

**ECONOMY PDG**  
**26 MAY 2022**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGNERATION**

**CULM GARDEN VILLAGE EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS STRATEGY**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Richard Chesterton

**Responsible Officer:** Richard Marsh, Director of Place

**Reason for Report:** To inform members of the Culm Garden Village Employment & Skills Strategy and seek members' views with regard to the delivery strategy and action plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That members note the work undertaken on the Culm Garden Village Employment & Skills Strategy undertaken to date and that members provide input into the delivery strategy and action plan set out in Appendix 1.

**Financial Implications:** There are no direct impacts on the Council's budgets arising from this report. However, some of the potential delivery mechanisms set out in the report would require an element of public sector support if these were to be pursued.

**Budget and Policy Framework:** There are no budgetary implications arising from this report.

The work will inform the masterplanning of the Culm Garden Village including the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD which is required by policy CU7 of the Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033. This work is being funded by Homes England Capacity Funding.

**Legal Implications:** There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**Risk Assessment:** Cullompton has a high level of out-commuting for work. The vision for Culm Garden Village seeks to reduce out-commuting and promote the sustainability of the garden village and the town by providing opportunities for local employment growth. If there is no strategy for employment and skills, there is a risk that new residents of the garden village will commute out of the area (and the District) to seek employment opportunities.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** The document does not specifically detail consideration of equalities but these have been considered in its preparation. Any actions taken forward would include equality impact assessments.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The document relates to the following Corporate Plan aims:

- Sustainable and prosperous communities: bringing higher paid and better skilled jobs into the community; reducing out-commuting
- A sustainable planet: providing jobs where people live

- Facilitate the creation of exciting new commercial opportunities within strategic development at Culm Garden Village
- Identify strategic and tactical interventions to create economic and community confidence and pride in the places we live.

**Impact on Climate Change:** Climate change is a key driver for the strategy, in particular creating a sustainable new community which complements the existing town. The strategy looks to provide jobs that can be accessed by sustainable transport methods.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 BE Group and Per Consulting were commissioned to prepare a Culm Garden Village Employment and Skills Strategy on behalf of Mid Devon District Council. The Strategy provides advice on the employment opportunities in Cullompton and the potential for employment uses within the Culm Garden Village (CGV). Furthermore, the study looks at how skills improvement programmes can help to drive business interest in the CGV. The strategy is included as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 The CGV was one of 14 areas initially awarded Garden Village Status by the Government in January 2017. Located to the east of Cullompton, the Garden Village is identified as having the potential to deliver up to 5,000 sustainable new homes in a country park landscape, with jobs, community facilities and transport, all highly integrated with the existing market town of Cullompton.
- 1.3 Phase 1 of CGV is allocated by policy CU7 of the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan. However, the Council has indicated a clear intention and direction of travel towards a garden village of significantly greater scale than that currently allocated. A wider area needed to accommodate this growth has not yet been allocated and will need to be identified through Mid Devon's next Local Plan.
- 1.4 Policy CU7 requires the provision of 20,000 square metres commercial floorspace within the plan period and a further 12,000 post-2033, to include a care home or retirement complex, appropriately scaled retail development and other suitable uses such as offices and a hotel or leisure development. This requirement will be considerably increased within any future allocation of land for CGV.
- 1.5 One of the 9 key principles in the draft CGV Vision & Concept document published in 2019 is to create ambitious employment opportunities. The principle establishes that a broad range of high quality employment opportunities is required to reduce out-commuting and help deliver a sustainable, resilient community, supported by an economy and skills strategy to attract the right people with the right skills and the right jobs

## **2.0 The CGV Employment & Skills Strategy**

- 2.1 The Culm Garden Village Employment and Skills Strategy has drawn on primary and secondary research methods, including site visits, interviews with

property market stakeholders such as developers, skills providers and commercial agents. Desktop analysis of national, sub-regional and local reports and strategies has been undertaken. The Employment and Skills Strategy has reference to the regional context within which the CGV sits, including the M5 corridor and Exeter.

- 2.2 An analysis of the local property market has been undertaken, including a critique of the transactions of commercial premises in Mid Devon, a review of currently marketed properties and an assessment of the types of uses within employment areas. This data was complemented with information gathered from conversations with locally active commercial agents.
- 2.3 The study has consulted with representatives of colleges in the area to understand potential growth plans within the colleges and to explore opportunities of connections within the CGV.
- 2.4 The study includes an analysis of opportunities for employment and skills development at the CGV. How these opportunities can be brought to the market is outlined in a delivery strategy and recommendations in this report.
- 2.5 The Delivery Strategy and Action Plan set out from page 70 of the Employment & Skills Strategy sets out an overall strategy for employment and skills development and potential mechanisms for its delivery. Table 22 on page 74 sets out an Action Plan for Employment and Skills Development.
- 2.6 The Strategy identifies that employment uses should be well-integrated with the wider CGV uses and neighbouring uses, and the importance of providing active travel methods to reduce the reliance on the private car, although it recognises that proximity to the M5 is an important attraction for businesses.
- 2.7 Finally, the Strategy outlines the importance of marketing the area to business including for example, preparation of an investment prospectus.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

The Culm Garden Village Employment & Skills Strategy has been developed to help address the challenge of creating a sustainable place and to inform the approach to employment land provision in the CGV masterplan. The document sets out a Delivery Strategy and Action Plan that members are asked to consider.

**Contact for more Information:**

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