historically important terrace street of former mill workers cottages
- Cockpit Hill and Pound Square include several houses of interest as well as traces of industrial activity
- Views to the parish church

- Architecturally diffuse area at southern edge of the conservation area
- Threshold to the town centre
- Includes Cullompton Community College and the sports centre
- Views to the parish church
- Green verges along Exeter Road

KEY ISSUES

- Impact of through traffic on condition of historic buildings
- Poor pedestrian environment - narrow / uneven pavements
- Unsympathetic alterations to buildings
- Vacant and neglected buildings
- Lack of greenery
- Shopfront signage detracts in places

- Incremental changes and accretions

- Improved connections with the town
- Bank subsidence
- Upgrade / maintenance of bridges
- Littering and dog fouling

- Footpath surfacing
- Littering and dog fouling

- Some cottages in poor condition - lack of maintenance / loss of features and materials / accretions e.g. satellite dishes
- Low quality infill development in places
- Traffic along Exeter Hill and cars / parking dominates in streets around

- Some houses in poor condition - poor maintenance / loss of features and materials / accretions e.g. satellite dishes

OBJECTIVES FOR HERITAGE

- To bring vacant buildings into reuse
- To protect buildings from further deterioration and loss of original features
- To improve the appearance of buildings through shop-front improvement schemes
- Protect and reinstate original shopfronts

- To promote this area as a focal point for heritage in the town
- Review opportunities for an increase in public access into historic buildings
- To promote routes through to the leat from the town centre

- Increase awareness of the Leat and the important role it has played in shaping Cullompton's heritage
- Improve accessibility along and connections to it from the town
- To increase wildlife benefits along it
- Review opportunities to ensure long term maintenance and management of the leat
- Review opportunities to reinstate heritage, including iron footbridge over Leat?

- Capitalise on the construction of the relief road to raise the quality of the open space and connections to and from it

- To protect buildings from further deterioration and loss of original features
- To celebrate this area's history as former housing for mill workers

- Protect the historic properties in the area
- Improve the arrival experience from Exeter Road to the High Street

5.6 Benefits of heritage

5.6.1 There is a body of evidence that supports the case for investment in heritage. Recent findings have been summarised by Historic England. On average, £1 of public expenditure on heritage-led regeneration generates £1.60 additional economic activity over a ten-year period ([Heritage Counts 2017](#)). Furthermore, research shows that taking care of heritage also brings wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits for local communities:

"The historic environment provides a sense of authenticity, beauty and distinctiveness. This attracts people, businesses and investment, and can provide places with their competitive advantage. Using the historic environment as an asset, and giving it new life, has also been one of the cornerstones of the economic and social revival of our towns and cities" ([Heritage Works, 2017](#)).

Regeneration and sustainable growth

5.6.2 Taking care of Cullompton's heritage can help to secure investment from public, private and charitable sectors which will bring wider benefits to the town. Findings by Historic England show that for businesses, the historic environment is as important in deciding where to locate as road access (Heritage Counts, 2010). Investors can have confidence because historic assets are well integrated into the townscape and already highly valued. Promoting an active role for heritage in regeneration will help realise other cultural and economic benefits by reinforcing the sense of place and identity of Cullompton. Furthermore, the re-use of existing buildings is often the most sustainable way to develop (Heritage Works, 2013).

5.6.3 Heritage funding can be paired with existing resources and funding streams to boost the benefits of heritage-led regeneration. The recent funding awarded by Historic England as part of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone project is an opportunity for this.

Tourism

5.6.4 England's heritage attractions play a major role in generating millions of domestic day and overnight trips. 3/4 of adults in England visited a heritage site at least once in 2017/2018. 34% of domestic tourists stated being able to visit a historic building or monument as their 'sole reason' or a 'very important reason' why they took their domestic holiday or short break. This increases to two thirds for day visitors. ([Heritage Counts 2019](#)).

5.6.5 In 2015, tourists spent £101 million in Mid Devon supporting the local economy ([Mid Devon Visitor Survey 2016](#)). The district attracted approximately 212,000 staying visits and 1.59 million day visits. Results from the visitor survey (2016) reveal that most visitors intended to visit Tiverton (40%), whereas only 8% intended to visit Cullompton.

5.6.6 Positioned just off the M5, Cullompton is well placed to receive visitors en-route to the south west. There is a real opportunity to capitalise on its strategic location and diverse heritage to provide an enhanced cultural, shopping and recreational offer. This would be as a destination in its own right as well as to encourage those stopping en-route to spend more time in the town.

Shopping

Cullompton's heritage provides a fantastic opportunity to raise the town's retail profile and ranking amongst other nearby centres. Shopping is no longer just about the shops - people are looking for a broader shopping experience. Heritage and culture, a distinct sense of place, spaces to dwell and a diverse dining offer can all contribute to an enjoyable leisure and retail experience that entice people into town. A town focused on heritage will draw people in and encourage them to explore more and stay for longer.

Culture and community

5.6.7 Heritage is a key aspect of Cullompton's cultural calendar. The Walronds is a great example of a repurposed historic building, now used for community events and activities.

5.6.8 The ability to share and participate in heritage is an essential ingredient of community cohesion, helping to reinforce identity in Cullompton. Regeneration of the historic environment benefits individual assets, the wider area around them and the communities which value and associate with them.

Health and social well-being

5.6.9 Involvement and enjoyment of the historic environment benefits our health. Access to the historic parks, gardens and other open spaces has significant benefits to our physical and mental health. Research shows how natural views can lower blood pressure and stress and improvements to the built environment have been shown to improve mental well-being (Benefits of Heritage, HLF, 2012). Attentive and inclusive quality design influences social behaviour, and can help reduce crime.

Education and employment

5.6.10 The historic environment provides students with the opportunity to learn about local heritage first-hand. Teaching young people about heritage can help students to develop a broader range of skills e.g. research and analysis, critical thinking and design, which can be applied more widely to the arts, culture and sciences. Heritage can also provide opportunities for important skills training in heritage renovation as part of further education programmes, as well as local employment opportunities. This can help to embed a high skills base in the local community to support high quality building work.

5.7 Partnerships

5.7.1 Delivering the heritage strategy depends on successful partnership working to help to regenerate, conserve and promote the historic environment.

5.7.2 Key partners include:

- Devon County Council
- Mid Devon District Council
- Cullompton Town Council
- Cullompton Town Team
- Representatives from the local business community and community organisations including The Hayridge Centre, Cullompton Community Centre, The Farmers Market, Cullompton Community Association, St Andrew's Church and other places of worship
- Art and cultural organisations including Cullompton Arts House, Walronds Preservation Trust and Cullompton History Group
- Schools and further education including Willowbank Primary School, St Andrew's Primary School, Cullompton Community College, adult education e.g. Learn Devon at the Hayridge Centre, youth clubs and youth activity groups
- National and regional partners including Historic England, Natural England

5.7.3 The Cullompton Town Centre Regeneration Partnership Group has been set up to help deliver projects as part of the HAZ scheme. Many stakeholders listed above are included in the partnership and have contributed a range of cash and non-cash contributions to help deliver the scheme.

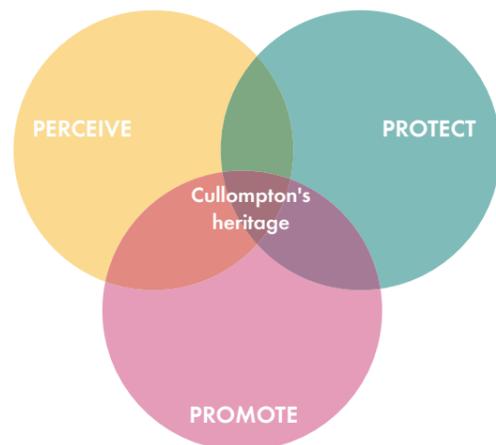
5.8 A Strategy for change

Overarching vision for heritage

- 5.8.1 The vision for Cullompton's heritage is **To use the special qualities and historic character of Cullompton as the foundation for future change. To allow the town's heritage to shape a distinctive identity for the town - a place people are proud to call home and a welcoming place to visit.**

Aims

- 5.8.2 The strategy sets out three aims that will help to realise the vision. These are to:
- **Perceive** - gather information to better understand Cullompton's past, its unique qualities and the existing condition of its historic environment
 - **Protect** - take care of Cullompton's heritage to prevent further deterioration of its buildings and to bring assets off the 'at risk' register
 - **Promote** - celebrating Cullompton's heritage and raising awareness through public realm enhancements, wayfinding strategies and promotional activities e.g. interpretation boards / online presence.
- 5.8.3 For each aim are a set of objectives and required actions. Underneath each objective is an indication of where in the town the objective applies to and whose responsibility it is. A sense of priority is also given to help inform delivery of the strategy.



Aim 1 - PERCEIVE

- 5.8.4 Cullompton's heritage has many layers. It is apparent through the 'seen' - the medieval street pattern, old buildings and historic materials and features. It is also glimpsed through the more hidden - street signs alluding to past activities or uses, the social history told through stories and old photographs, or the sense of place informed by the historic valley landscape.
- 5.8.5 Different people relate to, and appreciate history in different ways. Understanding this is essential for improving the historic environment. Cullompton's history is also always evolving - new stories are being told as the town responds to changing trends. Actions to manage Cullompton's heritage must be rooted in a thorough understanding of the town's history, the current condition of buildings, the challenges the town faces relating to heritage, and the contribution heritage can make to the local community, economy and environment. Managing Cullompton's heritage requires a strategic approach which is evidence-led.



Heritage assets in town

Objective A Grow our understanding of Cullompton's unique past

- 5.8.6 The District Council is working proactively with Cullompton Town Council, voluntary groups and local residents to develop its understanding of Cullompton's past and to improve its evidence base for managing its heritage. Interested groups and individuals provide a vital resource for fieldwork and research, filling gaps in knowledge about topics such as vernacular buildings, archaeology, the town's cultural history and its past industries. Having a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the town's heritage will provide a sensitive and effective response to promoting Cullompton as a heritage and cultural destination. The Devon Heritage Centre and Town Hall contains a wealth of information including history books, old maps, photographs, registers and directories that provide a useful resource to grow understanding.
- 5.8.7 The project to record the history of the cloth trade in the town, as well as the town council's archive project to collect and document significant items from Cullompton's past are great actions already taken that demonstrate a proactiveness to explore the town's heritage. Similarly, the project to expand the oral histories library that allows individuals to learn about the past from long-standing residents of Cullompton and the project to add to the existing local history books that explain the importance of Cullompton's architectural and social heritage.

Key actions

- Pioneer a research project with local primary schools to investigate local history. This could be combined with the oral histories library - young people could interview older residents about their experiences.

Where? Town wide

Priority Medium

Objective B Understand the role of heritage in town life and the challenges and opportunities it brings to different stakeholders

- 5.8.8 Integral to the strategy is developing our understanding of the role heritage currently plays in town life - the benefits, challenges and opportunities it brings to local residents, workers, students, business owners, landowners, community organisations and visitors. Establishing a baseline position will help to inform the management and promotion of Cullompton's heritage in the future.

Key actions

- Carry out a survey to understand how is heritage viewed and valued (including the perceived benefits, challenges and opportunities) by people who live, work and have a stake in the town. The survey should inform a review to identify potential opportunity for partnership working and co-operative solutions to any heritage challenges.

Where?

Town wide

Priority

Medium



Aim 2 - PROTECT

5.8.9 Cullompton's heritage is at risk. The conservation area is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register and is deteriorating. Unsympathetic developments, poorly maintained buildings and inappropriate alterations and extensions are contributing to the decline of character in the conservation area. Much of the historic fabric is in a fragile condition and in need of investment. The traffic, as well as the erosion of character and appearance (including Permitted Development works and unauthorised works), and the decreasing vitality and viability (empty shops, changing shopping habits) are issues that continue to have a negative impact on the town.

5.8.10 There have been some clear conservation successes since 2009, especially the restoration of the Walronds and the rescue of the Merchant's House, both former buildings at risk. The garden at Walronds is now an enjoyable community resource. The Community Centre by the church and the Hayridge Centre have also been positive moves.

5.8.11 The second aim of the historic strategy seeks to build on these heritage successes, seeking to remove the conservation area, Roman fort and camp and historic buildings off the 'heritage at risk' register where there is the ability to do so. It also seeks to strengthen the protection for all designated and undesignated heritage assets in the town. To do this, a combination of up-to-date management guidance and on-the-ground interventions that prioritise the most vulnerable assets are necessary.

Objective C Update and strengthen guidance to manage Cullompton's heritage

5.8.12 Appraisals of conservation areas are undertaken to ensure a positive management of change to the historic environment which is sustainable and which protects the special character of the conservation area. Local authorities are legally obliged to review their conservation areas from time to time and the Historic England Advice Note 1 (2016) underlines the importance of regular review of Conservation Area appraisals and management plans.

5.8.13 A review of the existing conservation area appraisal and management plan is currently being undertaken. It will include clear deliverable objectives to help ensure a sustainable future for Cullompton's heritage is delivered.

Key actions

- Review Local Assets Heritage Register and make recommendations for listing
- Review the Buildings at Risk register and seek to develop a strategy for individual buildings to ensure their removal from the register

Where?

Conservation area and its boundaries

Priority

High

Objective D Bring vacant old buildings into use

5.8.14 The National Planning Policy Guidance (para 3) states that generally the risks of neglect and decay for historic buildings are best addressed through ensuring that they remain valued and in active use that is consistent with their conservation. This may require sympathetic changes from time to time. Whilst vacancy rates in Cullompton are lower than the national average (7% in August 2019), there are buildings at risk of further degradation because of their vacancy. The Council undertook a detailed inspection of all properties in Fore Street and found that 9% of residential properties were vacant. Buildings like the Old Tannery and the Post Office sorting office on Fore Street are examples of buildings that should be protected through reuse.

5.8.15 Bringing vacant buildings back into use, including encouraging homes above shops, can not only improve the historic fabric but also help to bring vibrancy and activity into the town and support evening uses.

Key actions

- Seek to bring vacant buildings back into use to provide new commercial and /or community space.
- Seek opportunities for a permanent venue for the Cullompton Arts House.
- Explore opportunities to fund community initiatives and pop-up shops that might temporarily enhance vacant units.
- Seek to encourage homes above shops through preparation of guidance, engagement with owners and identification of funding opportunities.

Where?

Fore Street, High Street

Priority

High

Objective E Refurbish stand-out buildings

5.8.16 Refurbishing the town's most outstanding buildings is essential for protecting the historic integrity of the town and for allowing Cullompton's unique identity to shine through. Cullompton has 4 high status listed buildings, all of which are, or have been on the 'Heritage at Risk' register. There are a further 22 Grade II listed buildings in the HAZ area, many of which are in a bad state of repair.

5.8.17 The refurbishment of the Grade I listed Walronds and the creation of a public garden sets an example for how taking care of exceptional buildings can have wider benefits for the town. The building now provides a multifunctional space for a variety of different activities and uses and is a hub for the community.

Key actions

- Within the HAZ area set out a strategy for prioritising historic buildings for refurbishment. Action should be directed at buildings most 'at risk', those in poorest condition and with the potential to contribute to the town centre if refurbished.

Where?

Fore Street, High Street, Church Street

Priority

Medium

Objective F

Improve the condition of Cullompton's historic lanes and courts

5.8.18 A special feature of the town are the lanes, courts and passages leading off from the High Street / Fore Street. The court areas to the rear of the Fore Street buildings reflect the boundaries of the old burghage plots and are therefore important to the historic integrity of the town. They vary in their character - some are open, others run through a covered passage. Some are private and widen into courtyards flanked by residential or workshop units. Others are accessible to the public and provide intimate walking routes, connecting the centre of town with the CCA fields and the residential areas on either side.

5.8.19 They also vary in their condition - there is not a consistent palette of surfacing materials and some are cluttered by bins and modern traffic signage. Many of the residential properties along these routes are in need of maintenance. There is an opportunity to improve the environment of these lanes and to restore a consistent and sympathetic design to the entrance ways which value their historic significance.

Key actions

- Seek opportunities with key stakeholders including landowners and businesses to develop a public realm strategy that will consider surfacing, materials, signage, bin management, visual vistas and wayfinding.
- Explore opportunities to create new and refurbished homes and work spaces in the historic courts and lanes that radiate off the high street.

Where? Lanes and courts off Fore Street

Priority Medium

Objective G

Enhance Fore Street and improve the condition of its buildings

5.8.20 Cullompton has suffered over the years from heavy traffic that congests the centre of town. The traffic has worsened the condition of the historic properties that front Fore Street, causing structural and decorative damage. The heavy vehicles, noise and exhaust fumes detract from the general setting of the town and have worsened air quality. The construction of the relief road presents an opportunity to carry out works to enhance the environment for the pedestrian, cycle and business communities. In so doing, the town centre will become a more inclusive, healthier and safer environment.

5.8.21 It will also help to protect historic properties from further damage. The Council undertook an inspection of all properties in Fore Street and found that 38% were in poor condition due to damp, fire risk, poor repairs and hazardous stairs. The objective seeks to improve the condition of buildings by working with property owners and funding partners. Similarly, the grant scheme support through the Heritage Action Zone programme to support property owners along Fore Street to repair and refurbish buildings.

Key actions

- Seek to transform the character and function of the high street including a review of traffic flows and pavement widths following the construction of the Relief Road
- Undertake a detailed survey of the condition of all high and medium priority buildings

Where? Fore Street

Priority High

Objective H

Protect the Roman forts and camps at St. Andrew's Hill

5.8.22 Cullompton's heritage extends back to Roman times; the town was once home to two Roman forts which served as permanent bases for auxiliary units of the Roman Army. Remains of two Roman camps have also been recorded at St. Andrew's Hill. The Scheduled Monument is of national importance but is currently included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. The register states that the monument has extensive significant problems and its condition is declining. It is particularly vulnerable to arable ploughing and needs protecting.

Key actions

- Explore potential sources of grant aid to restore the condition of the Scheduled Monument whilst also delivering on other environmental objectives
- Explore the role of Historic England Management Agreements, Monument Management Schemes and Heritage Partnership Agreements in helping to improve the condition of the site

Where?

St. Andrew's Hill, northwest Cullompton

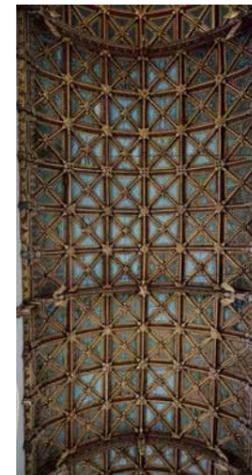
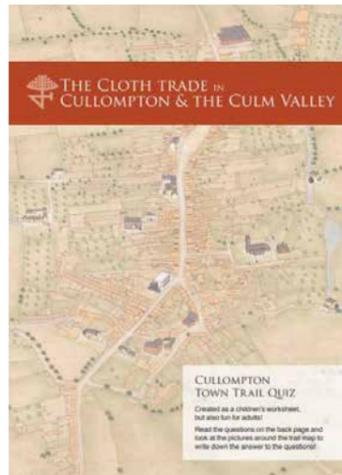
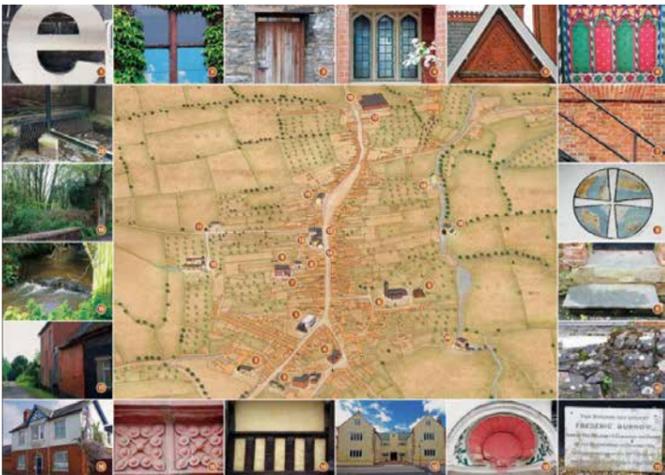
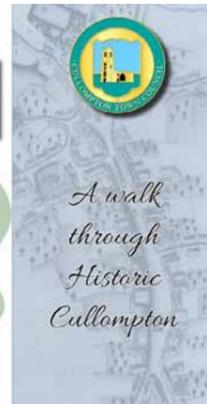
Priority

High





There are several geocaches around town at key heritage assets, placed by members of the public



There is an opportunity to build on the successful projects and activities happening around Cullompton to promote its heritage and inform people about what's happening in town

Aim 3 - PROMOTE

5.8.23 The Nobel Prize winning economist, Robert Merton Solow said in 1987 that "over the long term, places with strong, distinctive identities are more likely to prosper than places without them. Every place must identify its strongest, most distinctive features and develop them or run the risk of being all things to all persons and nothing special to any." Promoting Cullompton's heritage will strengthen the local distinctiveness of the town, increase pride among residents and draw visitors in. The strategy seeks to celebrate heritage through improving the setting of heritage assets (e.g. public realm enhancements) in the town centre, increasing awareness of heritage in Cullompton's surrounding streets and spaces, and events and programming to raise the profile of the town's distinct heritage. The strategy also encourages strengthening links with other historic and cultural assets in the District.

5.8.24 The objectives build on what is already happening in the town. Cullompton has an established record of heritage projects. The project to record the history of the cloth trade culminated in the Culm Valley & Cullompton cloth trade heritage trail as well as the installation of heritage interpretation boards around the town which have proved popular and have made heritage more visible. The restoration of the Walronds has raised the profile of Cullompton's heritage.

Objective I: Improve the setting and appearance of historic buildings along Fore Street and in the Bullring.

5.8.25 Enhancements to the public realm will help to create a high quality and attractive environment that is locally distinctive to Cullompton and which showcases the town centre's outstanding historic buildings along this key route.

Key actions

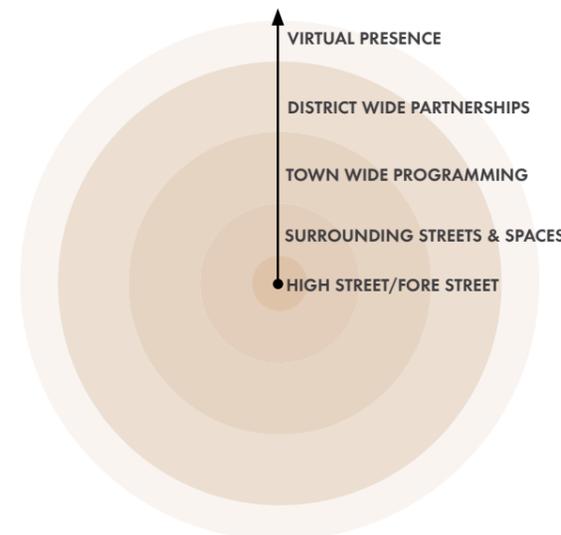
- Seek to commission design work and create a flexible public space at the Bullring for activities and events. A vision for the space should be developed in collaboration with local businesses and landowners and should identify and sustain the significance of the Bullring and the value of its public realm features where they contribute to the quality or identity of Cullompton. Enhancement works should respond positively to its historic context by considering aspects like surfacing, materials, street furniture and accessibility requirements.
- Seek to develop a public realm and movement strategy for Fore Street in consultation with key stakeholders.
- Offer a shop front improvement grant scheme for commercial properties in the conservation area.
- Offer a structural and historic reinstatement grant scheme for the restoration of historic features on those properties within Fore Street.
- Prepare shop front guidance.

Where?

Bullring, High Street, Fore Street

Priority

Medium



Objective J: Increase awareness of heritage in Cullompton's surrounding streets and spaces

5.8.26 This objective seeks to showcase the town's heritage at key points in the town centre which have a story to tell. Key buildings, community services, attractions, and public areas should be well signposted and easy to get to. New development should reveal the significance of heritage through improving the setting of old buildings or public realm enhancements.

Key actions

- Seek to prepare an updated set of interpretation panels for the town in consultation with local stakeholders. To include the leat, old mill buildings and the CCA fields as well as places with an important social history.
- Seek to establish a wayfinding, wayfaring and public art strategy to improve arrival points into the town.
- Explore opportunities for a tourist information centre in the town centre.
- Explore the opportunity to illuminate heritage assets either as a permanent feature or as part of a wider events
- Explore opportunities on-line such as the Geocaching app.
- Look at techniques to encourage visitors to 'stumble upon' hidden gems whilst learning more about the town's heritage
- Seek to create a marketing strategy (online and leaflets) which sets out an agreed and consistent message in consultation with stakeholders

Where? At historic sites and locations across the town and at arrival points into the town.

Priority Medium

Objective K: Raise the profile of Cullompton's distinct heritage through programming and events

5.8.27 The town already has a great reputation for holding successful spring and autumn festivals, celebrating artisan crafts, art and culture, local food and produce, as well as a variety of other events throughout the year. Historic buildings such as the Walronds open their house and gardens to celebrate these town events and organisations like the Farmer's Market help grow them. This is to both showcase what Cullompton and the Culm Valley has to offer as well as supporting local businesses and organisations. There is an opportunity to grow these events to highlight Cullompton's unique offer.

Key actions

- Continue to work with local businesses and community groups to expand the cultural programme of day and evening events focused on food and the arts
- Explore opportunities to open up historic assets to visitors as part of these events, or on a more regular basis
- Explore opportunities such a pop-up museum featuring some of the archival materials held at the town hall and else where
- Integrate relevant historical information into the marketing strategy (outlined in Objective J) to ensure the profile of Cullompton's distinct heritage is championed.

Where?

Town-wide

Priority

Low-Medium

Objective L: Strengthen links with other historic and cultural assets in the District

5.8.28 The town is nearby to some outstanding historic attractions, countryside and local heritage, including Killerton House, the Blackdown Hills AONB and Coldharbour Mill. Cullompton should look to strengthen its links with these assets, through partnerships and joined up working, as well as seeking opportunities to improve and promote walking and cycling connections to the countryside.

Key actions

- Explore possible partnerships with other

organisations further afield such as Killerton House and Coldharbour Manor and coordinate District wide events, activities and learning

- Explore opportunities to create new links into the countryside on foot or by bike and to better promote Cullompton's setting within a historic and attractive natural landscape.
- Consider incorporating these elements into the marketing strategy outlined in Objective J.

Where?

District-wide

Priority

Low - Medium



Figure 65 Connections to the countryside and nearby heritage attractions

- Protect St Andrew's Hill monument
- Fore Street building and public realm improvements
- Enhanced public space at Bullring & building improvements
- Stand out buildings - Grade I
- Stand out buildings - Grade II*
- Other listed buildings
- Improve laneways:**
- High priority for improvement (based on current condition and future potential)
- Medium priority for improvement
- Low priority for improvement
- Repurposing vacant buildings
- Key areas for awareness raising
- Promoting links out to countryside and other historic assets
- Conservation area and HAZ zone

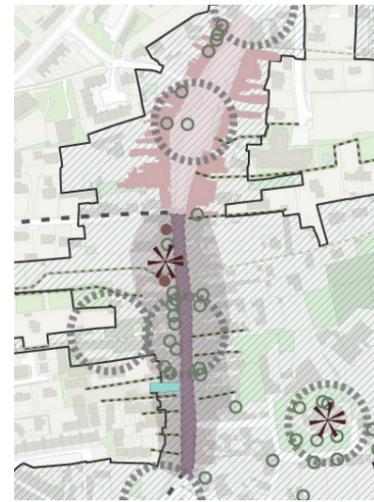


Figure 66 Zoom in of heritage strategy

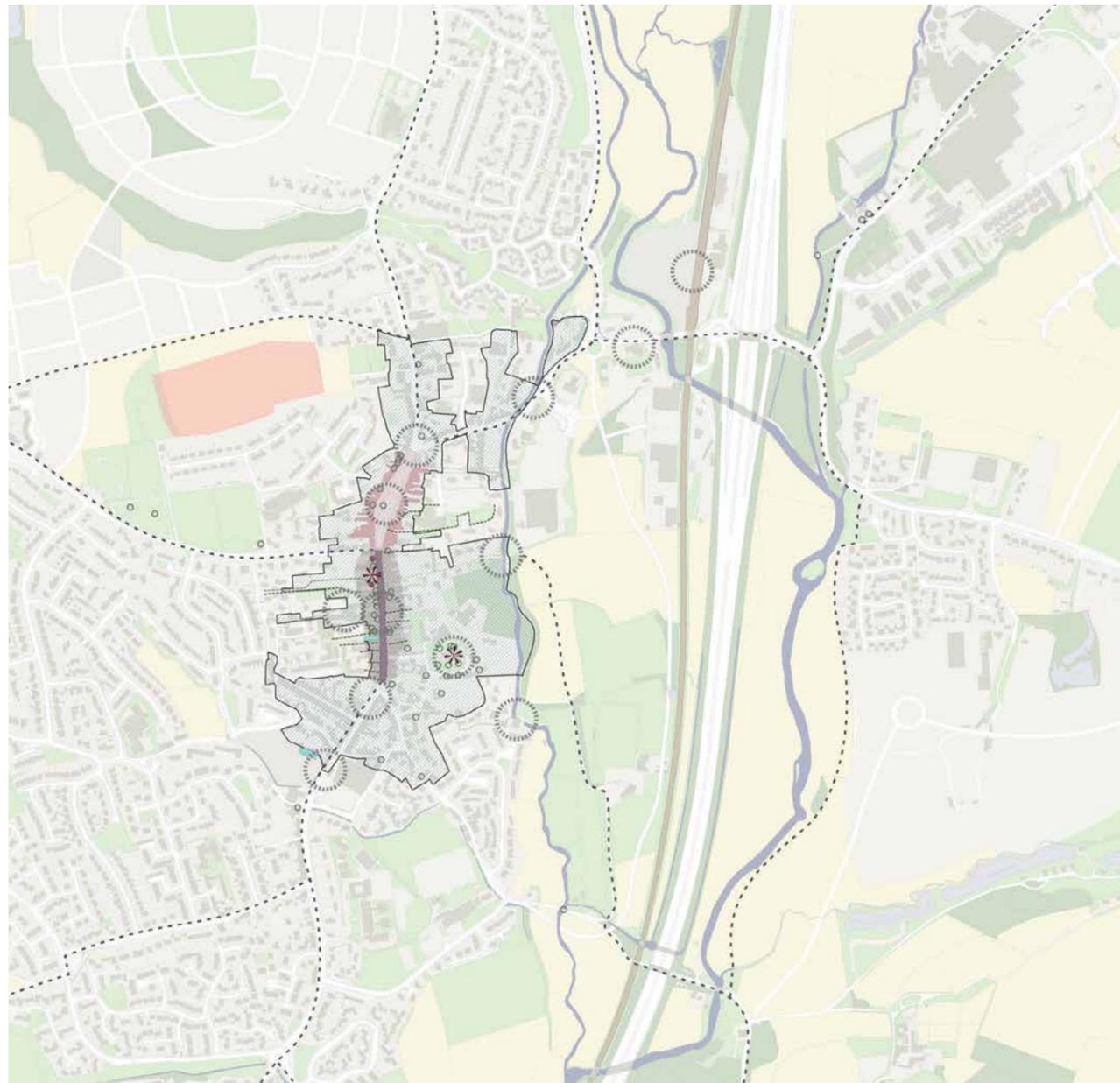


Figure 67 Heritage Strategy



Inside St Andrew's Church

6 Delivery, Monitoring and Review

- 6.9.1 The Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan provides a clear vision and set of objectives to guide the implementation of a set of key opportunity sites, public realm improvements and smaller scale projects which will work together to transform the town centre of Cullompton. The success of those projects will depend on continued partnership working to secure the delivery of high quality and sustainable interventions in a timely manner.
- 6.9.2 The masterplan has been structured such that individual projects can be implemented whilst recognising the importance of securing consistency in approach, quality and co-ordination between each project in accordance with this masterplan. This allows for a comprehensive approach to the delivery of development. It is important that these projects relate well and inform other strategic activities in the area such as Culm Garden Village and major infrastructure schemes.
- 6.9.3 A Delivery Action Plan will form an addendum to this masterplan and is currently under development. This would set out a time scale for interventions and delivery mechanisms.
- 6.9.4 The masterplan aims to set a basis for a high quality town centre and as such inform future planning applications. This will support a town centre that is underpinned by greener, healthier, connected and accessible green spaces, buildings and streets that seeks to lower the impact of carbon.
- 6.9.5 Monitoring will be an integral part of regeneration plans for the town. This will include monitoring of delivery of masterplan outputs and also tracking progress towards masterplan objectives. The delivery action plan will be subject to regular review in order to monitor progress towards critical success factors such as town centre footfall, vacancy rates along with quality review of heritage enhancements.



Photos around Cullompton

CULLY'S HIGHLIGHTS



