

Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2033

Referendum Version



Cullompton Town Council
August 2020



Amendment Schedule

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Steering Group Members:

Councillor Eileen Andrews
Councillor Karl Busch
Councillor Chaim Ebanks
Tim Duxbury (DCC)
Sue Edwards (DCC)
Councillor Claire Francis
Roy Gould
Councillor Gordon Guest (Chair)
Councillor Pauline Hammett
Steve Hellier
Ann McClements
Cathy Penharris (Vice Chair)
Jenny Penharris (Secretary)
Councillor Rachel Sinclair
Councillor Martin Smith
Michael Speirs (Vice Chair and former Chair)

Others:

Lou Maddocks - Administrator (2014 - 2020)
Steve Reardon - Administrator (2018 - 2019)
Paul Weston - Consultant

All individuals and groups involved in the production of this Neighbourhood Plan document have declared any relevant pecuniary or personal interests throughout.

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Foreword

Welcome to the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Version August 2020. This is a plan for the parish of Cullompton that will guide developers and planners through the next twenty years. The Submission Version of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan and its policies have been developed through an extensive process of community dialogue and consultation. It reflects the concerns and aspirations of the community as expressed by the many groups and individuals who engaged in the surveys, public consultations, workshops and discussions with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group or Cullompton Town Council. The Neighbourhood Plan also provides a firm foundation for continued community involvement with major planning projects such as the Garden Village, and the provision of high-class sports and recreation facilities, which will become particularly significant in Cullompton given the extensive housing development anticipated over the next decade. The Plan also provides some protection as we move forward into the sphere of influence of the Greater Exeter Plan.

Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan has occupied us for much longer than anticipated because we wished to publish after the Mid Devon Local Plan Review had taken place. This extended period of preparation has enabled us to look closely at the impact of developments such as the North West Extension and the Garden Village, as well as how the Swimming Pool Project can best be supported.

We are grateful to everybody who engaged in neighbourhood planning for Cullompton over the past few years. You have all contributed to the evolution of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan in some way. There are restrictions on what the Neighbourhood Plan can do. It is at heart a planning document, not a spending proposal or even a wish list. Within the constraints imposed, we have tried to incorporate the spirit of what we have been told should be the direction of future development within the parish to ensure that it is a vibrant place to live and work and meets the needs of its diverse population over the next two decades.

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will be Cullompton-specific additions to the national and district policies that guide planners and developers. Every policy is intended to add value to existing policies and provide locally relevant context and reasonable requirements for future development that is consistent with national planning guidelines.

A special thank-you is extended to everybody who contributed to completing the task of producing the Submission Version of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan, particularly the members of the Steering Committee, our consultants, the working groups and the Town Council.

Michael Speirs
Chair (2011 to 2015)
Cullompton NP Steering Group

Gordon Guest
Chair (2015 to present)
Cullompton NP Steering Group

Introduction

The Community's Plan

1.1 This Neighbourhood Plan is the community's plan. It represents the community's vision and priorities for how they would like to see the Cullompton area develop and change in the coming years and in doing so it sets out the local, neighbourhood planning policies which will be taken into account as and when any proposals for development come forward in Cullompton's parish area.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is not a plan which can cover every issue identified as being important to the community: it has a focus on responding to proposals for development and the appropriate use of land. It puts us, as a community, in the driving seat when it comes to having a say over what, how and where development should take place where it requires planning permission.

Map 1: Cullompton Parish and Designated Neighbourhood Area



1.3 The Plan covers the period up until 2033, and is therefore in line with the Local Plan produced by Mid Devon District Council as the local planning authority.

The Plan Area

1.4 The Cullompton neighbourhood plan area (the whole Parish) was designated by Mid Devon District Council on the 30 April 2014. Map 1 below shows the extent of the area that is the subject of this Neighbourhood Plan and its policies.

A Vision Statement for Cullompton

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.

To meet the needs of a rapidly expanding population, the town will provide an excellent mix of housing reflecting the distinctive character of the town through varied external finishes and integration of the various styles and types of housing required to meet local needs and encourage families to settle in the town and become part of the community. The housing and amenities will integrate the needs of people and nature, retaining the feel of a country town through abundant use of trees, flowering-trees, hedgerows and imaginative use of water management.

The high street will be a pedestrian-friendly economic and social centre for the community, providing a mix of shops, offices, dwellings and places to eat. Further retail will be encouraged in the smaller trading estates bordering the town centre. The leisure pursuits of all age groups will be catered for by excellent sports and activity facilities and easy access to the natural, nearby features of countryside and water.

Taking advantage of its location, the town will be a communications hub with good links by rail, road, paths and broadband to the region and beyond.

The Planning Process

2.1 The development and preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken by a Steering Group comprised of representatives of groups in the town along with Town Councillors and County Council officers.

2.2 It was understood from the outset that for the Plan to be truly representative of the planning issues of relevance in the area and to be the community's plan, we would need to carry out a thorough and on-going consultation process with those who live and work in the parish area of Cullompton. We also recognised that the Plan could not be properly developed without the input of organisations and agencies with a district, county, sub-regional or national remit and an interest in the area.

2.3 The process and the types of consultation exercise and discussion that we have gone through is documented in detail in a Consultation Statement, which accompanies the Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The key methods we have used have included:

- Public exhibitions, meetings and events
- Regular articles in the Cullompton Crier
- Use of social media (including website and Facebook)
- Local newspaper and noticeboards
- A community questionnaire delivered to all households
- Focus groups and workshops
- Survey and discussion with local businesses
- Directly contacting wider-than-local organisations and agencies (strategic stakeholders) which have an interest in planning issues in the area
- Consultation 'windows' during which comments have been invited on draft documents



2.4 The development of the Plan was based on a desire to be open and to welcome comments and contributions from all quarters. Our aim has been to encourage discussion and debate within the community about the issues and opportunities that face us and strive to achieve a community consensus. This Neighbourhood Plan represents the product of this process.

2.5 Having developed the Plan through this iterative and inclusive approach, the Regulations required us to carry out a formal consultation on the pre-submission version of the Plan and engage with the community, local stakeholder and strategic and statutory organisations. Having undertaken this consultation in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations, the Plan has been readied for formal submission to the local planning authority and examination of the Plan by an independent Examiner. After that, assuming that the Plan passes through the Examination successfully, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a public referendum where residents on the electoral register will be asked if they support the final version of the Plan. If the referendum answer is a "yes" from a majority of voters turning out on the day, the Plan will be "made" (or adopted) by the local planning authority, Mid Devon District Council.

Environmental Impact

2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan is also subject to sustainability testing as it is developed, to help establish the Plan's positive or negative impact on the social, environmental and economic character of the parish area. This has been done through a strategic environmental assessment (SEA). The purpose of the SEA is to identify impacts and, if necessary, propose possible amendments to policies to lessen any potential negative impacts which could arise as a result of the Plan's policies and/or proposals. The findings and the recommendations from the SEA is documented in detail in the SEA Report¹, which accompanies the Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The on-going assessment process has influenced the policy content of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan's Status

2.7 The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan, once made, will be a statutory development plan. That means that its policies will have significant bearing when it comes to being used by the local planning authority at Mid Devon District Council to help determine proposals for development submitted through planning applications. It will form the local tier of planning policy across our parish area. It sits with the district-wide Local Plan, produced by Mid Devon District Council (also a statutory development plan) and underneath the umbrella of national planning policy in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as the main planning policy documents relevant to the Cullompton area. Other important planning documents which govern specific issues are the Minerals and Waste Plans produced at the county-wide level.

2.8 The Neighbourhood Plan's policies, however, cannot guarantee that a development proposal will either be refused or be granted permission; but the policies will carry significant weight, alongside policies of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Mid Devon Local Plan when the local planning authority weighs up the appropriateness of the proposal in question.

¹ https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/Cullompton%20NP%20SEA%20Submission%20ER_v1.0_190107-1.pdf

The Structure of the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 Our Neighbourhood Plan has a locally determined 'framework' in the form of an overall vision for the Cullompton area and a series of aims and objectives which we have set for the Plan. These have been the subject of dialogue with the community and informed by the existing planning policies, plans and contributions of key organisations and agencies, with an interest in the area.

3.2 Having explained our rationale for these (in section 5, that follows), the Plan then sets out our local neighbourhood planning policies on a topic by topic basis, which we believe are necessary to supplement and complement to policies in the Mid Devon Local Plan to ensure the community's agenda for development and growth is achieved.

3.3 The community's agenda, derived through consultation, is reflected in the topics and their themes, and the broad aims and more specific objectives for each topic. The policies under each topic heading are those that we believe will achieve the objectives. Under each topic heading we have set out our neighbourhood policies, along with an explanation of the policy, reference to the national and local policies with which our policy aligns, and why we feel a neighbourhood plan policy is required.

3.4 It is important to note that whilst we have grouped policies under topic headings, when development proposals are being assessed, the whole plan (i.e. all policies) should be considered. Policies under one topic may also apply to proposals which naturally fit under another.

3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan finishes with an explanation of how we will monitor and review the Plan, a glossary which seeks to demystify some of the planning terminology used in our plan and a bibliography which includes the details of documents referred to and current web-links to those documents.

Community Actions

3.6 Inevitably when carrying out a community consultation, matters not directly related to the use and development of land are raised by the members of the public. Those that are not land-use-related have not been disregarded. They have been referred to the Town Council for further consideration and action.

Companion Documents

3.7 Several documents will be prepared to accompany the Plan. We are obliged to produce a:

- Consultation Statement
- Basic Conditions Statement
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.8 The Consultation Statement must satisfy the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, Part 5 section 15, and provide a document which:

- contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- explains how they were consulted;
- summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

3.9 The Basic Conditions Statement must be submitted alongside the draft Neighbourhood Plan. We are required to demonstrate how our Plan meets the Basic Conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3.10 The Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed by the local planning authority to consider whether it should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is considered likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. The process to determine whether this is so is commonly referred to as a 'screening assessment'. If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of those regulations. One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).

3.11 After discussions with the local planning authority, a SEA was carried out on both the Pre-submission and Submission versions of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA reports¹ can be seen in full on the website and are summarised in the Basic Conditions Statement.² Changes as a result of the recommendations in the SEA Reports have been incorporated in the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan.

² <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/documents>

The Planning Context

National Policy and Sustainable Development

4.1 In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan we are obliged, by law, to:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- ensure the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a "presumption in favour of sustainable development" (NPPF para. 11). It states that "neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies". The NPPF goes on to say that "strategic policies [in the Local Plan] should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans." Outside of strategic policies therefore, we are encouraged to shape and direct sustainable development in our area through our Neighbourhood Plan. "Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan" (NPPF para. 29). All references in this document are to the Revised National Planning Policy Framework³ (published February 2019).

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>

⁴ <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning-policy/local-plan-review/>

Mid Devon Local Plan

4.3 The Town Council appreciates that, in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, it is a basic condition that the Plan should conform to the strategic policies of the development plan for the area i.e. the currently adopted Local Plan. During the preparation of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan we have referred to the Core Strategy 2026, which was adopted in July 2007, along with the Allocations and Infrastructure Development Plan Document (adopted 2010) and Local Plan Part 3: Development Management Policies (adopted 2013). Together these comprise the development plan for the area. We have demonstrated in the Basic Condition Statement that accompanies the submitted Neighbourhood Plan, how our Plan and its policies is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the adopted development plan for Mid Devon.

4.4 Throughout the period in which we have been preparing the Neighbourhood Plan the Mid Devon Local Plan has been going through a review process that has involved several periods of public consultation. The resultant Local Plan Review will guide development in the District over the next 20 years. It is approaching the final stages in its development and adoption. "It aims to make sure that new homes, jobs and services required by communities are located in the most sustainable places. It will also help deliver the infrastructure, facilities and other development needed to make this possible."⁴

4.5 The Cullompton community has been engaged with this process in as much as the local planning authority has staged several consultation events in the area and had a dialogue with Cullompton Town Council. The Town Council has striven to exert influence over the development of the new Local Plan at all stages through written submissions. We have endeavoured to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan has remained in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the new Local Plan as well as the adopted Local

Plan. To demonstrate conformity, references to the strategic policies of the new Local Plan are included, within the supporting statements that accompany the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.6 The Local Plan Review has been through four stages of consultation since 2013. It was submitted to the Secretary of State along with other relevant documents. In September 2017, however, Mid Devon District Council requested an adjournment of the Local Plan Hearings to commission an independent report to review the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the proposed Local Plan, which itself was subject to a public consultation in the spring of 2018. Preliminary hearings for the examination of the Mid Devon Local Plan Review commenced on 20th and 21st September 2018. Hearings will continue into 2019.

4.7 Cullompton Town Council's position throughout the consultation process has been one of general endorsement of the strategic direction of growth proposed in the Local Plan Review. Cullompton Town Council is pleased that Cullompton will be a strategic development location.

4.8 Since 2013 the Town Council has been calling for additional land needs to be identified in the Local Plan for residential and commercial development. The second round of Local Plan consultation in 2014 left the option open; major growth in the Cullompton area was just one of four strategic development options. In response to the 2014 options document the Town Council clearly set out its position and the case for growth to be focussed on Cullompton.

4.9 Cullompton Town Council is seeking a fully cohesive, integrated vision that will self-support long term economic, environmental and employment benefits. It is the Town Council's belief that:

- i the proposed growth of Cullompton over the next 20 years is a positive move
- ii the need for a Relief Road to relieve traffic congestion within the town is an imperative
- iii most of the identified sites to the west of Cullompton will be full or nearly completed by 2026 and that the expansion along the A373 Honiton Road is a sensible and logical next step after 2026
- iv Cullompton's growth in housing must be matched by growth in infrastructure, commercial development and M5 junction 28 improvement
- v a new community east of junction 28 to allow for existing and future development of the town up to 2036 is supported provided that measures are put in place to fully integrate this community with the existing settlement area
- vi the development of the M5 corridor is critical to the economic growth and prosperity of Cullompton
- vii with a growing population, there is a need for some medium sized retail outlets to enhance the retail experience and commercial appeal of the area

We are pleased that this 'approach' has been found preferable by Mid Devon District Council and is central to the strategic growth policies of the Local Plan Review.

4.10 As an endorsement of this approach, Mid Devon District Council submitted 'East Cullompton' as a potential development area to be advanced as part of the Government's 'Garden Village Initiative' (see glossary). The Government indicated in January 2017 that it was impressed with the prospect and potential of a 'Garden Village' extension to the east of Cullompton. It has awarded

Mid Devon District Council a substantial package of support to advance the initiative.

4.11 Cullompton Town Council lent its support to the application, particularly because of its emphasis on infrastructure. The bid referred to:

- Junction 28 capacity improvements being essential to delivering the Garden Village Project
- Loan funding required for modifications to junction 28 to enable the project, swifter delivery, and continuity of delivery in association with a NW extension to Cullompton
- Brokerage with Highways England, Network Rail and the Environment Agency
- Access to new rail station's funding
- Access to starter homes funding

4.12 Garden villages are intended to be part of a new generation of locally-led development to meet local housing need, with a focus on creating attractive, well-designed places. One of the key benefits of garden village status is that it will assist in delivering urgently needed infrastructure for Cullompton. Mid Devon District Council's first public announcement after its 'award' was to say, "we propose to prioritise any government financial support to highway improvements including the town centre relief road and M5 Junction 28 improvements together with measures to reduce flood risk".

4.13 Cullompton Town Council is happy to go along with the 'Garden Village' approach to development in east Cullompton if it helps achieve the strategic policies of the Local Plan, delivers a high-quality living environment and facilitates sustainable growth of Cullompton that will offer benefits to all the parishioners of the area. However, it is the Town Council's position that this can only be achieved if the east Cullompton growth area is conceived from the outset as an integral part of the town of Cullompton and not a separate settlement; and master-planned accordingly.

4.14 The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan is designed to be a document which will help facilitate change in the parish area. It seeks to:

- i provide support to the strategic policies in the Local Plan and the general principles behind them
- ii set out a local development strategy that reflects how the community want to see Cullompton change and improve
- iii provide an additional level of detailed planning policies or a distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policy without undermining the policy
- iv introduce new local policies to ensure growth can be accommodated and bring net benefits to the whole area
- v protect everything that is precious to us and promote its recognition and enhancement
- vi encourage community action to ensure growth brings the significant community benefits

4.15 With a focus on sustainable development it is inevitable that the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan concentrates on the urban area i.e. the town of Cullompton, and its fringe. In no way, should this be interpreted that the rural parts of Cullompton parish are not important. Indeed, the reason why there are so few neighbourhood plan policies relating specifically to the countryside parts of the area is because we regard them as special and unsuitable for development of any scale. We support Local Plan Review strategic policy S14 which states that: "development outside the settlements defined by Policies S10-S13⁵ will preserve and where possible enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification of the rural economy." Only development that is agricultural or considered "appropriate rural uses" in type and scale will be permitted.

⁵ Policy S11 applies directly to Cullompton

Cullompton Today

4.16 The starting point for the Neighbourhood Plan is Cullompton today. We have undertaken research and surveys to establish the ‘evidence base’ for the Plan. The local social, economic and environmental conditions, issues and opportunities as we have identified and interpreted them are described in detail in an Evidence Base Report.⁶

4.17 Cullompton is a historic market town and civil parish in the district of Mid Devon and the county of Devon. The parish area extends some seven miles along the valley of the River Culm, covering nearly 8,000 acres, with over 9,200 inhabitants (in 2014) in Cullompton. Devon County Councils last estimate (2019) for the population of the hinterland (defined as the collections of towns and villages surrounding a market or coastal town) was in excess of 23,500. The town’s history dates well back into Roman times and it has been a market town since the 13th century. In the past the town’s economy had a large component of wool and cloth manufacture, then later leather working and paper manufacture. A large proportion of today’s inhabitants are commuters, but there is still some local manufacturing, including flour and paper mills.

Natural and Rural Environment

4.18 The rural parts of the Parish fall into one of two character areas. Land to the west of Cullompton is generally rolling farmland and valley slopes. The landscape to the east and south along the river Culm is categorised as ‘lowland plains’. Cullompton boasts three ‘county wildlife’ sites and a number of other important wildlife habitat sites and within the parish area. The CCA⁷ Fields host several notable species and habitats including:

- ponds, ditches and leats
- woodland and trees
- hedgerows and boundaries

4.19 In terms of public access, the Cullompton area has fewer public rights of way than most other Mid Devon parishes. The CCA Fields and High Banks, which runs alongside the River Culm are both popular open spaces for recreation walks and for young people to play.

4.20 Flooding is a perpetual hazard in the Culm valley. There were significant occurrences in both 2012 and 2013. In 2009, it was estimated that within the Parish there were 499 current properties in flood zone 2 (at moderate risk of flooding) and 424 in flood zone 3 (high risk).

Heritage

4.21 Cullompton Conservation Area is focussed on the town centre area. It has 50 designated heritage assets including the Grade I, St Andrew’s Church (15th C); the Grade II, Trott’s Almshouses (16th C) and the recently renovated Grade I, Walronds (17th C). Cullompton also boasts a range of other areas and features of local heritage significance such as Pound Square, Upper/Higher Bullring and the cobbled pathway at the side of the White Hart Public House. The Town Team, of local volunteers, has instigated a variety of projects to recognise and preserve our local heritage.

⁶ https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/Cullompton%20NP_SEA%20Scoping%20Report_v1.0_080317.pdf

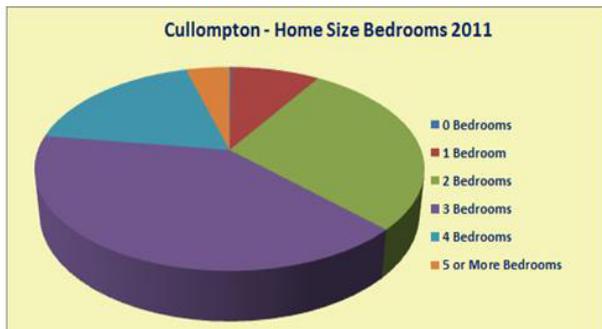
⁷ CCA = Cullompton Community Association

Housing

4.22 The parish population of over 9,000 is growing rapidly as a result of new housing developments. It is predicted to increase by 12% between 2006 and 2021. The most significant increase in population will be in the over 65 age group with a predicted increase of 52%.

4.23 A review of available housing data shows that:

- there is a relatively high level of home ownership (69%) and correspondingly low proportions of social and private rented housing
- the average house price in Cullompton in 2016 is £191,300, which is considerably lower than the Mid Devon average (£224,673)
- there is a wide range of properties, except for the 1 bedroom-type



Local Economy and Jobs

4.24 A district profile for 2011 showed that 70% of adults under the age of 75 were in employment, with unemployment relatively low (3%). The level of out-commuting in Cullompton is comparatively high for a Devon market town, with 65% of working residents of Cullompton (in 2011) travelling to destinations outside the town for work, such as Exeter (19%), Taunton and Tiverton.

4.25 The largest employers in the town are located on the Kingsmill Industrial Estate, a 24ha area to the East of Cullompton. The main employers at Kingsmill include Gregory Distribution, Milk Link, St Regis (paper manufacturers) and an industrial clothing shop. The Kingsmill Industrial Estate benefits from close links to the motorway network and local

distributor roads. Tesco is also a significant employer within the town.

Retailing and Town Centre

4.26 Cullompton's shops are focussed predominantly on the High Street. Tesco and Aldi are the two main supermarkets in the town. The 2012 household survey indicates:

- For food shopping, 32% of residents visit the town centre daily or more than once a week
- Only 13% of shoppers visited Cullompton town centre more than once a week for non-food shopping purposes
- For visits to services, 30% of visitors use the town centre once a week or more
- 74% of residents never visit Cullompton town centre in the evening

4.27 In a 2010 bench-marking survey by the County Council, 75% of town centre visitors rated the town's variety of shops as either 'poor' or 'very poor'. 61% rated the town's leisure and cultural facilities as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Town centre retailing has had a difficult time over the past 10 years. The Community Survey of 2014 showed however that local people still appreciated convenient access to the shops and put forward several ideas of how Cullompton town centre could be made more attractive and successful.

Highways, Transport and Travel

4.28 The M5, accessed via junction 28, is a major route for residents, commuters, visitors and commercial traffic. This junction is constrained and is often congested during peak hours, on all approaches - which causes further congestion and delay on other local roads.

4.29 An area of the town centre comprising the B3181 route, Station Road and a section of Tiverton Road has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area. The car still predominates travel patterns. 84% of Cullompton households have access to at least one car or van. 67% of the working population of Cullompton drive to work.

There is a lack of off-road parking spaces, which often contributes to congestion.

4.30 There are regular bus services from the town to Exeter and Tiverton. Cullompton is currently lacking in dedicated cycle routes, but several potential new routes have been identified.

4.31 Cullompton's railway station closed in 1964. Local residents have campaigned for many years to have a new railway station. Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council are in support of this.

Community Wellbeing and Leisure

4.32 Cullompton is blessed with some very good, new, community facilities such as the health centres, the Hayridge Library, Cullompton Community Centre and the Walronds. Several have come about largely because of community action. A community campaign to provide a swimming pool in the town is the latest campaign.

4.33 There is a shortage of sports pitches in the area, which could be even more marked as the population and demand increases. There are local football, rugby, bowls and cricket clubs in Cullompton, all of whom would like to expand their facilities to cope with a growing demand. The CCA Fields provides a home for the Football Club. The Cricket Club is located on its own site nearby.

4.34 Cullompton Community College is the only secondary school in the Parish and was close to capacity with 630 students in September 2017. The two primary schools in the parish are St Andrew's and Willowbank. The John Tallack Centre, owned by the John Tallack Youth Centre Trust, provides a vital focus for young people's activities. Cullompton Community College is rapidly reaching capacity; Planned Admission Numbers (PAN) for 2018 was 150 pupils with an increase in PAN to 180 (6 classes) brought forward from 2020 to 2019. All available spaces at the school are at the upper end with Y7, Y8 and Y9 at capacity in 2019. It is anticipated that in September 2019 will be 750 pupils and this clearly demonstrates the need to provide for their needs.

Academic Year	Actual Number	Proposed Number
2014	530	
2015	537	
2016	571	
2017	629	
2018	694	
2019		750

4.35 Despite its appearance and appeal as a typical Devon market town, Cullompton is a dynamic and complex settlement area with its own unique set of challenges. These are reflected in the response we received to the Community Survey 2014⁸

4.36 We have summarised below the context for the Neighbourhood Plan, which has been derived from our analysis of the evidence base:

Highways, Transport and Travel

- i an inadequate road network that must be sorted out
- ii the need to reduce substantially the damaging effect of heavy commercial vehicles and private motor cars
- iii the need to facilitate cheap and easy movement and travel
- iv the need to improve the M5 access links

Town Centre, Heritage and Culture

- i a town centre that still has a vital role to play
- ii a historic environment that needs respecting

Housing

- i a housing market that needs more understanding
- ii a housing stock with some inadequacies

Natural and Rural Environment

- i a countryside setting that needs looking after
- ii natural resources that need more management

Local Economy and Jobs

- i a strong desire to grow the local economy
- ii a need for more and better jobs

⁸ The report can be viewed at: <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/A8%20Community%20Questionnaire.pdf>

Community Wellbeing and Leisure

- i a desire for the highest quality of services and facilities
- ii public spaces that can be used and enjoyed
- iii the need to ensure the town provides a safe and pleasant experience for all its citizens, users and visitors

4.37 In summary, the Cullompton area needs revitalisation. With pro-active guidance and intervention by the Town Council the process has already begun, but much more is to be done. It will be further stimulated by our commitment to a sustainable growth strategy. The Neighbourhood Plan is intended to facilitate controlled sustainable growth – of the population, the housing stock and the economy. This, we believe, will achieve the scale of revitalisation we seek and secure a bright future for one of Devon’s best towns, its surrounding area and its inhabitants.

The Neighbourhood Planning Framework

Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan Topics and Themes

5.1 The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan has the following topics and themes:

Topic 1: **Sustainable Development**

Ensure all new developments contribute to the overall sustainability of Cullompton as a town and a community

Topic 2: **Highways, Travel and Transport**

Improve mobility, accessibility and reduce the overall use and impact of the motor vehicle

Topic 3: **Housing**

Provide new dwellings to meet a wide range of needs and demands

Topic 4: **Natural & Rural Environment**

Respect and appreciate our natural environment

Topic 5: **Town Centre, Heritage and Culture**

Protect and enhance our historic built environment whilst broadening the appeal of the town and its cultural activities

Topic 6: **Local Economy & Jobs**

Make Cullompton more business friendly and commercially viable

Topic 7: **Community Wellbeing and Leisure**

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

Deriving Our Aims and Objectives

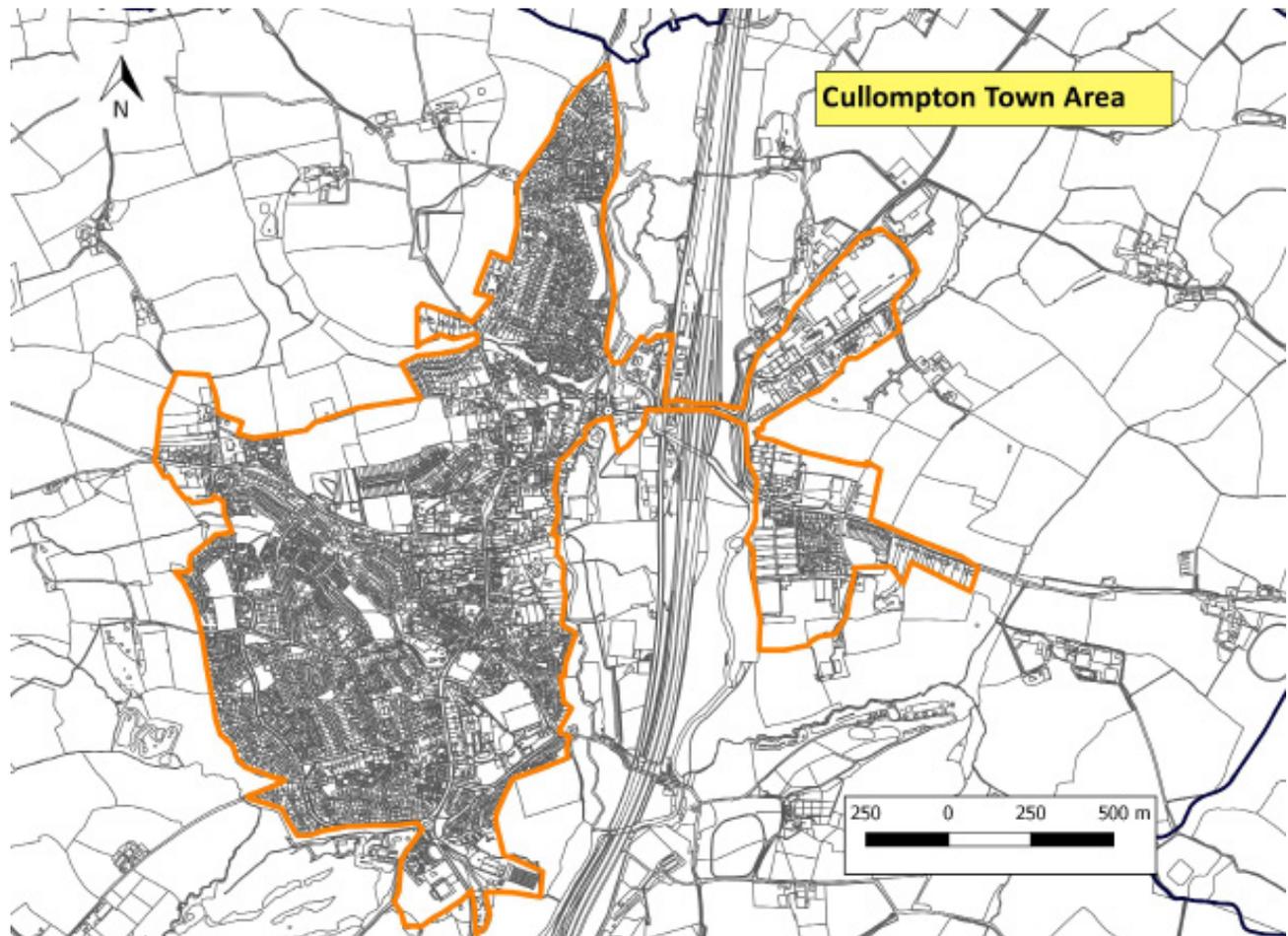
5.2 The process of arriving at an agreed set of aims and objectives started with a 'workshop' event at which the members of the Steering Group along with other interested members of the community took part in a session that examined the evidence and the response we had received to surveys and other forms of consultation. The process and outcomes can be found described fully in a Workshop Report, September 2014.⁹ A draft set of aims and objectives were subsequently refined by the Steering Group before being the focus of a community consultation in Cullompton in December 2014. The response was positive and encouraging. Details of what local people said can be found in the Cullompton Consultation Report December 2014¹⁰. As a result of the reaction and comments we reorganised the topic headings and made revisions to some of the objectives. The final set we believe reflects the community's neighbourhood planning and development agenda. It is this agenda that underpins the neighbourhood plan policies.

5.3 Several objectives and policies relate only to the town area of Cullompton. The boundary on Map 2 (page 20) delineates what is meant throughout this Plan by the "town area".

⁹ The report can be viewed at: <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/Cullompton%20NP%20Workshop%20Report%20Final%20Sep14.pdf>

¹⁰ The report can be viewed at: <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/December%20Consultation%20Report%202014-1.pdf>

Map 2:
Cullompton Town area referred to in policies H03 and EJ02



Sustainable Development

Ensure all new developments contribute to the overall sustainability of Cullompton as a town and a community

Introduction

6.1 Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present while not preventing future generations meeting their own needs. The Neighbourhood Plan policies are intended to ensure that new development brings benefits to all the communities and settlement areas in the parish area whilst not worsening the lives of future generations. This includes protecting precious natural resources and increasing resilience to the short and long-term effects of climate change. Achieving sustainable development is the theme of the NPPF. Mid Devon District Council's vision and spatial strategy sets out how "the sustainable development of Mid Devon will bring positive benefits to local communities through promoting community well-being, supporting economic success, conserving and enhancing the area and respecting environmental limits"¹¹. The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan seeks to contribute by facilitating the sustainable development that we judge is needed in a manner that minimises its negative impact on the environment.

Aims and Objectives

6.2 The following aims and objectives relating to sustainable development have emerged following a programme of community consultation. They have been used to help formulate the Neighbourhood Plan policies and inform a programme of other community actions. The policies in this section reflect a widespread concern about the adequacy of infrastructure to ensure that major growth does not threaten the overall sustainability of the town; and a determination that new development should not harm or deplete our environment or natural resources.

Planning Aims	Planning Objectives
Ensure new development has the appropriate infrastructure in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate infrastructure is in place before new development takes place • Plan new development road layout to help reduce vehicle use of town centre • Link new housing development to town centre facilities and amenities
Ensure new development avoids increasing the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure flood risk and drainage are built in to development agreements
Increase use of renewable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure new developments achieve high levels of energy efficiency • Control impact of renewable energy installations

¹¹ Local Plan Review 2013 – 2033 Proposed Submission, Mid Devon District Council, Feb 2015

Traffic Impact of Major Development

6.3 Cullompton has long suffered from traffic congestion, particularly in and around the town centre. The current situation is not at all satisfactory and is of major concern to the local community, as is evident from the results of the Community Survey 2014; 79% of respondents told us the motor vehicle should be far less dominant in town. Town centre congestion, and the concomitant problems it causes, is made worse whenever the M5 is closed and the town centre serves as a relief route. We want to minimise this congestion and its resulting pollution, which has an impact on air quality in the town centre.

6.4 The NPPF (para. 181) encourages us to identify “opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement.”



- ¹² Development prescribed under section 62A(2) of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as major development is any development involving one or more of the following—
- (a) the provision of dwelling houses where—
 - (i) the number of dwelling houses to be provided is 10 or more; or
 - (ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph (a) (i);
 - (b) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more;
 - (c) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

6.5 Policy SD01 seeks to ensure that major new development (as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990¹²) does not contribute further to the problems we experience, by increasing the volume of traffic that needs to use town centre roads. Under Local Plan Policies DM3 and DM4, most large developments are required to carry out integrated transport assessment, travel plan, traffic pollution assessment and low emission assessment. The highways authorities¹³ will expect developers to assess the impact of development on the M5 and junction 28 as well as the town centre and local road network. We expect any traffic impact assessment prepared by developers to demonstrate clearly and specifically how their proposals will help minimise the need for such traffic to use the town centre roads of Cullompton before any approval for a major development is given. Reducing the volume of traffic requiring use of town centre routes is a key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan. We do not want this negated by the impact of new development.

6.6 Our policy is consistent with the Cullompton Air Quality Management Area Action Plan 2009 which recognised the need to bring effective traffic relief to the town centre and introduce town centre traffic management measures.

Policy SD01 Traffic Impact of Major Development

Proposals for major development which are required to provide a Traffic Impact Assessment must demonstrate how the proposal will mitigate any negative impacts of the traffic generation associated with the proposed development on Cullompton town centre, including vehicular access/egress and circulation arrangements.

Road infrastructure requirements should be in place in good time so as to prevent an unacceptable impact on the existing road network, and the town centre in particular, as a result of the development.

¹³ Highways England and Devon County Council

Links to the Town Centre

6.7 Cullompton Town Council has made clear¹⁴ that it would like to see a coherent and extensive all-weather cycle and walking network that provides safe and accessible routes that will encourage local people to walk or cycle within the town as an alternative to using the motor vehicle; thereby realising the health benefits of doing so whilst reducing the amount of local traffic in and around the town. The Town Council is particularly keen to see all major new developments connected to the town centre and public facilities and services, such as GP surgeries and schools, and recreational venues by footpaths and cycle ways. In this way we hope too that the role of the town centre will be strengthened, as local people have asked. The NPPF (para. 91) calls for “safe and accessible developments... the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas”.

6.8 Local Plan Policies CU2 and CU8 make provision for cycle and pedestrian links to and from the town centre and the large housing extensions to North West Cullompton and East Cullompton when they are developed. Local Plan Policy CU13 provides for cycle and pedestrian links within the development at Knowle Lane and connections to the wider transport network. Policy SD02 seeks to endorse and extend this approach to new development and make provision for cycle and pedestrian links to and from all major development (as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990¹⁵) to Cullompton town centre, where it is practical to do so.



6.9 Local people made it plain in the Community Survey 2014 that safety is a key concern. Policy SD02 therefore emphasises the need for safety and accessibility to be a major consideration in design and layout of new development. All new major developments should make footpath/cycleway provision that facilitates easy and safe movement around the development and establishes links to the town centre. In this way too, we aim to integrate all new developments with the rest of the town.

6.10 This policy is consistent with the approved Cullompton Multi-Use Path Cycle Path Policy Document 2013/14 which sets out the Town Council’s preferences and priorities for developing the network.

Policy SD02 Links to the Town Centre

All major developments should include provision for accessible pedestrian and cycle routes and connections that:

- i. link safely to the wider network of routes leading to and from Cullompton town centre and other essential public facilities, such as schools and health facilities; and
- ii. benefit from natural surveillance of public areas as well as satisfactory lighting.

¹⁴ Cullompton Multi-Use Path Cycle Path Policy Document 2013/14, approved by Cullompton Town Council 25 July 2013

¹⁵ See definition at footnote 11

Flood Attenuation

6.11 Cullompton Town Council is mindful of the serious flooding in 2012 and other localised flooding since. It is concerned about the changes to the watercourses, increased run-off and other factors resulting from major house building on green field sites. This could, potentially, increase the risk of flooding and all new development should pay particular attention to flood risk.

6.12 Flood risk is on the increase. We want to reduce the risk of flood and be assured that any and all new development will not only avoid heightening the flood risk in future but will actively contribute to minimising the risk of flooding in their vicinity and in the wider area. Reducing the risk of flooding is an imperative in all new development proposals. The NPPF (para. 155) calls for the avoidance of inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding “by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere”. The NPPF (para. 163) requires that any residual [flood] risk can be safely managed, including by emergency planning; and it gives priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems. Consistent with this, Local Plan Policy S9 requires measures to reduce the risk of flooding and Local Plan Policy S11 is supportive of measures to reduce flood risk within Cullompton.

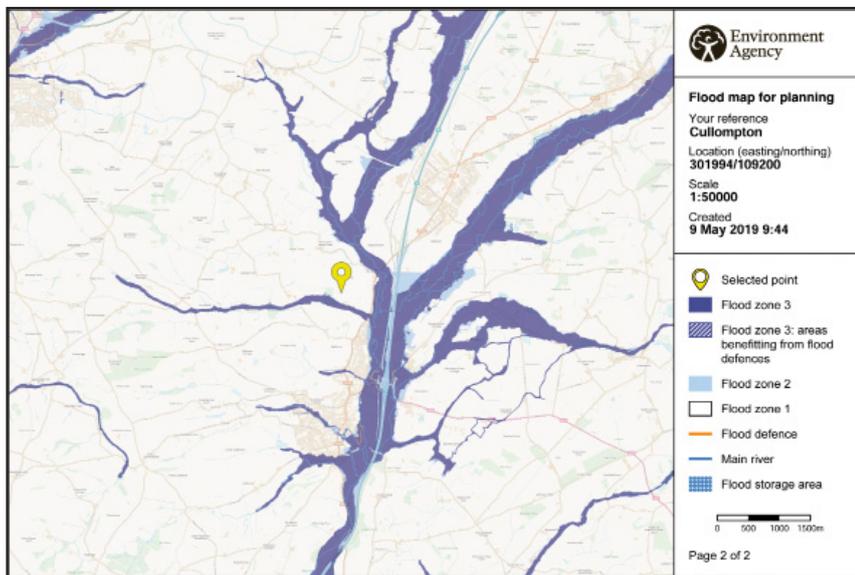
6.13 Flood attenuation, as part of a sustainable drainage system, is not only important in minimising risk. It provides an opportunity to add to the quality and variety of the local environment and contribute to improving our eco-systems. Policy SD03 requires developers to show how they will take the opportunity, whenever available, to create attractive new water features of the appropriate size to serve the main purpose that will also add positively to the local landscape and the amenity of the surrounding area. Where development proposals lie within flood risk areas or adjacent to a main river, the Environment Agency should always be consulted. Developers are encouraged to follow Devon County Council’s guidance on sustainable drainage and flood risk management .¹⁶

6.14 Cullompton Town Council feels strongly that the collection and re-use of grey water in new build dwellings should be considered by developers in all new build schemes, especially the Garden Village and the North West Extension.

**Policy SD03
Flood Attenuation**

In addition to meeting national flood risk policy requirements, flood attenuation on major developments should, where appropriate make use of existing on- or off-site natural water features, or new onsite water features in suitable and safe locations, to contribute to the visual amenity and biodiversity of the area.

Map 3:
Flood Attenuation referred to in policy



¹⁶ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/sustainable-drainage/>

Solar Design in Housing Schemes

6.15 We want the Neighbourhood Plan to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide and minimising the impact of new development on the changing climate. The NPPF (para. 148) says the planning system should... support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”.

6.16 We believe that every opportunity should be taken at the development stage to ensure new developments take advantage of Cullompton’s renewable local energy sources, and its sunshine in particular. We share the view expressed in the Planning Design Guide for Mid Devon “It is important that due consideration is given to energy conservation in the design and location of new buildings in accordance with principles for sustainable development, compatible with the need to harmonise the development with its surroundings.”¹⁷

6.17 Passive solar design refers to making use of the sun’s energy for the heating and cooling of living spaces. Passive solar design is the siting and design of buildings to maximise the use of the sun’s energy for heating and cooling. Passive solar design takes advantage of natural characteristics in building materials and air to help reduce the additional energy needed for heating and cooling. The PPG says that “policies can encourage sites to be planned to permit good solar access to as many buildings as possible. The potential benefits of passive solar design can only be realised by careful siting and layout... It is important that passive design considers the potential for overheating in the summer, as well as reducing need for heating in the winter.”¹⁸

6.18 Local Plan Policy CU5 requires “renewable and low carbon energy to provide a proportion of the site’s energy use” as part of the approach to major development in the ‘North West’ extension to Cullompton, in the interests of minimising “the overall carbon footprint of the development”. Policy SD04 requires the principles of passive solar design and renewable energy technologies to be central to the design and planning of all new housing areas. The policy does recognise that there is a need to achieve a balance between energy efficiency and acceptable standards of privacy and amenity. On the matter of possible noise disturbance, developers are encouraged to seek guidance from the Institute of Acoustics¹⁹.

Policy SD04 Solar Design in Housing Schemes

The use of passive solar design, renewable energy technologies and low energy systems in all new housing developments will be supported.

Wherever possible dwellings should be orientated so that principal habitable rooms can benefit from passive solar gain, maximising energy efficiency whilst ensuring that the site layout provides acceptable standards of privacy and amenity to all residents.

¹⁷ <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning/conservation/design-guidance/>

¹⁸ NPPG Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 26-013-20140306, Mar 2014

¹⁹ Professional Practice Guidance on Planning & Noise New Residential Development, Institute of Acoustics, May 2017 <https://www.ioa.org.uk/sites/default/files/14720%20ProPG%20Main%20Document.pdf>



Connectivity

6.18 We want the town to be as well connected as it can possibly be and to take full advantage of future improved technologies. We want Cullompton’s residents, students and businesses to have access to the latest communication technology. The quality of local connectivity could influence local business start-ups and be crucial to the success of local enterprise. We endorse the Government’s view that access to superfast broadband should be a right - absolutely fundamental to life in 21st century Britain and regarded as an essential service just like gas, electricity and water.²⁰ The NPPF (para. 42) states that “Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role”.

6.19 Local Plan Policy S1 states that supporting high quality communications infrastructure by supporting the expansion of telecommunications and high speed broadband throughout Mid Devon is a priority. Therefore, Policy SD05 requires new buildings to have the necessary equipment i.e. suitable ducting for fibre connectivity and/ or other apparatus in place, to enable high speed broadband connections and other media/ communication connections to be a simple matter.

Policy SD05 Connectivity

All new residential, educational and business premises development should endeavour to make adequate provision for high speed broadband and other communication networks.



²⁰ Expressed in Prime Minister’s speech 7th November 2015
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-plans-to-make-sure-no-one-is-left-behind-on-broadband-access>

Culm Garden Village

6.20 The Local Plan Review has determined Cullompton will become the strategic focus of new development in Mid Devon, “reflecting its accessibility, economic potential and environmental capacity. This strategy will improve access to housing through urban extensions and expanded employment opportunities. There will be significant improvements to the town’s infrastructure and connectivity, including the reopening of the railway station, and improved services for its population and nearby rural areas. Proposals will provide for approximately 3,930 dwellings, of which 1,100 will be affordable, and 73,500 gross square metres of commercial floor space over the plan period” (Local Plan Policy S11).

6.21 A site of approximately 160ha. to the east of Cullompton has been designated in the Local Plan Review as a development area to provide 1,750 dwellings within the plan period and at least 850 further dwellings beyond 2033. Local Plan Policy CU7 sets out the strategic policy requirements and conditions. These include a “comprehensive master-planning” approach. Other Local Plan policies deal with the key aspects of:

- CU8 – transport provision
- CU9 – environmental protection and green infrastructure
- CU10 – community facilities
- CU11 – carbon reduction and air quality
- CU12 - phasing

6.22 Relevant to the Local Plan’s strategic policies is the ‘expression of interest’ made by Mid Devon District Council in 2016. It responded to a Government initiative launched in March 2016 “to support locally-led garden cities and towns in places where communities want them”. Mid Devon District Council considered that not only did the East Cullompton development strategy meet the eligibility criteria; here was an opportunity, with additional support from Government, “to ‘lock-in’ and maximise Garden Village principles, expedite the delivery of the initial phase and build momentum in respect of a further phase in the context of the forthcoming Greater Exeter Area

Strategic Plan”. Mid Devon District Council’s case was summarised as follows: “Culm Garden Village presents a genuinely locally led, credible, feasible and deliverable Garden Village concept. It will emerge and mature as a new settlement of up to 5,000 homes to the east of Junction 28 of the M5 to serve the Exeter Housing Market Area (HMA) and the ‘Heart of the South West’ Local Enterprise Partnership Area”.

6.23 Cullompton Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group supported the Garden Village ‘bid’ in principle. However, that support was conditional upon establishing a joined-up approach that ensures the planning of a garden village at East Cullompton is properly connected to the planning framework for the rest of the parish area; and enables the community, through the Town Council and its neighbourhood planning group, to participate in a meaningful way. In that way, it will be “genuinely locally led”.

6.24 How this can be achieved was considered and discussed at a Community workshop on 22nd March 2017²¹ The workshop was attended by over 50 people, and comprised not only a wide cross-section of community and business interests, but a variety of ages from school children and those in their early twenties, to retired residents. The Workshop proved to be both harmonious and positive.

6.25 The ‘headlines’ from the Workshop are:

- The potential for financial support from the Government’s ‘flagship’ Garden Village Initiative offers a welcome opportunity to plan for and embrace growth, positively.
- There was a strong unanimity about the themes emerging.
- The workshop was willing to express ‘emphatic support’ for the Garden Village Initiative, if it is advanced and delivered in a way that accords with some important principles.

²¹ <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/Culm%20Garden%20Village%20neighbourhood%20plan%20report%202017.pdf>

6.26 The six “community principles” emphasised in the ‘bid’ are:

- a mix of homes for rent, sale, and shared ownership;
- well-designed homes in beautiful landscaped settings;
- development which enhances the natural environment;
- a wide range of local jobs;
- local leisure, cultural, shopping and community facilities; and
- mobility for all enabling healthy living from an integrated transport system. We concur with these ‘objectives’.

6.27 Policy SD06 also reflects the community principles, we believe should underpin the approach taken to delivering growth of the town and the major development of East Cullompton. These principles mean that:

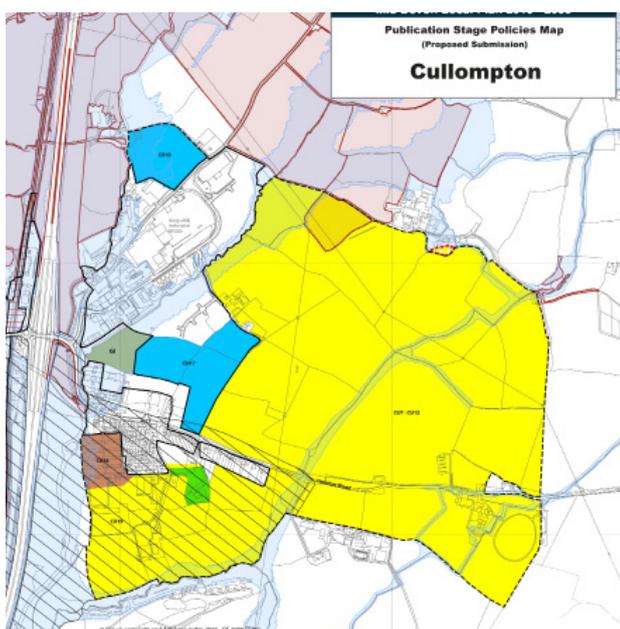
- it should be design, not developer-led;
- it should be guided by an agreed masterplan;
- every effort should be made to integrate and connect the new development to the existing community - both physically and socially; and
- Adequate infrastructure (including transport, community and environment) should, as far as possible, precede housing development.

6.28 In December 2017 Mid Devon District Council was awarded substantial monies from the Planning Delivery Fund to progress the master-planning of East Cullompton. The purpose of the Fund is to support:

- “more and better joint working, across local authority boundaries.
- a step change in the design quality of new development
- innovation to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processes and enable the delivery of more high-quality homes²²”

We look forward to working closely with Mid Devon District Council’s planning team to realise a sustainable extension to Cullompton of the highest quality, that we can all be proud of.

6.29 The community participated in a series of workshops during 2018 to help inform the vision, principles and concept plan in respect of the whole garden village and to establish the constraints and opportunities in respect of a draft Masterplan SPD²³. The area subject to the masterplan exercise encompasses the areas of floodplain (to the north and east of land allocated in the Local Plan Policy CU7) to ensure that both the negative and positive impacts of the strategic development at East Cullompton on the floodplain can be properly assessed. The Town Council believes that the opportunity to create first class leisure provision for Cullompton, such as a country park and a ‘sports hub’, on this land should be an integral part of the masterplan.



²² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-delivery-fund-prospectus>

²³ SPD = Supplementary Planning Document (see glossary)

6.30 The issue of ‘integration’, of the existing and new development, physically and socially, is perceived as the most challenging aspect of the East Cullompton development. We regard the Garden Village Initiative as a marvellous opportunity to deliver strategic growth at Cullompton in the public gaze. The Town Council expects the community to be a ‘partner’ in its planning and delivery. In this way, we can contribute to ensuring the Garden Village area becomes an integral part of the community and settlement of Cullompton, not a stand-alone settlement.

Policy SD06 Culm Garden Village

Proposals to develop a locally led garden village towards the east of Cullompton will be supported in principle. Any such development should be subject to a comprehensive masterplan that should:

- i. seek to create a new settlement area, of unique character, within an outstanding natural environment;
- ii. foster integration between the existing and new settlement areas;
- iii. secure sufficient physical connection between the proposed new development to the East and the existing town (including bridges, roads, pedestrian links, cycle paths and public transport);
- iv. plan for complementary facilities in and adjacent to the housing areas that can serve the needs of the whole community of the neighbourhood area, including sports, education, health/ wellbeing, community and faith spaces;
- v. embrace the principles of accessibility for all;
- vi. provide an appropriate range and scale of spaces for businesses to function effectively;
- vii. deliver mix of housing types, tenures and designs, that meet high standards of sustainable living; and
- viii. ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to achieving the timely delivery of infrastructure.

Infrastructure

6.31 Cullompton Town Council is very clear that the scale of development proposed for Cullompton requires major infrastructure improvements and new infrastructure projects. Housing development should only proceed if there are clear plans to improve infrastructure, including, but not limited to, green, blue and built infrastructure.

6.32 The Local Plan Review has acknowledged that the town’s infrastructure will need considerable improvement, extension and enhancement to support sustainable growth to the scale that is proposed. Policy CU20 in the Local Plan is specifically about ‘Cullompton Infrastructure’ and states that Mid Devon District Council will make use of developer funding and planning obligations to deliver the required infrastructure. The list of ‘required infrastructure’ mentioned in the Local Plan includes: a town centre relief road, extra-care housing provision, green infrastructure, public transport service enhancement (including a railway station and bus interchange), additional community services and facilities. We would add the digital communication network and public utilities to the essential infrastructure list. The condition and capacity of the sewerage system is of particular concern. It has its limitations that “will require detailed investigations to assess what improvements will be required²⁵”. The Environment Agency has emphasised the need to ensure that adequate flood risk management infrastructure is in place. Kentisbeare Parish Council has told us that it is vital to include a ‘recycling centre’ in the growth proposals²⁶. The Garden Village Initiative will place even more demands on local infrastructure, including the means of accessing the motorway network from East Cullompton whilst not overburdening the local road network.

6.33 Local consultations continue to identify widespread concern that the town may suffer as a result of too rapid a growth. This must not occur. The phasing and timing of infrastructure provision must be a critical test as to whether major development should proceed. Devon County Council has recently warned that “it should be acknowledged that viability and funding

²⁴ Email from Development Co-ordinator, South West Water, 5th May 2017

²⁵ Reg. 14 Response, Kentisbeare Parish Council, 14th Nov 2017

availability can impact on infrastructure phasing”.

Policy SD07 is aimed at ensuring that the necessary test is applied and passed by major development proposals and the necessary infrastructure investment is assured.

6.34 The Town Council expects Mid Devon District Council to maintain a consultation-based dialogue with it, and the community at large, to ensure that the planned infrastructure is that which is needed and most likely to bring benefits to the whole of the town and parish area. The Town Council will be particularly concerned about the timing of infrastructure improvements.

Policy SD07 Timing of Infrastructure

Major development should be phased logically and in tandem with the timely and co-ordinated provision of infrastructure to help support sustainable growth and ensure that an unacceptable strain is not placed on the existing infrastructure.



Highways, Travel and Transport

Improve mobility, accessibility and reduce the overall use and impact of the motor vehicle

Introduction

7.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies are intended to recognise and facilitate those, much needed, improvements to the local transport network that are required to reduce the intrusion of the motor vehicle; to increase the travel choices available locally; and the appeal of alternative forms of transport.

Aims and Objectives

7.2 The following aims and objectives relating to highways, travel and transport have emerged following a programme of community consultation. They have been used to help formulate our neighbourhood plan policies and inform a programme of other community actions. This topic features early in the Neighbourhood Plan because of the weight of concern about travel-related matters expressed at the various consultation events.

Highways, Travel and Transport	
Planning Aims	Planning Objectives
Upgrade Motorway junction 28 so as to be fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve junction 28 and ensure motorway connections remain adequate
Reduce vehicular traffic in Cullompton town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide relief roads and traffic management plan • Control traffic flow through the town centre
Improve our public transport connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create transport hub • Support new railway station
Extend and improve safe cycle routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop circular/linear cycle network with many linkages in and out of town
Improve the pedestrian experience in and around the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure footpaths are of adequate width for mobility scooters and double buggies etc

Improving our Motorway Connection

7.3 The M5 motorway junction 28 that serves Cullompton and its hinterland is inadequate both in terms of capacity and safety. 72% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 told us we needed a better motorway junction. It certainly needs improvement before substantial growth can take place in the area. Devon County Council has recently²⁶ carried out works at junction 28 to ease problems and to accommodate the already committed development in the area. It will likely prove to be inadequate on its own, when all the proposed development in the Local Plan takes place. An additional junction may well be required to ease the pressure on junction 28.

7.4 Devon County Council commissioned, in 2015, some initial modelling and design work and exploration of the options for motorway connections that would be required should development of the scale indicated in the Local Plan come forward. Mid Devon District Council has been working closely with statutory consultees to ensure emerging proposals for “junction 28 M5 improvements” are appropriately designed. However, as we were told in late 2017, Highways England has no further scheduled improvements earmarked for junction 28. It does, we are informed, continually monitor the performance of the junction.

7.5 Local Plan Policy S11 supports investment in improvements to the M5 motorway, including junction 28, to maintain highway capacity and safety. Policy CU7 of the Local Plan recognises that an essential prerequisite to major development east of Cullompton is “transport provision to ensure appropriate accessibility for all modes, including a new or improved access and egress onto the M5 motorway and pedestrian and cycling links across the motorway to the existing town”.

7.6 Policy HT01 is supportive of any improvements to junction 28 of the M5 that ensure it functions properly and efficiently and is no longer a cause of complaint and much frustration to local people and businesses, nor a lasting negative memory for many who visit the town. Any

upgrading should not only aid the motorist. There are many pedestrians that also cross the motorway regularly via junction 28. They need to do so safely.

7.7 The NPPF (para. 181) encourages transport solutions “solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion”. Policy HT01 is consistent with the Cullompton Air Quality Management Area Action Plan 2009 which also prioritised the creation of additional capacity at Junction 28 of M5.

Policy HT01 Motorway Connection

Proposals to ensure that junction 28 of the M5 functions efficiently and safely as population and business activity in the Cullompton area grows, will be supported.

Improving our Public Transport Network

7.8 There is a proportion of the local community, many of whom are elderly, that will continue to be dependent on public transport. To encourage others to use public transport out of choice rather than need, we have to make public transport a more accessible and attractive option. A ‘transport interchange’ that links to parking areas, a new railway station and is easily accessible to and from the town centre by foot and connected to the cycle network, will go a significant way towards protecting the services we have and increasing demand for public transport. We would expect the interchange to be on a site near the railway station and determined as part of a master-planning exercise for the location.

7.9 The NPPF (para. 104) says that “planning policies should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development”. Local Plan Policy S7 supports traffic management measures in Cullompton including improving sustainable travel opportunities and interchange facilities to improve town centre environment and accessibility. Local

²⁶ Autumn 2015

Plan Policy CU20 commits the local planning authority to seeking external funding and partners to deliver both a railway and bus interchange. During 2018 Mid Devon District Council began the process of developing a masterplan for Cullompton town centre that will result in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The masterplan is intended to be wide-ranging and “seek to strengthen the economy by creating new opportunities for businesses, jobs, shops, leisure, heritage and culture, and transform public spaces to make the town a more attractive place to shop, relax and stay, strengthening the town’s role as growing market town”.²⁷ Transport options and the potential of a new transport interchange, and movement linkages with the proposed garden village, are an important part of the masterplan brief.

7.10 Policy HT02 expresses the Town Council’s support to the development of an interchange at a suitable location and seeks to facilitate a transport interchange for Cullompton, which should be connected to appropriate walking and cycling facilities and routes.

7.11 Cullompton Town Council feels very strongly that, in addition to a new railway station and bus interchange (bus station); there should be a Cullompton Park and Ride to provide an integrated local transport service. This should provide an integrated local transport network to get people from home to the bus or train station and so leave their vehicles at home when they go to work. This transport service should look to provide a route along the M5 as well as getting people to the bus/train station and other local facilities and services.

Policy HT02 Improving our Public Transport Network

Development proposals to further the provision of a transport interchange for Cullompton are supported.

Improving our Cycle Network

7.12 Cycling is on the increase and showing every sign, in 2017, that it will continue to grow in popularity. There are however, too few car-free cycle routes. 78% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 told us we need more cycle routes. (para. 104) says “planning policies should provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans)”.

7.13 We want to make cycling more appealing as a regular travel and recreation option. This requires easy and safe routes being provided that create links between our neighbourhoods, existing and new, to the town centre, to employment areas and to other public facilities such as the health centre and schools. An improved network of paths for walking and cycling in Cullompton would increase the number of people walking and cycling for shorter journeys in the town. This will improve the health of the residents of Cullompton and reduce traffic levels in the town. The Town Council has adopted a Cycle Paths Plan²⁸ and expects developers to acknowledge this Plan and invest in its implementation. Cullompton Town Council would like to see an extended, coherent and extensive cycle path network, for health benefits and to reduce local traffic. This would include a new cycle route made from Cullompton that connects with the National Cycle Route 3 at Willand.



²⁷ <https://democracy.middevon.gov.uk/documents/s11478/Cabinet%205th%20April%20Cullompton%20town%20centre%20masterplan%203.pdf>

²⁸ Cullompton Multi-Use Path Cycle Path Policy Document 2013/14, Cullompton Town Council, 2013

7.14 Local Plan Policies CU2, CU8 and CU13 provide for cycle and pedestrian links to and from the town centre and within the major mixed-use urban extension areas of North West Cullompton and East Cullompton, as well as at Knowle Lane. Policy HT03 complements and extends the Local Plan's approach by supporting the development of a safe cycle network across and around the whole town and not just in and out of the new development areas.

7.15 Policy HT03 is consistent with the Cullompton Air Quality Management Area Action Plan 2009 which called for the provision of walking and cycling routes alongside all new road links.

Policy HT03 Improving our Cycle Network

Cullompton Town Council has adopted a Cycle Paths Plan. Where feasible and appropriate, developments should acknowledge the Cycle Paths Plan and make provision to assist in its implementation.

Proposals that further the development of an accessible network of cycle routes in and around Cullompton are supported. In particular, proposals should look to achieve a greater degree of safe linkage between residential areas, employment areas and public facilities.

²⁹ "In lightly used streets (such as those with a purely residential function), the minimum unobstructed width for pedestrians should generally be 2 metres" Manual for Streets, Department for Transport, 2007 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf

³⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3695/inclusive-mobility.pdf

Improving our Footpaths

7.16 A lot of the local footpaths are narrow and make it difficult in many places for people to pass safely. We would like all new footpaths to be of a minimum width of 2,000mm, a recognised standard²⁹ for good accessibility.

7.17 With an ageing population and mobility aids becoming more commonplace, opportunities should be taken to ensure that there is sufficient width on a footpath to allow safe passing of a mobility scooter with other pedestrians, for two mobility scooters to pass each other with ease and meet the accepted width of pavements for persons with guide dogs.³⁰ The average size of a mobility scooter is growing. We urge new developments to make full allowance for this or, where it is not practicable, to allow for 'passing places' for mobility scooters at appropriate intervals along new footpaths. Such measures will also enable safe turning for people who use mobility scooters. New footpaths in major housing development areas should at least meet the minimum standard and be laid out as an attractive and safe network that links the new neighbourhoods with the town centre, employment areas and public facilities.



7.18 The NPPF (para. 110) requires us to "give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility "create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards". Local Plan Policy S1 also calls for safe and accessible environments. Local Plan Policy DM1 states that the design of new development must be of high quality and based upon creating safe and accessible places that also encourage sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling.

7.19 Policy HT04 ensures that, whenever possible, new footpaths are of adequate width to accommodate mobility vehicles and with gradients and terrain that will not impair, to ensure wheelchair accessibility. The 2,000mm width is the accepted standard for footpaths “that allows two wheelchairs to pass with comfort”.³⁰ This standard, we are informed has the support of Devon County Council “for any new footpaths created, where reasonable and practicable, working in liaison with landowners and developers”.

Policy HT04 Improving Footpaths

Footpaths that are provided by new development should be a minimum of 2000mm in width where reasonable and whenever practicable.

Footpaths should link to existing networks to facilitate easy and safe pedestrian access to the town centre and public facilities and services.



Housing

Provide new dwellings to meet a wide range of needs and demands

Introduction

8.1 We expect the Local Plan to allocate sufficient land in the appropriate locations to enable Cullompton to grow in an ordered and sustainable manner. Our view on what sites should be allocated for housing is set out in the Town Council's response to the Local Plan Review³¹. The Neighbourhood Plan policies are intended to ensure that we continue to meet all our local housing needs by recognising what those needs are and by providing good quality homes that people will be proud to live in. We expect them to be designed and laid out in a way that will help foster the sense of 'one town and one community' that is so important to the future wellbeing of the Cullompton area.



Aims and Objectives

8.2 The following aims and objectives relating to housing provision in the Cullompton area have emerged following a programme of community consultation. They have been used to help formulate the neighbourhood plan policies and inform a programme of other community actions.

Housing	
Planning Aims	Planning Objectives
Increase the housing stock and ensure it offers a wide range of types and choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a wide range of family houses • Provide accommodation for young people, the elderly and single people
Ensure new family housing has adequate garden and parking spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate parking and garden space is provided for all new dwellings
Ensure new housing developments encourage a sense of neighbourhood and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate local community spaces and facilities are provided for all new developments

Housing Mix

8.3 We want to ensure all types of local housing need are met. This requires new development to respond to the local demand for different types and sizes of dwelling to ensure that the supply of housing in the parish area meets the demand of the local and incoming population and households. We recognise that housing needs will change and will require regular re-assessment. We want the developer of any larger housing development to refer to an up-to-date assessment of the local housing market and needs (carried out within 12 months prior to the planning application

³¹ Local Plan Review Letter from Cullompton Town Council to Mid Devon District Council, 30th March 2015

submitted) and demonstrate, to Cullompton Town Council as well as Mid Devon District Council, how the proposed development will meet the local demand for the size and type of dwelling proposed and contribute towards improving the access of local people to new dwellings. The NPPF (para. 61) says “the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies”.

8.4 We want to create mixed communities. We expect all major housing developments to include both small and larger dwelling units and, if possible, provide a variety of family house sizes (two bedrooms and more) to accommodate different types and sizes of households. We want more flexibility in the housing stock. We want more houses that are big enough for a family to grow in and stay where they are, if they wish to do so. We also want to see more ‘whole life’-type housing developed i.e. homes designed to accommodate the changing needs occurring through one family’s lifetime, including small children, mobility difficulties and elderly person’s requirements.

8.5 Local Plan Policy S1 seeks to deliver a wide range of high quality homes through a diverse housing mix by meeting the housing needs of all sectors. Mid Devon’s Housing Need SPD³² requires a proportion of affordable dwellings to be built to life-time standards. Given that our demographic profile is ageing³³ and most residents wish to stay in Cullompton for the long-term (72% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014), we think it reasonable to require a proportion of all types of dwellings to be built to ‘lifetime standards’. These standards are now covered by the optional requirements for accessible and adaptable dwellings in the 2015 version of the Building Regulations 2010. To meet lifetime homes standards “reasonable provision should be made for most people to access the dwelling and incorporate features that make it potentially suitable for a range of occupiers including older people, those with reduced mobility and some wheelchair users”³⁴.

8.6 Policy HS01 requires the developer of major housing schemes³⁵ to consult with the Town Council and be aware of the up-to-date housing need situation in Cullompton and demonstrate how their proposed housing mix will help meet local need, in terms of size and type. The latest

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Exeter Housing Market and covering Mid Devon, confirmed our own conclusions that there was still a substantial need for small dwellings. SHMA states “broadly, we recommend a property size target [for market housing] 60% one and two bedrooms and 40% three/four bedroom split in the market sector to provide a better-balanced housing”. For low cost market housing, “given that household growth will be mostly from smaller households, it is considered that smaller units will play a key role in meeting future market housing requirements” and for social and affordable rented housing, “the vast majority of need across all authorities is for smaller 1 and 2 bedroom units ranging from 84.1% to 86.3% of waiting lists”³⁶.

Policy HS01 Housing Mix

Development proposals on major housing sites, of 10 or more dwellings or on sites of 0.5ha. or more, must contain an appropriate mixture of house types and sizes and show how they contribute to meeting current local housing needs of the neighbourhood area by referring to an up-to-date assessment of local housing need and evidence from Cullompton Town Council.

³² Policy MHN/4 Lifetime Homes “The Council will require that 20% or more of the affordable housing meets the Lifetime Homes Standard”

³³ “a large increase in persons of 65 years and over is projected for Mid Devon” - Evidence Base Report for the Mid Devon Local Plan Review, Devon County Council, Feb 2015

³⁴ Access to and Use of Buildings, The Building Regulations 2010, 2015 Edition, HM Government, 2015

³⁵ “major development” for housing as defined by Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 means development involving —the provision of dwelling houses where—
(i) the number of dwelling houses to be provided is 10 or more; or
(ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more

³⁶ https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/103519/shma_final_report__2015.pdf

Social and Affordable Housing

8.7 Policy S3 of the Local Plan sets out the district's requirements for new dwellings to meet the housing needs of today and the future. Policy S11 sets out the new housebuilding targets for the Cullompton area.

8.8 In promoting the delivery of these strategic policies, we want to help create mixed and inclusive communities and neighbourhoods. We expect a developer to achieve the required quota of affordable housing set by the Local Plan for all larger developments. However, we don't want affordable housing to be identifiable merely because of its appearance or location. Moreover, in no way do we want occupants of social housing to feel stigmatised.

8.9 Mid Devon District Council's SPD³⁷ on Affordable Housing has a section on 'Layout and Design' which also emphasises the need to ensure the "creation of inclusive, mixed communities as follows:

- a) Affordable and market housing on a site should be the same mix of sizes and visually indistinguishable from each other;
- b) Affordable and market dwellings should be intermixed within the site, avoiding any particular concentrations in any part of the site;
- c) Affordable housing should be provided broadly in step with the market housing as the development progresses."



8.10 We fully support this approach and, because a supplementary planning document does not have the status of an adopted development plan, we have therefore set Policy HS02 which requires the developer to ensure that the affordable housing is properly integrated with the rest of the development and not distinct or unnecessarily distinctive.

Policy HS02 Social and Affordable Housing

On all housing developments in the Cullompton area the required quota of affordable housing should be visually indistinguishable from other types of housing and not located separately on the development.



Creating Smaller Housing Units

8.11 A current deficiency in the local housing market, relative to the composition of households and population in the parish area, appears to be the number of small units available. We anticipate that the need for small, one- and two-bedroom, dwelling units is likely to continue well into future. The last Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 concluded that the "future need for all authorities is concluded to be largely dominated by a need for smaller properties, mostly in the 1 and 2 bedroom size categories.³⁸" The NPPF (para. 118) says planning policies and decisions should "promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained".

³⁷ SPD = Supplementary Planning Document

³⁸ Exeter Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report 2014/15, DCA,

8.12 We want to see the provision of good quality, small dwelling units around the town suitable for young people, as well as for an ageing population and the growing need for housing suitable for older people.

8.13 We also want to widen housing choice and encourage opportunities to do so partly by making good use of existing buildings that may have become redundant.

Policy HS03 Creating Smaller Housing Units

The creation of smaller dwellings through the subdivision of existing larger dwellings or other redundant buildings within the town area of Cullompton (as defined on Map 2) will be supported where the development:

- i. meets an identifiable need for smaller properties across all tenures;
- ii. respects the character, scale, setting and design of the existing building;
- iii. will not result in over-development of the building's curtilage; and
- iv. will protect the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers.

Parking on Housing Schemes

8.14 Cullompton Town Council feels very strongly that residential garages should be of a size suitable for modern vehicles. They should have sufficient space for the car to be parked and the door opened so that the driver can exit the vehicle inside the garage. The Town Council also feels very strongly that driveways should be of sufficient length to enable modern vehicles to park on them without obstructing the pavement. Examples of these can be seen in Burgess Hill Policy S4.³⁹

8.15 On-street parking is not only a big problem in and around the town centre; it also disrupts traffic flows and creates safety problems on the new estates and distributor roads. We do not want new development to add to the on-street parking problem or repeat recent mistakes, which have received much criticism from residents and estate users. At the recent community consultations, several people referred to the recent developments in the north and west of Cullompton as being inadequate in terms of road widths and off-road parking spaces. Too often, cars, lorries, and other heavy goods vehicles are parked up on the footpaths. Some of the initial owners of the properties have complained that they were not advised properly on the lack of parking.

8.16 On new developments, we want to ensure that there is sufficient space provided within the curtilage of individual family dwellings or nearby, for occupants and their visitors and callers, which allows adequately for current car ownership levels and usage. Garage spaces are not considered as equating to a parking space; modern lifestyle means that garages are often used for storage, rather than for parking a car.

8.17 We are aware that home-delivery vehicles are a necessary part of the modern retailing, with online shopping growing in popularity. Therefore, we encourage the provision of short-term off-road parking areas for delivery vehicles in appropriate locations on new developments. These will also serve to avoid regular utility vehicles such as refuse collection and recycling vehicles from causing obstruction.

8.18 We are also concerned that residential streets with insufficient off-road parking space can lead to more on-street parking and consequently, emergency service vehicles facing difficulties getting to houses in the case of emergencies. We want to ensure that new developments are accessible to all vehicles and reflect the realistic demand for parking spaces and that the impact of on-road parking is minimised.

8.19 We note that a recent Government Statement recognises that "the imposition of

³⁹Burgess Hill NP Policy S4 "New housing developments that include the provision of garage space must be of the minimum size for cars - 7.0m x 3.0m (internal dimension) for this to be counted as a parking space."

maximum parking standards lead to blocked and congested streets". As a result, the advice now is that local planning authorities should "only impose local parking standards for residential and non-residential development where there is clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage the local road network"⁴⁰. We believe that Cullompton does need to set minimum standards so as not to exacerbate a recognised problem and to ensure that the road network can cope at peak flow times. This includes those times when the M5 is closed and motorway traffic must use the roads through Cullompton, which can happen at any time of the day or night.

8.20 Local Plan Policies DM5 seeks to provide for an appropriate level of parking and sets the district's space standards for new housing development including parking. Local Plan Policy DM5 requires an average of 1.7 parking spaces per dwelling and 2-4 cycle parking spaces, depending on dwelling size.

8.21 Car ownership shows no sign of decreasing. Policy HS04 modifies the space requirement of the district policy in the interests of clarity and an overall increase in the number of off-road spaces. It also seeks to ensure that off-road visitor parking is provided for in the interests of road safety and the free flow of traffic. In accordance with the NPPF (para. 105), which states that "policies should take into account...adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles", the policy requires developers to be mindful of the growing demand for re-charging facilities for householders' and visitors' vehicles.

Policy HS04 Parking on Housing Schemes

New residential development should provide off street parking in accordance with the requirements of the Development Plan. Wherever possible, to reduce the potential for parking on the highway the following standards are encouraged subject to the accessibility of the site including to public transport:

- 1-bed house/flat 1 off-road car parking space
- 2-bed house/flat 2 off-road car parking spaces
- 3-bed house/flat 2 off-road car parking spaces
- 4-bed house/flat 3 off-road car parking spaces
- 5+ bed house/flat 4 off-road car parking spaces

The layout of all major developments should provide adequately for off road visitor parking and temporary parking spaces for delivery and utility vehicles.

Parking schemes and layouts should not impair access required by the emergency services.

Adequate provision should be made for the charging of electric vehicles.

Wherever practical, permeable materials should be used for surface parking areas.



⁴⁰ Ministerial Statement, DCLG, Mar 2015

Gypsy and Traveller Sites

8.22 Traveller sites should be afforded the same degree of shelter and privacy that other residents of Cullompton would expect. Screening should be adequate to achieve this goal and add to the visual appearance of the local environment without creating separateness from the rest of the community. The NPPF (para. 127) says we should aim to ensure developments “establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit”.

8.23 Local Plan Policy S3 provides for a five-year supply of pitches for gypsies and travellers in the District. Local Policy CU1 requires a small site for at least five pitches at North West Cullompton (CU1-CU6); and at least 10 additional pitches are required as part of the major growth development at East Cullompton (CU7-CU12).

8.24 Local Plan Policy DM7 specifies the site requirements and the need for non-isolating boundary treatments. Policy HS05 seeks to be more positive about boundary treatments on any gypsy or traveller site provided in the Cullompton area to provide an appropriate level of privacy and make a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the neighbourhood. The Government’s advice is “the aim should be to achieve a boundary that is sympathetic to, and in keeping with, the surrounding area. Boundaries can also be used to provide shelter for more exposed sites. A balance needs to be struck between providing privacy and security for the site residents and avoiding a sense of enclosure through for example, the use of high metal railings”.⁴¹

Policy HS05 Gypsy and Traveller Sites

Gypsy and traveller sites provided in accordance with Development Plan should have an appropriate boundary treatment that is sympathetic to, and in keeping with, the surrounding area and which provides privacy and security for the occupants of the site.

⁴¹ Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide, DCLG, 2008

Natural and Rural Environment

Respect and appreciate our countryside

Introduction

9.1 Our Neighbourhood Plan policies are intended to confirm our intention to safeguard the environmentally sensitive parts of the parish area by recognising those areas that need to be protected and where possible enhanced. Whilst much of the Neighbourhood Plan is about the urban area, the countryside is a precious resource that cannot be disregarded.

Aims and Objectives

9.2 The following aims and objectives relating to the local countryside, its ecology and habitats, have emerged following a programme of community consultation. They have been used to help formulate the neighbourhood plan policies and inform a programme of other community actions.

Natural and Rural Environment	
Planning Aims	Planning Objectives
Protect and enhance the natural environment and its bio-diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect natural hedging and wildlife • Utilise public rights of way and local green spaces as biodiversity corridors
Respect, increase and protect public rights of way and access to the countryside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use 'Local Green Space' designation to protect areas of value to the community • Improve and maintain footpaths and bridleways
Enable new development where it assists the viability of farming and rural economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow conversion of farm buildings to increase farm viability

Protecting and Enhancing Local Wildlife

9.3 We respect the local natural environment and its biodiversity. Whilst there are no sites within the parish area that have protection through a statutory designation, there are many areas which are important to local biodiversity. 94% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 agreed we need to protect the countryside around us. Most of the locally important sites have been identified and delineated by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre on behalf of Cullompton Town Council (see map 3 on page 24)).

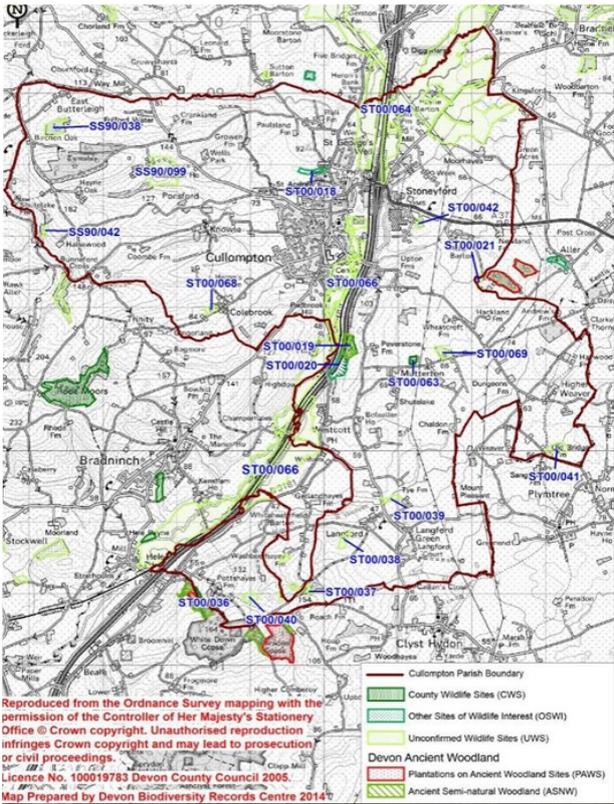
9.4 The town of Cullompton is growing. This makes the countryside and those remaining areas of natural environment even more special. We want to be assured that these sensitive sites will be protected and enhanced if possible. The areas identified on map 3 (page 24) are those regarded as sensitive and special, based on 2014 survey records. We are determined to protect the local habitats they provide and the species they host. We hope to use the development process not only to maintain but also to help increase local biodiversity. We are also reminded by the Environment Agency of the "importance of natural networks in managing water such as water quality and flood risk". The flood plain for instance coincides with several unconfirmed wildlife sites (see map 3 on page 24).



9.5 The NPPF (para 170) says “planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.....minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”.

9.6 Local Plan Policies S1 and S9 set out the district policy to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity; and Local Plan Policy DM28 sets the method by which the local planning authority will assess the significance of the impact of any development. Policy EN01 provides support to these Local Plan policies, as they seek to protect those sites within the parish area identified as being of ecological or geological importance. We expect major development proposals to be supported by sufficient information for the impact of the proposals on the local natural environment and its inhabitants to be fully assessed and have a significant effect on the decisions taken related to that development proposal.

Map 4:
Areas of Local Ecological Significance referred to in Policy EN01



Policy EN01 Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Where appropriate, development proposals will be expected to protect sites of ecological and/or geological importance and protect and enhance local biodiversity and wildlife to include:

- i. the safeguarding or protection of designated sites, protected species, priority species and habitats, ancient or species rich hedgerows, grasslands and woodlands;
- ii. the provision of appropriate buffer zones around designated sites or features and/or the implementation of appropriate mitigation and compensation measures where appropriate in accordance with the Development Plan.
- iii. the safeguarding and preservation of ecologically sensitive areas and ecological corridors;
- iv. the safeguarding of important geological sites;
- v. the protection of trees and tree groups of arboricultural or amenity value;
- vi. the appropriate planting of new native trees and hedges;
- vii. biodiversity enhancements incorporated into the development wherever possible; and
- viii. the provision of appropriate measures to avoid and reduce potential recreational impacts to ensure there is no adverse effect on the integrity of European Sites.



Improving the Public Rights of Way Network

9.7 Cullompton has some beautiful countryside, rolling hills, river and streams and an identified list of local walks. We want to ensure that the existing walking and horse riding routes in the parish area remain fit for purpose. We want to increase the appeal of walking to the local population. We feel that this can be done in part by improving access to the countryside and promoting circular walking trails around the area.

9.8 Many rights of way and bridleways are “valuable for biodiversity by providing green corridors and linear grassland and hedgerow habitats.” We support improvements and extensions to the footpath network in the countryside as long as any developments to achieve this include measures to protect local flora and fauna and serve to encourage responsible access and enjoyment of the countryside.

9.9 The NPPF (para. 98) states that “planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access”. Local Plan Policy S1 recognises the value of public rights of way and Local Plan Policy DM26 seeks to incorporate existing public rights of way in major development areas.

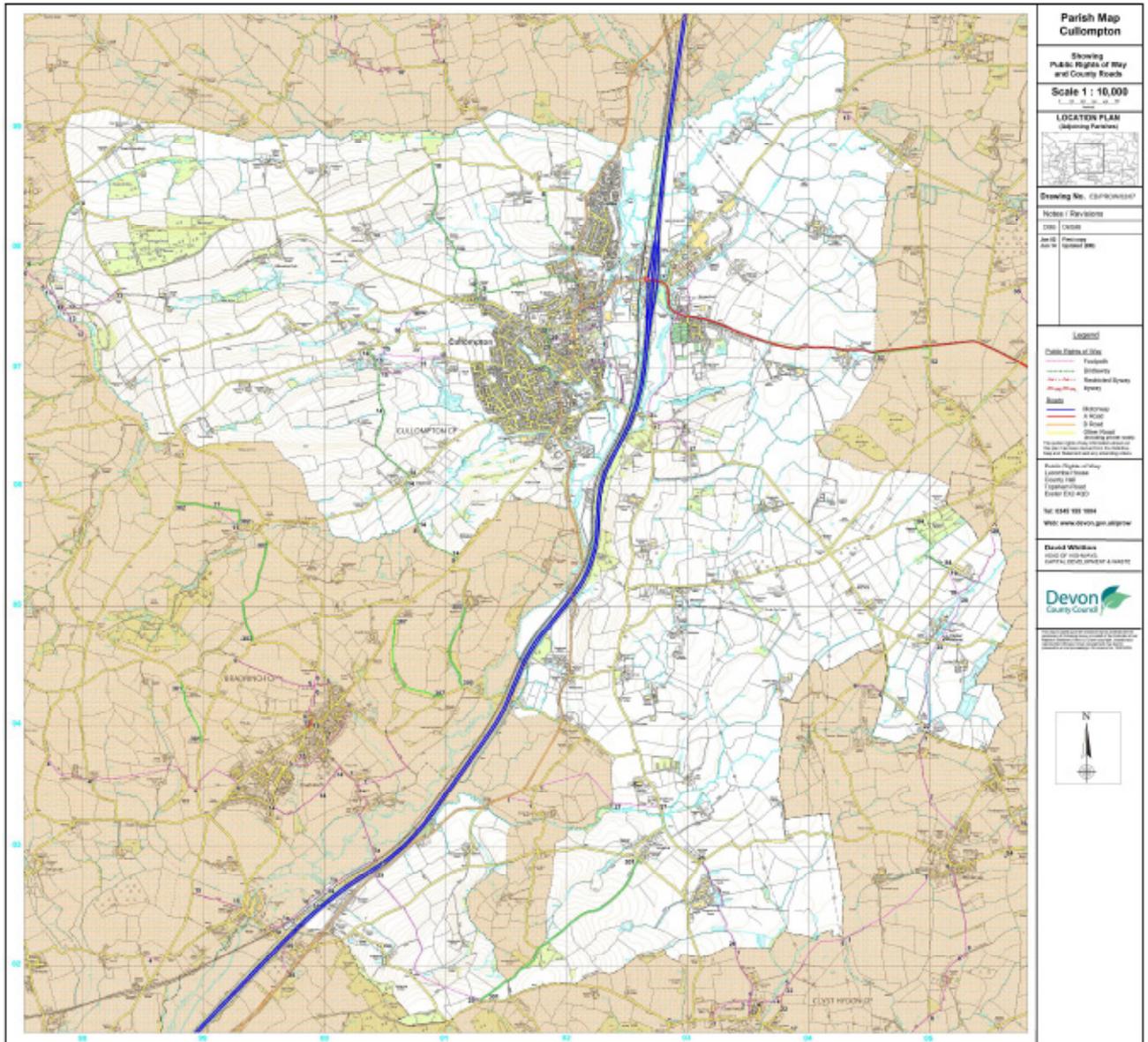
9.10 Local Plan Policy CU3 protects existing public rights of way (for the North West Cullompton development). Policy EN02 supports extensions and improvements to the network of public rights of way and bridleways across the whole parish area and endeavours to ensure that their value as biodiversity corridors is fully recognised, protected and, if possible, enhanced by any development work. In the interests of improving accessibility we are supportive of the removal of barriers (such as stiles and gates), wherever it is appropriate to do so. Map 5 shows the present network of public rights of way and bridleways in the parish area.

Policy EN02 Improving the Public Rights of Way Network

Measures to improve and extend the existing network of public rights of way and bridleways are supported so long as their value as biodiversity corridors is recognised, protected and efforts are made to enhance biodiversity as part of the ‘development’ work wherever appropriate.



Map 5:
Public Rights of Way and Bridleways referred to in Policy EN02



Local Green Space

9.11 A recent audit and assessment of local play areas and parks has been carried out on behalf of the Town Council. It looked at all local play areas and 'pocket parks' and took a view as to whether they were fit for purpose, capable of being maintained properly and worthy of protection. The conclusions from this assessment are reflected in the list of local green spaces in Policy EN03. The Local Plan through its policy DM24 recognises the value of local green space and acknowledges that "sites which are particularly important to local communities may be designated as Local Green Space, through the preparation of local or neighbourhood plans".

9.12 We are pleased to recognise that the town area has several small green areas that contribute significantly to the appearance and character of the local area and provide for a range of informal community leisure activities of the local population, not least providing somewhere safe for young children to play, as many of them do. Cullompton Town Council will be exploring how to reinforce their value as part of a network of green infrastructure throughout the town. As Natural England has reminded us, "green infrastructure can perform a range of functions including improved flood risk management, provision of accessible green space, climate change adaptation and biodiversity enhancement"⁴².

9.13 The areas identified in Policy EN03 meet the criteria of the NPPF (para. 100) which enables them to be designated as 'local green space' i.e.:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

9.14 A thorough assessment of potential sites was carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to assess whether the 'candidate' sites met the NPPF criteria, including being demonstrably special to the local community. Consistent with the approach of Local Plan policy DM24, those 'green' sites that are valued primarily for their sport and recreational purposes, are identified on map 6 (page 48) and subject to a separate Policy WL01. The sites that are subject to Policy EN03 are designated as Local Green Space because they are highly valued green areas that contribute significantly to the amenity of their neighbourhood, and the community wants to ensure they continue to do so for a very long time. A Site Assessment Report⁴³ presents our site by site analysis and conclusions.

9.15 The sites we consider 'qualify' as local green space and to which Policy EN03 should apply are:

Bilbie Close/Crow Bridge - a stretch of grass that provides for a range of informal leisure activities. It is bordered on two sides by a local brook.

Bockland Close – is a play area at the rear of dwellings that provides a safe play space for local children. It has a range of play equipment with safety surfaces.

Clover Drive – a triangular piece of grass, fringed with mature trees that contains a small children's play area, with a modern multi-play installation and a safety surface.

Cross Parks – a corner plot of amenity land at the edge of a new housing estate. It helps green the local environment and effect a transition between the urban area and the nearby countryside.

Culm Lea Play Area (recently updated) – at the end of cul-de-sac, alongside a footpath that leads to an informal walkway along the River Culm, is a fenced local children's play area with some basic play equipment.

Forcefield Road – an amenity space with mature trees that provides a car-free pedestrian route through the estate.

Haymans Close - a modern railing-enclosed play area in the middle of this modern housing estate. It offers a range of play opportunities for young children. As well as a multi-play installation for the younger children, with safety surface, there is a flat

⁴² Reg. 14 Consultation response, Natural England, 8th Nov 2017

⁴³ <http://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/CullINP%20LGS%20Assessment%20Report%20Nov17.pdf>

piece of grass that allows for a range of informal activities.

Haymans Green – also a modern railing-enclosed play area in the middle of this modern housing estate. It offers a range of play opportunities for young children. As well as a multi-play installation for the younger children, with safety surface, there is a kick-about area for the slightly older children of the locale.

Headweir Road (corner of Splatford Drive) – a fenced grass area with a large specimen oak tree. It has a children's play area with modern but traditional play equipment i.e. swings, slide and see-saw, all on safety surfaces.

Headweir Road (land between Nos. 73 & 75) – a green play and amenity space that includes a pedestrian link to Fairfax Road. Recently updated by Cullompton Town Council

Jubilee Gardens, Willand Road – an attractive gateway site that has been planted with ornamental shrubs and commemorative trees and features a flowerbed displaying the town's name.

Knightswood Play Park – a small park off Knightswood that provides a safe and sheltered play area away from the roads. It offers several pieces of play equipment and space to run around. Recently updated by Cullompton Town Council

Meadow Lane – an expanse of amenity grass that plays host to the town's skate-park.

Rivermead Play Area – a small triangular grassed area with three pieces of junior play equipment, with safety surfaces, and a bench serving the families of the local area.

Saxon Way/Windsor Close – at the junction of these two roads is an amenity area containing a fenced, modern, play area for young children serving the families of the local area.

St Andrew's Hill - the area of the Roman forts on St Andrews Hill, a scheduled ancient monument, is an important open green space in terms of its historic significance, that will impact positively on the north/north-west town expansion. Its designation was advocated by the Historic Environment Team at Devon County Council. As the planned development in North West Cullompton progresses

it will surround the site. Because of its proximity to the new community it is designated as a local green space.

Swallow Way – a green corridor crosses Swallow Way providing a well wooded pedestrian routeway across the estate leading westward into the countryside. At the eastern end with a footpath entrance off Manning Avenue is a fenced children's play area with a range of play equipment.

Tufty Park – a small, gated, play area on Shortlands Road with grass and a range of play equipment for young children, with safety surfaces. Recently updated.

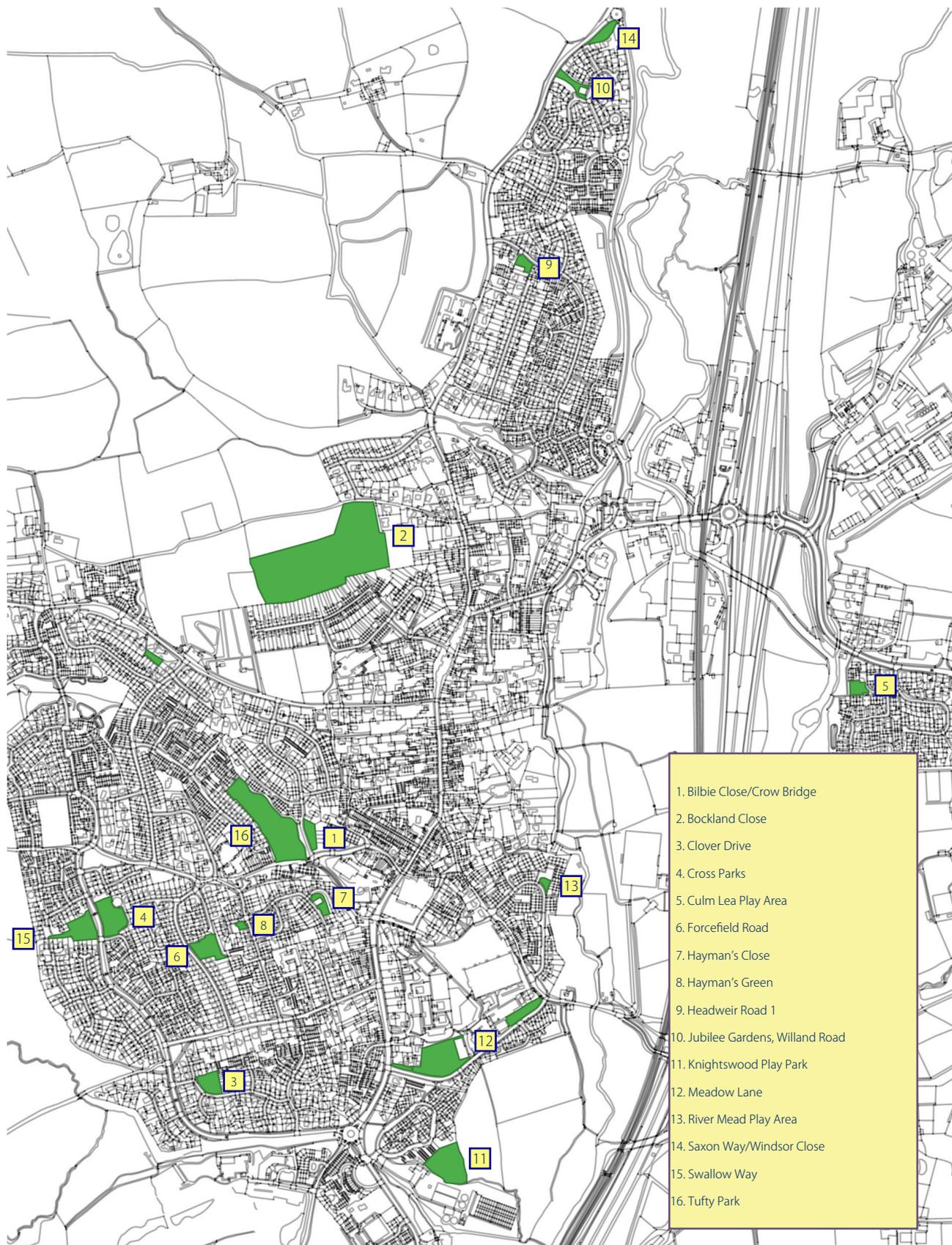
Policy EN03 Local Green Space

The following areas (listed below and identified on map 6) are designated as Local Green Spaces.

1. Bilbie Close/Crow Bridge
2. Bockland Close
3. Clover Drive
4. Cross Parks
5. Culm Lea Play Area
6. Forcefield Road
7. Hayman's Close
8. Hayman's Green
9. Headweir Road 1
10. Jubilee Gardens, Willand Road
11. Knightswood Play Park
12. Meadow Lane
13. River Mead Play Area
14. Saxon Way/Windsor Close
15. Swallow Way
16. Tufty Park

Proposals for built development on these areas will only be permitted in very special circumstances.

Map 6:
Designated Green Space referred to in Policy EN03



Town Centre, Heritage and Culture

Protect and enhance our historic built environment whilst broadening the appeal of the town and its cultural activity

Introduction

10.1 Our Neighbourhood Plan policies are intended to facilitate a continuous process of improvement to the historic core of the town of Cullompton to ensure it continues to serve as the centre of community life by meeting ever changing needs and demands whilst protecting and enhancing its special character and the heritage that it represents. We wish to ensure the historic buildings and spaces, some of which are currently ‘at risk’⁴⁴, continue to play a worthwhile role in the life of the town.

Aims and Objectives

10.2 The following aims and objectives relating to Cullompton town centre and the area’s rich heritage and culture have emerged following a programme of community consultation. They have been used to help formulate the neighbourhood plan policies and inform a programme of other community actions.



Town Centre, Heritage and Culture	
Planning Aims	Planning Objectives
Protect and enhance our historical environment and heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore and enhance High St/Fore St buildings • Facilitate the proper use of heritage buildings • Restore Cullompton cinema for community use
Make the town centre more pedestrian friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce traffic in town centre • Improve and control parking in town centre
Increase connectivity between areas of the town and beyond via network of footpaths and cycle routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve walking, cycling and mobility scooter routes in and around town centre
Improve the quality and appeal of the public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide shared surfaces in suitable locations town centre • Define and enhance town squares • Install creative public art installations
Support a co-ordinated arts/culture agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Cullompton as a cultural hub
Encourage arts projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an open art house bistro/gallery in the town
Protect the town centre’s retail function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support new retail business in the town centre • Seek other activities that could enhance the town centre and attract footfall
Develop the town centre’s evening economy and facilities, to cater for all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage diversity of evening entertainment provision to attract all groups • Explore the potential for a multi-use entertainment complex • Encourage businesses to take a flexible approach to opening hours

⁴⁴ According to Devon County Council in its Reg.14 Consultation response, these “include The Manor House Hotel, the Roman forts on St Andrew’s Hill and also the Cullompton Conservation Area”

Heritage Assets

10.3 We want to ensure that our heritage is recognised and respected. 91% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 told us we must protect old buildings and heritage. Our heritage assets are important to us for historical, cultural, urban design and 'sense of place' reasons. They help define what Cullompton, a proper Devon town, is all about. We would like to ensure they can continue to play a significant role in the life of the town. We want to ensure that uses are commensurate with the building's heritage.

10.4 The NPPF (para. 185) says "plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats." Local Plan Policy S1 recognises the need to conserve and enhance the historic environment through the identification and protection of both designated and non-designated heritage assets. Local Plan Policy DM25 sets out more detailed policy in the interest of protecting the heritage assets.

10.5 Policy TC01 emphasises the importance with which local heritage assets are regarded, by recognising the Mid Devon Register of Heritage Assets. The historic core of Cullompton is now encompassed by a Conservation Area, within which there are 46 Listed Buildings, including 42 Grade II Listed Buildings, as well as the Grade I, 15th century St Andrew's Church, the Grade I Listed 17th Century Walronds, the Grade II and II* Manor House Hotel and the Grade II Listed Merchants House. In addition, the Grade II Listed First Bridge spanning a tributary of the River Culm, is located beyond the Conservation Area boundary.

10.6 Mid Devon District Council has established a local Register of Heritage Assets⁴⁵, which includes several locations, buildings and structures in the Cullompton area that were identified in the Cullompton Conservation Area Appraisal⁴⁶. These include areas such as Queen Square and Higher Bull Ring and features such as pillar boxes, red telephone boxes and the seat and lean-to shelter at Trott's Alms Houses.

10.7 The Town Council may, from time to time, propose additional heritage features in the parish area for inclusion on the Register. We expect any development in the vicinity of a locally registered heritage asset to have a positive impact on the asset and local heritage and adhere to Local Plan Policy DM25, which requires applicants to provide a description of the significance of the heritage asset and/or its setting. We would expect a Heritage Impact Assessment to be presented in situations where development could directly affect a registered local heritage asset.

Policy TC01 Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets

Development proposals affecting Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets must comply with national policy and the Development Plan.



⁴⁵ Register of Heritage Assets: Local List East, Mid Devon District Council, Jan 15

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/114803/east-area-heritage-assets-part-1.pdf>

⁴⁶ Conservation Area Appraisal, Mid Devon District Council, 2009

https://new.middevon.gov.uk/media/114976/cullompton_conservation_appraisal_revised_2009.pdf

Character of the Built Environment

10.8 We want Cullompton to remain an attractive market town. We want to retain the essential character and appearance of Cullompton's built environment, which is epitomised by the variety of styles and forms on show. Adding new development to this mix is a design challenge that should not be taken lightly. We want development to complement and enhance its setting. Yet, as Cullompton Community Centre and our new Library, 'the Hayridge', have shown, there is 'room' for new forms of architecture and building. However, we do expect new buildings to fit in; to make use of local materials; and contribute positively to the character of the built environment.

10.9 The NPPF (para. 125) says that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. The NPPF (para. 130) places great emphasis on the significance of good design and goes as far as saying "permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents."

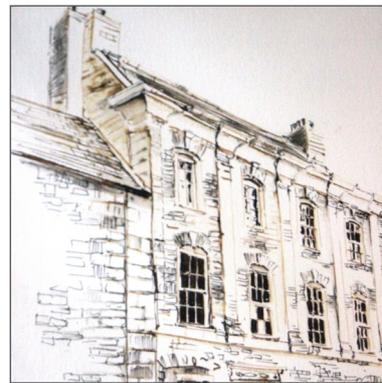
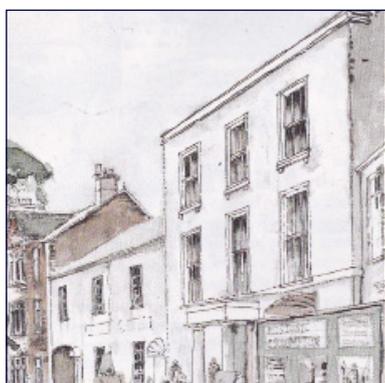
10.10 The NPPF (para. 127) wants us to ensure developments "are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment". Local Plan Policy H1 calls for design that respects local character, heritage, surroundings and materials. Local Plan Policies DM1 and DM14 acknowledges the need for new development proposals to take into account physical context, local character, density and land use mix and, in the town centre, retain or enhance the town centre's historic character and appearance, vitality and viability. The Conservation Area Management Plan recognises that the town has a historic core which contains "a number of high grade listed buildings, several traditional pubs, cafes, a variety of small independent shops as well as a monthly farmers' market and a weekly indoor market. There have been several small-scale enhancement schemes in the central area. Despite this the town centre generally lacks vitality and is not an attractive environment." The purpose of the Management Plan is to set development and design standards and stimulate better design within the Conservation Area.

10.11 Policy TC02 is our opportunity to endorse the Conservation Area Management Plan and put in place a locally relevant policy that reflects how local people have regard for the variety of types and styles that co-exist in Cullompton. A sensitive, yet imaginative, design approach to new development is required, especially in the town centre, that will produce a contemporary, high-quality development of merit, whilst adding to and complementing the variety and diversity that makes up the unique character of the built environment of Cullompton.



10.12 Within the Conservation Area this means “new buildings including those of contemporary design should reflect the scale, massing, height, spacing, materials and colour palette of the conservation area. Extensions and alterations to existing buildings should follow the scale, proportions, detailing and materials characteristic of the property type. Works of maintenance, repair or replacement in the public realm should comply with an agreed palette of materials, colours and textures”⁴⁷.

10.13 Outside the Conservation Area it means, for major development schemes, ensuring that design policies reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of the area’s defining characteristics. The NPPF (para. 125) says “design policies should be developed with local communities”. The Town Council will be happy to facilitate community engagement with the local planning authority and design experts to develop appropriate design guidance that will achieve: a harmony of design to ensure development fits in with the overall form and layout of its surroundings; an enhancement of the local character; promotes high levels of sustainability; and helps raise the standard of design more generally in an area, whilst not preventing diversity nor stifling innovation.



Policy TC02 Character of the Built Environment

Development should contribute positively to the character of the built environment in its locality by:

- i. demonstrating an understanding of the diverse qualities that contribute to this character; and
- ii. reinforcing local distinctiveness and a strong sense of place.

Development proposals in or within the setting of the Conservation Area should demonstrate how they have taken the Cullompton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan into account.

⁴⁷ Conservation Area Management Plan for Cullompton, Mid Devon District Council, 2009
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/114972/cullompton-conservation-area-management-plan-combined.pdf>

Pedestrian Priority in the Town Centre

10.14 The congestion and nuisance from traffic traversing the town centre is substantial. It is made even worse whenever the M5 is blocked and/or closed. We want to reduce the congestion in Cullompton town centre. We should improve the town centre for pedestrians. The community has told us that no longer should the town centre be dominated by the motor vehicle, not least because of the effect it has on air quality. We want to improve air quality⁴⁸. We have to reduce the volume of traffic using the town centre.

10.15 The Town Council aspires to see Fore Street become one-way from the Manor Hotel to the Library (the Hayridge), with short-term parking on one side of the road. Any measures that can help bring this about, which get the support of the community, will be welcomed. 80% of respondents to the consultation survey in the winter of 2016 supported the proposal to further pedestrian priority in the town centre.

10.16 The NPPF (para. 106) says in town centres we should “promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists”. Local Plan Policy S7 supports positive measures in the town centre including traffic management. Local Plan Policy S11 guides high quality development and other investment to support the implementation of the Cullompton Air Quality Action Plan including the construction of new highway links to relieve the town centre and enhanced walking and cycling opportunities around the town. Policy TC03 is aimed at facilitating a pedestrian-friendly town centre and supports measures that deter through traffic.

Policy TC03 Pedestrian Priority in the Town Centre

Design and highways proposals intended to reduce through-traffic on Fore Street and High Street and make the town centre more pedestrian-friendly will be supported.

Service Arrangements in the Town Centre

10.17 94% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 told us we need a town centre with a strong retail function. In the interests of ensuring the town centre can continue to function as a retail centre, the Town Council would like to improve and simplify planning for retail businesses within the core of the town. It has long been recognised that servicing arrangements for town centre businesses needs improvement. The lack of specific servicing arrangements to most town centre businesses is a significant contributor to the traffic congestion we suffer from.

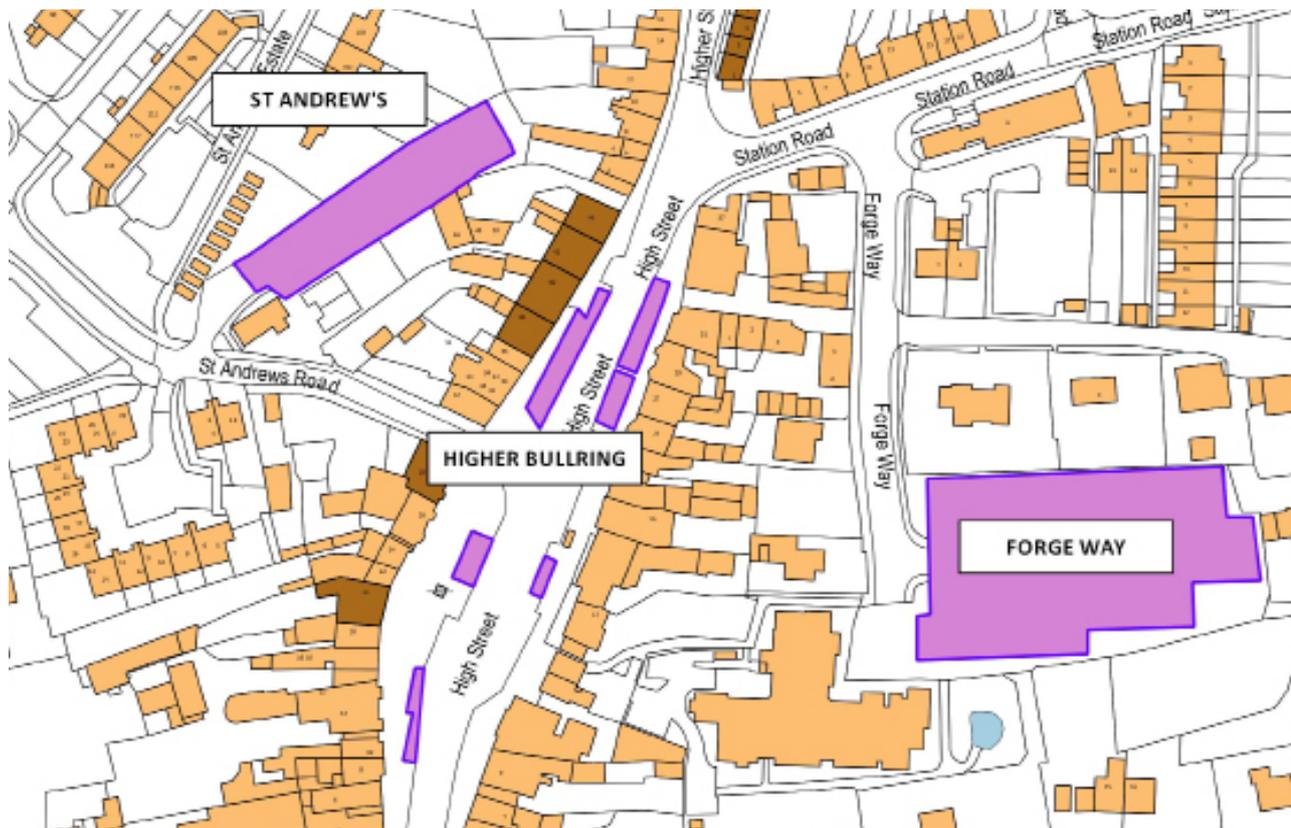
10.18 The NPPF (para. 85) requires us to “support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation”. We want to see servicing made easier and not detrimental to the businesses in the town centre. The issue was highlighted with the closure of the Tiverton Road junction in 2015 due to repair work being carried out at the Manor House Hotel. During this period, restricted hours for loading and unloading was introduced along the length of Fore Street until the Tiverton Road junction was reopened. These temporary restrictions showed how much better Fore Street functions when servicing is controlled.

10.19 The current use of land in front of the Hayridge as a public car park has also demonstrated the value of additional car parking space in and around the town centre. 95% of respondents to the consultation survey in the winter of 2016 supported the proposal to safeguard existing town centre car parks. The NPPF (para. 106) states “In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure”.



⁴⁸ Cullompton has been subject of an Air Quality Management Area Order since December 2006 <https://new.middevon.gov.uk/media/103608/cullompton-air-quality-action-plan-2009.pdf>

Map 7: Parking Areas referred to in Policy TC04



10.20 Policy TC04 is supportive of development proposals that would result in the provision of better servicing and customer parking arrangements in the interests of relieving congestion and obstruction on roads in and around the town centre. To that end, we have also cited the three areas of public parking that are owned by public authorities. These areas we recognise as important community assets that are used by town centre users and help keep parked cars off the road.

Policy TC04 Service Arrangements in the Town Centre

Development proposals to improve servicing arrangements and/or increase customer parking to business premises in the town centre and thereby reduce congestion on nearby roads will be supported.

The St Andrews, Forge Way and Higher Bull Ring car parking areas (as defined on map 6) are important assets to the local community and are essential to the functionality of the town centre. Their use for car parking will be safeguarded and their capacity maintained unless it can be demonstrated that they are no longer needed or suitable alternative provision is made.

Art in the Public Realm

10.21 Cullompton needs a more positive image that engenders local pride and helps attract inward investment. To these ends, further town centre environmental improvements would be welcomed. The NPPF (para. 127) says “planning policies and decisions should ensure developments establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit”. In support of the positive impact that innovation in design can have it also states (para. 131) “great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area”.



10.22 Along with restoring and improving buildings and making the town centre more pedestrian-friendly, we want to make visiting the town centre a more appealing and stimulating experience. We want to improve the quality of the public realm and welcome public art that has relevance and reinforces the character and individuality of public areas. Public art is art in any media that has been planned and executed with the intention of being staged in the public domain, usually outside and accessible to all. We have seen what can be achieved by recent installations such as the cemetery gates, designed by local students; the sheep noticeboards; and the mural at Station Road.

10.23 Local Plan Policy DM1 applies to new development and recognises the value of visually attractive places and the components that contribute toward this.

10.24 We want to encourage and accommodate innovative public art and design whether temporary or permanent, wherever appropriate throughout the town. In this way, we hope to stimulate a greater interest in community arts and culture, increase ‘community pride’ in the town and enhance the overall impression left on visitors. 80% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 felt we needed to develop the town’s tourism appeal.

10.25 Policy TC05 makes the quality of the public realm the subject of the policy and recognises how we can reinforce the character and vitality of the public realm and spaces through the introduction of innovative design and high-quality public art features.

Policy TC05 Art in the Public Realm

Proposals to introduce innovative public art which enliven and add positively to the character of the public realm and which facilitate or encourage greater community use of public spaces will be supported .

Cultural and Leisure Facilities in the Town Centre

10.26 We want to strengthen and broaden the role of the town centre. The Town Council would like to attract new businesses and new shops and promote tourism/leisure. We want to encourage town centre-based arts and cultural activity. We want to make better use of buildings and spaces in the town centre for community purposes. We want to bring redundant buildings back in to use. 91% of respondents to the consultation survey in the winter of 2016 supported the proposal to improve and increase the cultural and leisure facilities in Cullompton town centre. A cinema and swimming pool were high on the 'wish-list' of new facilities that were wanted by the pupils of Cullompton Community College when they were surveyed in 2014.

10.27 The NPPF (para. 92) says we should "plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities". Local Plan Policy DM14 promotes the sustainable growth and regeneration of Cullompton through the support of development proposals for retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development where they retain or enhance the town centre's historic character and appearance, vitality and viability. Local Plan Policy DM23 supports proposals for the redevelopment of existing community facilities that enables them to modernise, remain viable and continue to be retained for the benefit of the community will be supported.

10.28 Policy TC06 encourages the conversion of redundant buildings and spaces in the town centre specifically for leisure and cultural purposes.

Policy TC06 Cultural and Leisure Facilities in the Town Centre

Proposals that increase the provision of cultural and leisure facilities in the town centre through the conversion and/or better use of redundant buildings and spaces are supported.



Former Cullompton Cinema

10.29 The town lacks breadth in social/leisure facilities and opportunities. The town centre has an important role to play in community life and we also want to develop the town's tourism appeal and offer.

10.30 Local Plan Policy S7 is supportive of positive measures of enhancement and regeneration. Local Plan Policy DM14 promotes the sustainable growth and regeneration of Cullompton and states that within the town centre, development proposals for retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development will be supported where they retain or enhance the town centre's historic character and appearance, vitality and viability. Local Plan Policy DM22 supports proposals for new or expanded tourism, visitor or leisure facilities will be supported within the town centre.

10.31 It has been suggested at several local consultation events that the former Cullompton cinema building could still play a role in community life. The building situated at No.4 High Street, Cullompton is still remembered fondly for the role it used to play in community life. 86% of respondents to the consultation survey in the winter of 2016 supported the proposal to bring the former cinema back into community use. We would welcome proposals coming forward that could bring its use for community activity about once again; particularly if it helps encourage local arts and cultural activity and improves local leisure facilities and opportunities. Such a development would increase use and the appeal of the town centre.

10.32 Policy TC07 applies specifically to a former community asset that many believe still can play a part in community life if the opportunity arises.

Policy TC07 Former Cullompton Cinema

Proposals that enable the re-use of the former Cullompton Cinema building for community leisure and or cultural purposes would be supported.

Extending the Attraction of the Town Centre

10.33 The town centre is very important to us. We want to support the town centre economy and we want to strengthen the role of the town centre in community life and make it more appealing to visitors. We want to enable a wider range of community and social activity so as to extend the hours, particularly into the evening, when the town centre is a focus for community activity and events. The evening economy of the town centre should be broader and more family-oriented. In doing this, there is also significant tourism potential that could be exploited. 98% of respondents to the consultation survey in the winter of 2016 supported proposals to provide more and better evening leisure and social facilities.

10.34 The NPPF (para. 85) says "planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation... and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries". Local Plan Policy S7 seeks to promote positive measures of enhancement and regeneration to the town centre with new homes, shops, leisure, offices and other key town centre uses which are well designed and contribute to vitality and viability. Local Plan Policy S11 guides high quality development and other investment in Cullompton to promote new homes, shops, leisure, offices and other key town centre uses which are well designed and contribute to vitality and viability. Local Plan Policy DM14 promotes the sustainable growth and regeneration of Cullompton through the support of development proposals for retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development where they retain or enhance the town centre's historic character and appearance, vitality and viability.

10.35 Policy TC08 is made in the interests of encouraging more family leisure uses and developing the evening economy of the town centre in the interests of the whole community.

10.36 Cullompton Town Council is very concerned about the future of the high street and town centre areas. The Council feels that the town centre reflects the heart of the town and that new development should recognise this. As well as new amenities and facilities within all the new housing developments the role of the town centre should be strengthened and developers should indicate how they contribute to the town centre.

Policy TC08 Extending the Attraction of the Town Centre

Proposals that help promote the development of a visitor and evening economy in the town centre are supported.

Improving the Town Centre Offer

10.37 We want to support the town centre economy and we want to strengthen the retail role of the town centre and make it more appealing to visitors. 80% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 told us we need to develop the town's tourism appeal. Retailing is part of that appeal and the role and attraction of the town centre would be increased by a broader range of retail outlets. Making use of the 'side courts' and introducing new forms of retailing would also provide opportunities for new retailers and other micro-businesses to get started, or just have a go. 85% of respondents to the consultation survey in the winter of 2016 supported the idea of making use of these by-ways to enliven the town centre and increase its commercial appeal.

10.38 The NPPF (para. 85) encourages us, in town centres, to "retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones". This is echoed in Local Plan Policy S7 which advocates "positive measures of enhancement and regeneration". Local Plan policy DM14 promotes the sustainable growth and regeneration of Cullompton through the support of development proposals for retail, leisure, commercial, office,

tourism, cultural, community and residential development where they retain or enhance the town centre's historic character and appearance, vitality and viability.

10.39 Policy TC09 seeks to take advantage of some of the 'character spaces' that exist in the town centre, e.g. the side courts, of which there are many. We seek to encourage additional and alternative types of services and facilities in appropriate locations that will contribute to its variety and enliven the town centre to help more users and visitors.

10.40 The development of various forms of small start-up business within the town area (see map 2 page 20) is to be encouraged, as long as they do not cause nuisance and conform to other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan, they are to be supported.

Policy TC09 Improving the Town Centre Offer

Proposals to provide small-scale retail units or stalls, tourist facilities, street cafes and visitor attractions in the side courts and other suitable spaces in Cullompton town centre will be supported provided they:

- i. are of an appropriate design and scale;
- ii. are temporary in nature;
- iii. do not restrict pedestrian or cycle passage;
- iv. provide free passage for those with mobility impairment; and
- v. do not cause nuisance to neighbouring uses and nearby residential areas.

Local Economy and Jobs

Make Cullompton more business friendly

Introduction

11.1 Our Neighbourhood Plan policies are intended to ease local barriers and broaden the supply of local business space so that Cullompton can continue to grow as an important business centre in Mid Devon and meet more of its local employment needs.



Aims and Objectives

11.2 The following aims and objectives relating to jobs and our local economy have emerged following a programme of community consultation. They have been used to help formulate the neighbourhood plan policies and inform a programme of other community actions.

Local Economy and Jobs	
Planning Aims	Planning Objectives
Encourage businesses to move to Cullompton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to and from industrial estates
Foster a positive attitude towards promoting local economic development and attracting inward investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the supply of flexible, easy in and out business spaces • Accommodate new forms of retailing such as click and collect

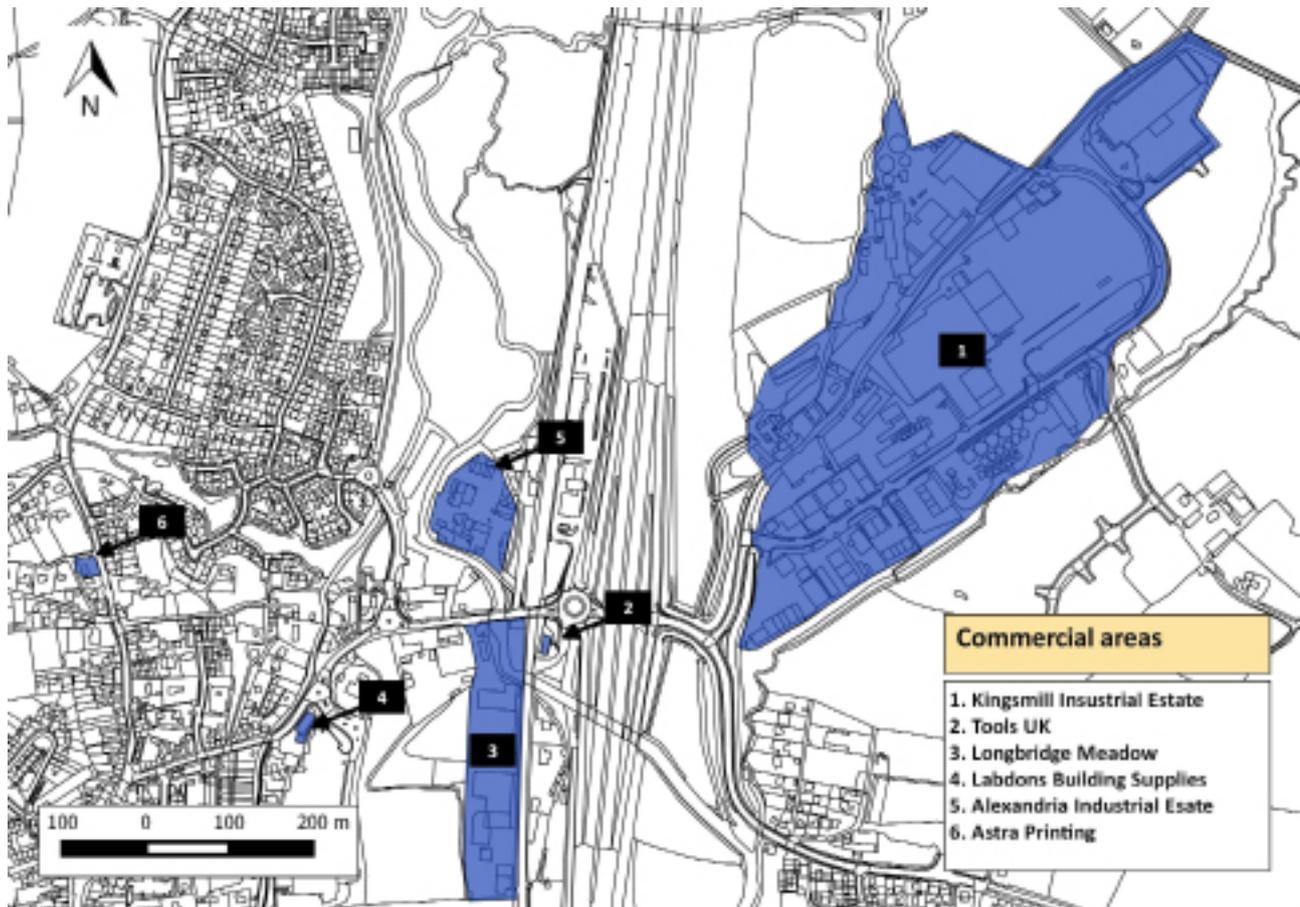
Improving Access to Commercial Areas

11.3 Access and egress to several of the commercial areas is a matter of concern, not least because of safety considerations. It is raised regularly with town councillors. Access and egress from the Kingsmill Estate is particularly hazardous because of the volume of traffic and the lack of separation between pedestrians, motor vehicles and cycles; but arrangements at the other busy commercial areas shown on map 8 (page 60) could also be improved. Improving access arrangements in the interests of safety is very important. Such measures would also help reduce one of the barriers to business development and likely to make these trading areas more attractive to new businesses as well as customers.

11.4 Local Plan Policy CU8 recognises the need to create safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle links between the new East Cullompton development, when it takes place, and the Kingsmill Industrial Estate (the area's main area of commercial activity).



Map 8: Commercial/Industrial Areas referred to in Policy EJ01



11.5 In the meantime, Policy EJ01 supports all development proposals that serve to improve safety and access to commercial areas for both pedestrian and road users.

Policy EJ01 Improving Access to Commercial Areas

Measures that improve access to and from the commercial areas (as identified on map 8) and increase safety of pedestrians and road users are necessary and will be supported.

Development of Small Business Units

11.6 There is a need for more and better quality local employment opportunities. 87% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 told us that we should encourage more business and commercial development. Cullompton Community College tells us that the town “needs to attract business and a strong local economy in order to retain the excellent skill base of young people on its doorstep”⁴⁹ We want to encourage new business and enterprise of all kinds. The NPPF (para. 80) says “planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt” and “be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances” (para. 81).

11.7 The strategic policies of the Local Plan focus on providing larger employment sites in association with the new housing on the major development areas of North West Cullompton (21,000 square metres commercial floorspace), East Cullompton (20,000 square metres commercial floorspace within the plan period and a further 12,000 post-2033), Week Farm (15,000 square metres of employment floorspace) and Venn Farm (9,000 square metres of employment floorspace). Local Plan Policy DM19 provides for the protection of existing employment land and premises.

11.8 The Mid Devon Employment Land Review of 2013 considered that “there is a case to argue that the portfolio of employment sites could be ‘rebalanced’ to include a number of smaller employment land allocations which are not dependent on provision of significant additional infrastructure, and could be easier to deliver in the short-to-medium term”⁵⁰. We want to help new small enterprises to get established and to engage with local markets. Providing for more small business units in the town may also reduce the need to commute out of Cullompton.

11.9 Policy EJ02 aims to be pro-active in the development of local enterprise and jobs at the micro-scale. It provides support to the development of various forms of small start-up business units within the town area (as defined on map 2, page 20) as long as they do not cause nuisance and conform to other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy EJ02 Development of Small Business Units

Proposals that provide for the development of small-scale business units, including live-work units, in the town area (as defined on map 2) will be supported, provided that the proposals:

- i. contribute positively to the character and vitality of the local area;
- ii. are well integrated into, and complement, existing clusters of activity;
- iii. do not have an adverse impact on residential amenity; and
- iv. do not adversely impact upon road safety.



⁴⁹ Reg.14 Consultation response, Cullompton Community College, 12th Nov 201

⁵⁰ <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/85326/employment-land-review-nw-cullompton.pdf>

Community Wellbeing and Leisure

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

Introduction

12.1 Our Neighbourhood Plan policies are intended to protect the social, community, leisure and recreation spaces and facilities we have and ensure that such facilities increase to meet the future demands of our growing community and help us become more involved, active and healthier.



Aims and Objectives

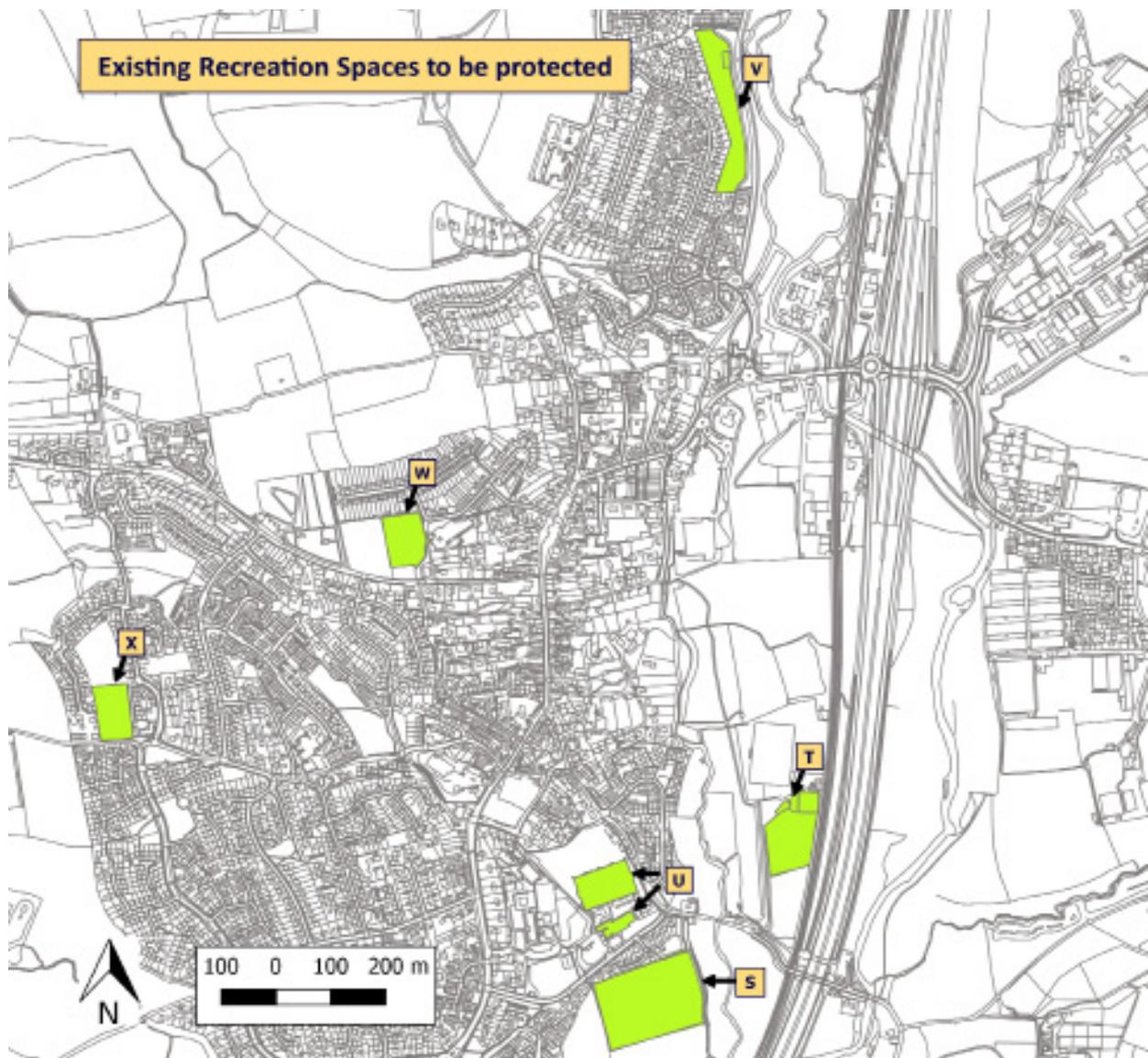
12.2 The aims and objectives relating to community wellbeing and leisure provision have emerged following a programme of community consultation. They have been used to help formulate the neighbourhood plan policies and inform a programme of other community actions.

Community Wellbeing and Leisure	
Planning Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Objectives
Improve access to and the quality of public open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan footpaths, cycle routes and parking for open spaces
Ensure adequate indoor and outdoor facilities are available in local neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new larger scale open spaces to provide for a wide range of activities • Provide tennis courts and several multi-use games areas • Support the development of a swimming pool and other new indoor facilities
Develop sustainable community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more allotments
Continue to improve community resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cullompton to become a dementia friendly town and community
Encourage the involvement of young people as part of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand provision of youth facilities

Existing Recreation Spaces

12.3 The NPPF (para. 96) says “access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.” and says (para. 97) “existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on” unless it is certain that they are no longer needed.

Map 9: Existing Recreation Spaces in Cullompton to be Protected referred to in Policy WL01



12.4 The parish area has a limited number of sports and recreation areas. The ones we have are well used and serve an important role in community life. We want to encourage people to enjoy healthy leisure pursuits. We want to protect the recreation areas we have and ensure they are easily accessible and fit for modern purposes.

12.5 Local Plan Policy DM24 seeks to protect existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, unless they are deemed surplus to requirements or can be replaced by better.

12.6 The areas listed in Policy WL01 are those that are available for public use or serve the recreation needs of local schools. The Town Council has agreed that these should be afforded the protection of Local Plan Policy DM24.

Policy WL01 Existing Recreation Spaces

The following sports and recreational land and buildings (identified on map 9) are very important to the local community and should be protected in accordance with the relevant policies in the Development Plan.

- S Cullompton Community College sports pitches, Meadow Lane
- T Cullompton Cricket Club
- U Culm Valley Sports Centre
- V Linear Park, Millennium Way
- W Upcott Field
- X Willowbank School Field, Knowle Lane

CCA Fields

12.7 Both the adopted Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan identifies the CCA Fields as the potential route for a town centre relief road. It is shown on the policy maps and referred to in policies AL/CU/14 and Policy CU19 respectively. It is not a 'solution' that is easy to accept by the community, as consultation after consultation has shown, but we do acknowledge that a road to relieve congestion and air pollution in and around the town centre is very necessary, and even more so in the context of an expanding town and population; and it may help facilitate improvements to the motorway connection as per Policy HT01 (Motorway Connection).

12.8 The CCA Fields is a 13 hectares site that once belonged to two different farms. In many ways, it still has the appearance of open countryside yet it is close to the town centre of Cullompton. It has become a much loved, readily accessible leisure and recreation resource for the community. It is the home of several sports clubs, it includes formal play areas and it plays host to a range of town events such as the annual circus, dog shows and the Cullompton Town Fayre.

12.9 The CCA Fields is owned by the people of the town. It is managed on their behalf by Cullompton Community Association, which is a Registered Charity (no. 270312) formed in the 1970s following a public meeting, by a group of Cullompton residents to improve the life of the residents of Cullompton. The extent of the CCA Fields and the ownership of its various parts is shown on Map 9.

12.10 The CCA Fields were purchased for the community in the 1970s, using monies from dormant club and charity bank accounts with the permission of the Charity Commissioners. Much of the work to make it usable as public open space and recreation area was done by volunteers, with some help from the contractors that were constructing the nearby M5.

12.11 The Cricket Club (established 1891) owns the freehold of its own site excluding the car park. The 1.01ha. site comprises a cricket pitch, a club house with changing facilities, a bar and function rooms, modern cricket practice nets, an artificial wicket and storage facilities for mowers and other equipment. The Cricket Club has

indicated a desire to relocate. The Club has outgrown its current location and, recognising that a growth in population should lead to an increase in participants, it wishes to find space sufficient for two cricket pitches plus a club house and all the ancillary facilities a club of its stature needs. The England and Wales Cricket Board has advised that a site with a footprint of 4.85ha. is required to accommodate this size facility. The Bowling Club also owns the freehold of its site (see map 9).

12.12 The Local Plan Review Policy CU19 deals with displacement and replacement of open space and sporting facilities and the protection of archaeology, habitats and environmental features as a result of the construction of a relief road for Cullompton. The Local Plan also states that "the aim will be to cause minimum impact on the CCA Fields and acceptability in terms of flood risk and flood flows." Flood prevention proposals should be attentive to the current issues of flooding and drainage in the vicinity and along the Culm Valley. No doubt the planning of the final route will be guided by these important considerations.

12.13 Policy WL02 introduces additional safeguards and considerations. These have been informed by the representations of the Cullompton Community Association, which is taking seriously its role as a charity set up to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare, recreation and leisure. The Association has debated the issue on several occasions over the past few years. At its meeting in March 2017 it considered the purpose and efficacy of a draft version of policy WL02 and made several suggestions, which the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has sought to accommodate within the policy.

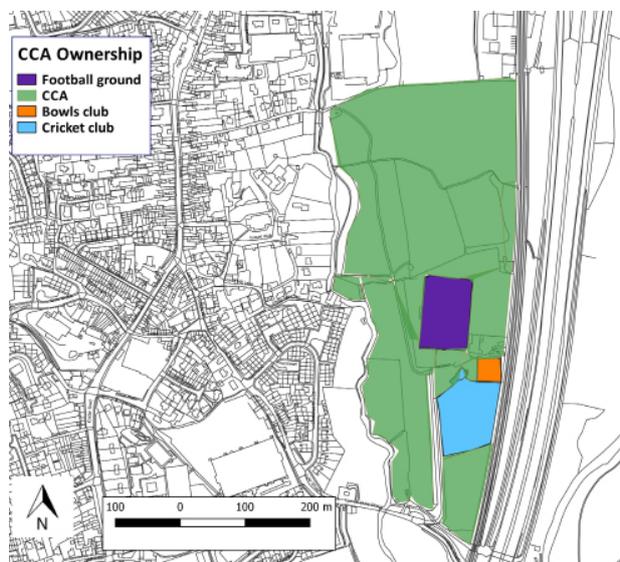


12.14 Our purpose is to minimise the permanent loss of most of the CCA Fields and retain most of their uses, if they are to be dissected by a relief road. Policy WL02 reflects this ambition and sets criteria to ensure:

- much of the CCA Fields would remain in use during a prolonged period of construction
- the community is compensated for the disturbance and any loss of precious recreation space
- there is no net loss in community recreation opportunities because of the construction of a relief road through the CCA Fields
- the CCA Fields can continue to provide for a variety of different recreational activities
- safety is a prime consideration and the CCA Fields remain a safe and secure environment for users
- any potential conflict between users of the CCA Fields and adjoining roads is avoided

12.15 Cullompton Town Council wishes it noted that in the autumn of 2018 and spring 2019 Mid Devon District Council and Devon County Council voted to approve a relief road through the CCA Fields and to progress detailed design work. MDDC and DCC voted for the relief road to run parallel with the railway line, including any additional design work. This would form part of a phased infrastructure plan to include an upgrade to Junction 28 of the M5.

Map 10: CCA Fields Ownership Pattern



Policy WL02 CCA Fields

The existing leisure and recreation space at the CCA Fields is an important resource for the local community. Any proposals to develop part of the CCA Fields to provide a relief road for Cullompton should:

- seek to maximise the single uninterrupted area of recreational land to be retained as the CCA Fields in their current location, ensuring that the remaining area of CCA Fields is capable of being used for a variety of recreational purposes in a safe manner.
- replace any recreation space lost with equivalent or better provision elsewhere in Cullompton, to be vested in the community.
- maintain as far as possible the continued use of sports facilities and recreation spaces during construction.
- ensure the relief road is suitably landscaped and screened to minimise disturbance to users of the CCA Fields.
- have regard to the most sensitive ecological areas and habitats, including proposals to mitigate any loss of or harm to the natural environment.
- maintain as far as possible current access routes to the fields to facilitate safe pedestrian access to the CCA Fields and prevent any unauthorized vehicular access to the CCA Fields from the relief road.
- ensure the provision of adequate car parking
- ensure that the development of the relief road does not increase flood risk.

Usable Public Open Space

12.16 The NPPF (para. 69) encourages us to create “opportunities for meetings between members of the community and ... safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space”. It also states (para. 73) that “planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision”.

12.17 We want to encourage people to enjoy the outdoor environment. 81% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 told us we need better parks and open spaces in Cullompton. We want open space that is provided in new developments to be usable for a variety of recreational and leisure purposes and have the access and facilities that are required to enable their enjoyment by the local community. We want to encourage community activity on the open spaces. We want open space to be easily accessible by foot or bicycle. We want good quality play areas for younger children to be located close to family homes.

12.18 The Town Council has recently carried out an audit of local public open spaces⁵¹ to better understand their use and value. It was agreed that a few small park areas were underused and in a poor state of repair. The conclusion from the audit was that some of the smaller parks and play spaces in the town should be closed and replaced by bigger and better facilities nearby.

12.19 The Town Council will continue to monitor use of open space and the town’s recreation requirements and liaise with Mid Devon District Council in the interests of providing spaces that are needed, usable and fit for purpose.

12.20 We accept that the standards used in the Mid Devon Open Space Strategy of 300m distance for amenity space, allotments and children’s play areas and 600m for other forms of public open space are appropriate in establishing limits to what is reasonable in accessibility terms. These are the standards adopted in Local Plan Policy S5 of the new Mid Devon Local Plan, which sets standards of provision for open space. We would like to see these standards improved upon in new housing developments whenever possible.

12.21 Local Plan Policies CU3 and CU9 specifies the hectares of open space required in the North West Cullompton development for East Cullompton. Local Plan Policy CU13 does the same for Knowle Lane.

12.22 Policy WL03 requires new open space proposals to be based on an up-to-date assessment of the need for different activities and appropriate size requirements and ensure it is part of a joined-up strategy of provision for the whole town. It also emphasises the importance of location, to maximize visibility, and accessibility as well as size. It requires developers to consult with the Town Council in the interests of ensuring the open space provision is part of an overall approach, which ensures that all open space on housing schemes is more than adequate in scale and size, contributes to meeting local needs for leisure and recreation and, importantly, has satisfactory arrangements in place to secure the long-term maintenance of the public open space.

Policy WL03 Usable Public Open Space

Public open space on major new developments should be of adequate size and be located and designed so that it is usable by residents and other members of the public for a range of leisure and recreation activities.

Developers should seek to ensure that children’s play space benefits from natural surveillance and is located close to family-type housing areas. All new public open space should be accessible via the footpath network.

Developers are encouraged to involve Cullompton Town Council, at an early stage in the preparation of proposals for public open space provision.

⁵¹ Report on Cullompton Parks to Cullompton Town Council, Buczkowski and Guest, Feb 2015

Outdoor Sports Facilities

12.23 We are a sporting community. The importance of good quality sports facilities to the people of Cullompton is understood by the Town Council and reflected in the goals of the Provision of Leisure Facilities Report⁵¹, accepted by the Town Council in 2013. Cullompton Town Council would like a substantial expansion of sports/leisure facilities in Cullompton. The NPPF (para 73) recognises that “access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities”.

12.24 Some sports areas may need up-dating or replacing. We need to ensure facilities are accessible to disabled persons. We need to ensure that there are a wide variety of indoor and outdoor facilities and a variety of different playing surfaces to facilitate the greatest variety of different sports. We want to increase the number and range of sports facilities that serve the whole community and meet the growing demand we anticipate, not least because of the intended new developments. Currently Cullompton Community College has an arrangement for shared use of sports facilities at the MDDC Leisure Centre. The College tells us that “as pupil numbers grow between 2018 – 2021, the need for greater use of the leisure centre during the daytime and after school clubs for larger numbers will increase. The Leisure Centre may not prove to be adequate for the rising 1,200 [pupil] capacity that the School requires”.⁵³

12.25 Whilst carrying out consultations for the Neighbourhood Plan we have been reminded that the current site and facilities enjoyed by Cullompton Rugby Club are a significant constraint on its growth and development. “As a Club we are in desperate need of more pitches for all our players to be able to use”⁵⁴ was the position in 2015 and remains the same in 2017. The Cricket Club too has made it clear that the capacity of its current site is constrained “our ground is now too small to support the levels of cricket demand that we are seeing even at this stage of Cullompton’s growth curve, with us literally not having any

further pitch capacity to support further growth in player numbers”.⁵⁵ Sport England (having consulted several sports governing bodies) has advocated that Mid Devon District Council should prepare a comprehensive “playing pitch strategy (PPS) as well as assessing the needs and opportunities for sporting provision. Sport England provides comprehensive guidance on how to undertake both pieces of work”.⁵⁶ Cullompton Town Council is wholly supportive of such a strategic approach, which takes account of the growth in population that is envisaged over the next 15 years and well beyond. It will be a willing participant.

12.26 We expect sufficient land to be allocated and safeguarded in appropriate locations by the policies in the Local Plan so as ensure there is sufficient space for the growth of outdoor sports provision in the area throughout the Plan period. A view on which land should be allocated for sports and recreation was set out in the Town Council’s response to the Local Plan Review.⁵⁷

12.27 Local Plan Policy CU3 sets down the required area of sports and recreation space to be provided in the North West Cullompton development and Local Plan Policy CU9 states the requirements for East Cullompton. Local Plan Policy CU20 lists community facilities, including sports and leisure facilities, amongst the required infrastructure for Cullompton.



⁵² Provision of Leisure Facilities, G. Guest for Cullompton Town Council, May 2013

⁵³ Reg.14 Consultation response, Cullompton Community College, 12th Nov 2017

⁵⁴ Letter to MDDC from Cullompton Rugby Club Project Manager, 16th Sep 2015

⁵⁵ Letter to NPSG from Chair, Cullompton Cricket Club, 6th Aug 2017

⁵⁶ Email to MDDC regarding NW Cullompton applications, Sport England, 14th Sep 2017

⁵⁷ Local Plan Review Letter from Cullompton Town Council to Mid Devon District Council, 30th March 2015

Indoor Sports Facilities

12.28 Policy WL04 provides support for flexible, accessible, sports facilities that are designed to serve the whole area and not just for new development areas. In some cases, this may mean considering a site outside of the settlement area. In these instances, the proposals should be assessed as being able to blend in and not cause harm to the countryside or ecology in the vicinity; nor having an unacceptably adverse effect by way of noise and light pollution, for instance, on neighbouring uses.

Policy WL04 Outdoor Sports Facilities

Proposals to provide more tennis courts, MUGAs and other outdoor sports facilities and pitches are supported provided they will:

- i. have no significant adverse impact on the character and ecology of the area;
- ii. not have an adverse effect on other land uses in the vicinity;
- iii. be capable of being integrated into the surrounding landscape, through landform and appropriate planting; and
- iv. have satisfactory arrangements put in place for their long-term maintenance.



12.29 The indoor sport and recreation provision we have in Cullompton in 2017 requires significant improvement just to bring the town up to a similar standard as Tiverton and Crediton. 84% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 told us we need more leisure facilities. Cullompton Town Council's desire to see a substantial expansion of leisure facilities in Cullompton includes an indoor swimming facility.

12.30 If we adhere to the advice in the NPPF (para. 70) of planning "positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities...".The shortage of good quality public indoor sport and recreation space should be remedied when the major new developments take place.

12.31 Local Plan Policy DM23 supports the development of new community facilities providing a local community benefit or environmental enhancement will be permitted where they are easily accessible by the local community and well related to a settlement.

12.32 Policy WL05 supports the provision of additional indoor sports and recreation facilities that serve the whole area in accordance with the latest standards of provision.

Policy WL05 Indoor Sports Facilities

Proposals to provide improved and additional indoor sports and recreation facilities in or adjacent to settlement areas will be supported.

Cullompton Swimming Pool Complex

12.33 A swimming pool campaign for Cullompton can be traced back as far as 1922. In 2005, a feasibility study by Mid Devon District Council acknowledged residents' support for and frustration over the lack of a local swimming pool. It accepted that there was an unmet demand locally, which unfortunately the District Council was unable to satisfy. There is an active community campaign and planning group in Cullompton, which has been raising project development funds since 2011. This has enabled progress to be made on proposals for a 'state of the art' swimming pool complex that includes:

- indoor swimming pool
- learner pool
- hydrotherapy pool
- dance studio/hall
- health and fitness suite
- ten pin bowling area (3 – 4 lanes)

12.34 The demand for a local swimming pool was confirmed by a very positive response to the Cullompton Swimming Pool Campaign Questionnaire 2014 and to subsequent neighbourhood planning consultations. Cullompton Town Council acknowledges that the benefits of a modern swimming pool complex to a growing town like Cullompton would be substantial. Policy WL06 reflects the town's continuing support for the development of a Swimming Pool Complex in the neighbourhood area with ancillary facilities, which could include appropriate (A1 and A3) commercial uses, that will ensure the Complex is a viable and sustainable community enterprise.



12.35 A community-based project to provide the Swimming Pool Complex should attract substantial grant funding towards its construction. It is likely however that additional and match-funding will be required to ensure that the multi-million-pound project is developed. To this end, the Swimming Pool 'Campaign' Group has been engaged in negotiations with local land-owners and developers.

12.36 To ensure that development proposals are in the best interest of the community, Cullompton Town Council is mindful to work with the partners in the Swimming Pool Complex during 2019/20 to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Order⁵⁸. This will engage the community in the preparation of plans for the swimming pool and associated development; and would vest the decision with the community, as to whether the package of development proposals should be granted outline planning permission.

Policy WL06 Cullompton Swimming Pool Complex

The development of a swimming pool complex with appropriate ancillary facilities will be supported provided:

- i. it does not have an unacceptable environmental impact;
- ii. the scale of the facility is related to the needs of the area; and
- iii. there is safe and convenient access for potential users.

⁵⁸<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/neighbourhood-development-orders-community-right-build-orders/>

Community Allotments, Orchards and Composting

12.37 The Town Council supports the further provision of allotments, community orchards and composting in development areas as part of planning to “enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs” (NPPF para. 91).

12.38 Cullompton Town Council maintains a register of those interested in having an allotment. There is a waiting list for allotments. Such facilities should encourage healthier lifestyle and healthy leisure pursuits. Opportunities to provide more allotments, community orchards and community composting sites and encourage more local food growing should be realised as a direct result of the major new developments that will take place. If the trend of providing smaller gardens on new developments continues, this exacerbates the need for an increased supply of allotment or community gardening space. 88% of respondents to the consultation survey in the winter of 2016 supported the provision of more allotments.

12.39 All the larger housing proposals within the Cullompton area should allow for the provision of allotments, a composting site and a community orchard, as long as the demand is there.



12.40 Local Plan Strategic Policy S5 sets standards of provision for allotments in the Cullompton areas as 0.25 hectares per 1,000 persons, which should be within 300 metres or six to seven minutes’ walk time (presumably of those that use the allotments). Local Plan Policy CU3 sets down a required area of allotment space to be provided in the North West Cullompton development. Local Plan Policy CU9 states the requirement for East Cullompton.

12.41 Policy WL07 relates not just to the provision of allotments but to other forms of community horticulture and supports the Town Council’s policy of not only meeting local need but also encouraging more community-based horticulture and recycling activity. This starts with the availability of sites and, we believe that previously redundant land could be a focus for such activity.

Policy WL07 Community Allotments, Orchards and Composting

Proposals for the provision of allotments, community orchards and composting in the larger residential development areas (over 50 dwellings), in suitable locations and sufficient to meet local demand will be supported.

The use of redundant land for community allotment, orchard and composting initiatives in suitable locations will be supported.

Dementia Friendly Town



12.42 “A dementia-friendly community is one in which people with dementia are empowered to have high aspirations and feel confident, knowing they can contribute and participate in activities that are meaningful to them. To achieve this, communities working to become dementia friendly should focus on …Ensuring that the physical environment is accessible and easy to navigate for people with dementia.⁵⁷”

12.43 It is a core planning principle embodied in the NPPF that planning should “take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs”.

12.44 Environments that are easy for people to access, understand, use and enjoy are beneficial to everyone (all ages and to the able bodied and disabled). Good accessibility is becoming increasingly important as we experience an ageing population. While that population is generally staying more active for longer, a greater number of people living into old age means that we need an accessible town and an urban environment that is responsive to their needs.

12.45 Dementia is on the increase nationally (and locally). Dementia-friendly neighbourhoods are places that are familiar, legible, distinctive, accessible, comfortable and safe. By supporting change and development that helps make Cullompton a more dementia-friendly town shows that we care for all age groups and the more vulnerable amongst us. We want them to continue to enjoy being a part of the community. 98% of respondents to the consultation survey in the winter of 2016 supported the proposed initiative.

12.46 Cullompton Town Council will adopt a Dementia Strategy that will include a form of checklist that can be used to assess whether a development proposal is achieving the kind of dementia-friendly outdoor environment that is required. When in place, this checklist will be based on the principles of familiarity, legibility and distinctiveness that are considered important in helping persons with dementia to continue to cope alone.

⁵⁹ Building Dementia-friendly Communities: A priority for everyone, Alzheimer’s Society, 2013 http://www.actonalz.org/sites/default/files/documents/Dementia_friendly_communities_full_report.pdf

12.47 There is no Local Plan policy on this matter.

12.48 In addition to dementia, Cullompton town council would like new development to consider the full spectrum of all physical and mental health disabilities. Developers should also consider physical disabilities requiring uses of walking aids or wheelchairs or mobility scooters, and old age in general to access properties. In addition, the local medical practices can provide evidence that Cullompton’s new housing development is attracting a high proportion of retired, older people into the area (note ref Dr Dixon’s letter). This means that Cullompton has a high need for support services and access facilities.

12.49 Policy WL08 reflects a desire to introduce and embed the concept of dementia-friendly to the development process in Cullompton and encourage developers to recognise the issue and opportunity. Land use planning in support of a dementia strategy is relatively new. Examples of good practice are limited. Oxford Brookes University has produced a useful checklist⁵⁷ of things to consider in the interest of creating a familiar, legible, distinctive, accessible, comfortable and safe environment. Developers will be encouraged to consult with the Town Council and the Devon Dementia Partnership and show how their development proposals have been influenced by local strategies, current guidance and good practice in planning to create a dementia-friendly environment.

Policy WL08 Dementia FriendlyTown

Proposals that contribute towards making Cullompton more dementia-friendly and an accessible town to disabled people will be supported.

Development proposals will be expected to show how they incorporate the principles of dementia-friendly and fully accessible environments by reference to the Cullompton Dementia Strategy and other relevant Town Council strategies.

12.50 We need more positive things for young people to be involved with. We recognise that many young people feel the town lacks facilities and the opportunities they want. 93% of respondents to the Community Survey 2014 told us we need to improve facilities for teenagers. Two thirds of respondents to the survey carried out at July 2014 amongst the students of Cullompton Community College said the same. However, we feel that the needs of young people need to be better understood and planned for. In the 2014 Survey, the most commonly suggested activities the students would like to see in Cullompton were a swimming pool (70%) and a cinema (12%). Many other activities were suggested including tennis courts, bigger parks, football pitches and bowling; but the preferences and priorities amongst young people were difficult to discern.

12.51 We need to find ways to engage with young people further to understand what they really want and involve them in its delivery. Cullompton Town Council would also like to involve young people in civic affairs and planning for the future. Over 87% of respondents to the Town Council's 2019 Budget Survey, of residents, regard investment on youth services as being important. In terms of the requirement to provide for young people,

12.52 Local Plan Policy S5 sets standards for outdoor space for youths and Local Plan Policy S8 refers to the need for "community halls" as part of the additional infrastructure requirements of the major new developments. Local Plan Policy CU10 goes as far as providing for new youth facilities in the long-term as part of a multi-purpose community building for youth, children and other community uses as part of the major development at East Cullompton.

12.53 We want to ensure that local young people are given a proper say in what is provided for them. Policy WL09 is framed around the principle that the end users should have a major say in what is being provided for them. This is particularly important for young people in helping establish a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the facilities. Bodies such as 'Youth Voice', or whatever representative bodies are active at the time, should be involved in the design and planning process.

12.54 Cullompton Town Council strongly believes in supporting young people. The Town Council has regular meetings with Cullompton Community College and the John Tallack Youth and Community Centre. It supports the Youth Council and liaises with the youth service providers. The council has taken on responsibility, from Mid Devon District Council, and is refurbishing a growing number of play parks. The Town Council believes that major new housing development should contribute to supporting amenities for young people. This should include a full range of services and amenities for children and young people.

Policy WL09 Providing for Young People

Proposals that provide additional facilities for the direct benefit of young people are supported where it is demonstrated, through direct engagement with recognised local youth organisations, that local young people have been consulted and involved in developing the proposal.



How We Will Monitor and Review the Plan

13.1 There is no statutory requirement for the impact of this Neighbourhood Plan and its policies to be monitored. Cullompton Town Council recognises that it is entering a period of unprecedented growth that will necessitate the monitoring of the impact of neighbourhood plan policies on the planning application decision-making process. The Town Council will do this in part by referring to this Neighbourhood Plan when reviewing the emerging planning proposals and planning applications. The Town Council will keep a record of its response to major planning proposals and the outcome, as a way of monitoring the impact and efficacy of the Neighbourhood Plan. Based on this monitoring, a full or partial review of this Plan will be undertaken after five years.

13.2 A full or partial review may also be triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national or district-wide planning policies or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, district and/or existing neighbourhood plan policies.

Glossary of relevant terms

Affordable Housing	Affordable housing: Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined by local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	If a Local Authority identifies any locations within its boundaries where the Air Quality Objectives are not likely to be achieved, it must declare the area as an Air Quality Management Area(AQMA). The area may encompass just one or two streets, or it could be much bigger. The Local Authority is subsequently required to put together a plan to improve air quality in that area - a Local Air Quality Action Plan.
Biodiversity	The variety of life in all forms e.g. wildlife, plants, etc.
Conservation Area	An area of special architectural or historic interest, designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1991, whose character and appearance it is desirable to preserve and enhance. There are special rules on some development in conservation areas.
Dementia Friendly Community	A dementia-friendly community is one in which people with dementia are empowered to have high aspirations and feel confident, knowing they can contribute and participate in activities that are meaningful to them.
Design and Access Statement	A design and access (DAS) statement is a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application. It provides a framework for applicants to explain how a proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users.
Design Guide	A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice often produced by a local authority with a view to retaining local distinctiveness.
Design Statement	A Design Statement [DS] is a practical tool to help influence decisions on design and development. Prepared correctly, it will provide a clear statement of the character of a village or town against which planning applications may be assessed.
Flood Risk Assessment	An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in an area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered
Garden Village Initiative	A Government scheme to promote 'garden village' type developments of between 1,500 and 10,000. Government support to approved schemes could include a <i>"limited amount of funding"</i> until 2018 and advice from the Homes and Communities Agency. The prospectus said there is not a <i>"single template"</i> for garden villages, towns and cities but added the Government will not support places <i>"which merely use 'garden' as a convenient label"</i> . It said: <i>"We will want to see evidence of attractive, well-designed places with local support"</i> .
Green Infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Heritage Asset	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
Heritage Impact Assessment	An Assessment Report with enough information to understand the impact of development proposals on the significance of any heritage assets affected.
Lifetime Home Standards	Criteria developed by a group convened by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1991 to help house builders produce new homes flexible enough to deal with changes in life situations of occupants e.g. caring for young children, temporary injuries, declining mobility with age.
Local Development Scheme	Sets out the programme for the preparation of the local development documents.
Local Education Authority	The public body whose duty it is to carry out specific functions relating to education for a defined area. All references to local education authority apply in this Plan to Devon County Council.
Local Green Space	Green areas of importance to local communities designated to provide special protection against development.
Local Plan	A portfolio or folder of documents (Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), setting out the planning strategy for a local planning authority area.
Local Planning Authority	The public body whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a defined area. All references to local planning authority apply in this Plan to Mid Devon District Council
Minerals Plan	A statutory development plan prepared by a minerals' planning authority (Devon CC) setting out policies for the control of development constituting of the winning and working of minerals or the deposit of mineral waste
Neighbourhood Plan	A plan prepared by a Town or Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
NPPF	The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of communities.
NPPG	The National Planning Practice Guidance is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of most of the Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.
Passive Solar Heating	A solar heating system using a simple solar collector, building materials, or an architectural design to capture and store the sun's heat. Very simple examples include a garden greenhouse, or a south-facing window in a dwelling
Permitted Development	Permission to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application to a local planning authority, as granted under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order.
Public Arts	Permanent or temporary physical works of art visible to the public, whether part of a building or free-standing. For example, sculpture, lighting effects, street furniture, paving, railings and signs.

Public Realm	Those parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) available, for everyone to use. This includes streets, squares and parks.
Public Right of Way	A public right of way is a highway over which the public have a right of access along the route.
SHMA	A Strategic housing market assessment is a study of the way the housing market works in an area. It considers the type of households living in the area, where they work and what sort of housing they live in. It attempts to estimate future housing needs across the area, broken down by tenure and size of housing.
Spatial Strategy	Sets out long-term spatial vision for the area and the strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision. Broad locations for development are set out in a key diagram.
Strategic Environmental Assessment	A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
SUDS	Sustainable drainage is a concept that makes environmental quality and people a priority in drainage design, construction and maintenance. The sustainable drainage system (SUDS) approach includes measures to prevent pollution, reduce surface water runoff at source and provide a range of physical structures designed to receive the runoff.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.
Sustainability Appraisal	The consideration of policies and proposals to assess their impact on sustainable development objectives.
Transport Impact Assessment	A Transport Impact Assessment considers the impact of a proposed development on all modes of transport and requires developers to consider ways to reduce the number of private car journeys and increase the use of more sustainable modes, to their development.



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