

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 17 May 2022 at 10.00 am

Present

Councillors

R M Deed (Leader)
C J Eginton, R J Chesterton, Mrs C P Daw,
D J Knowles, B A Moore and C R Slade

Also Present

Councillor(s)

J Buczkowski, S J Clist, L J Cruwys, R J Dolley and S Penny

Also Present

Officer(s):

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Richard Marsh (Director of Place), Karen Trickey (District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer), Dean Emery (Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits and Recovery), Tina Maryan (Area Planning Officer), Chris Scobie (Cullompton High Street Heritage Zone Project Officer), Jessica Watts (Member Services Apprentice) and Sally Gabriel (Member Services Manager)

1. APOLOGIES (00-02-55)

There were no apologies for absence.

Cllr S Penny joined the meeting via Zoom.

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00-03-07)

Honorary Alderman Mrs Campbell referring to Item 5 on the agenda (Cullompton HSHAZ) highlighted the setting of the medieval street layout of Cullompton, the impact of any motorway closure on the town and the previous funding bids for improvements to the public realm. She referred to the volume and size of traffic, the lack of free parking in the town and the impact of the proposed scheme on pedestrians, by bringing them closer to the traffic. She then asked the following questions:

Referring to the recommendations within the report she asked whether there would be a genuine public consultation on the plans and whether there would be room for alteration and amendment post consultation? She had asked during the first consultation whether a parking bay for emergency vehicles should be provided on the east side adjoining the access the Clark's Court, this seemed to have been ignored; a minor rearrangement had been made to the disabled parking spaces with the result that the number of spaces had been reduced, why had this been done and who would benefit? She referred to the bus bay being removed and whether buses would therefore in the block the traffic in the high street. She also asked about the installation of cameras in the area during the period of consultation to record the

number and size of vehicles using the road at this point, she had been told that it would be illegal to use the existing CCTV cameras, was that correct? Referring to the traders, the Honorary Alderman asked how many traders had been involved in the consultation to date and how many of those had agreed to the reduction in the number of free parking spaces in the town centre prior to the opening of the proposed relief road? She also asked whether it was intended to proceed with the work before confirmation had been received with regard to the amount of funding available and a start date for the relief road, as there were concerns with the amount of traffic in the high street due to the development of more housing to the west of the town, as access to the site would only be via the High Street and Tiverton Road. Finally she referred to the memorial area and whether there would be adequate space for traders vehicles to unload their wares for the street market.

The Chairman indicated that responses the questions would be provided when the item was discussed.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00-15-15)

The Leader declared a personal interest in Item 5 on the agenda following the mention of ambulances as he was a Governor of SWAST.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00-15-38)

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. CULLOMPTON HSHAZ - HIGHER BULLRING PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT (00-16-05)

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Director of Place requesting approval of the Cullompton Higher Bullring public realm enhancement concept design for public consultation, and to handover to Devon County Council for design development and implementation.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report providing some background information on the award of funding for the scheme and the stage 1 public consultation process that had already taken place, the conclusion of which had demonstrated strong support for the public realm enhancements around the Higher Bullring with 89% stating that this area needed improvement. Consultants had been appointed and had developed a concept design focused on the Higher Bullring area alongside Historic England and highway officers from Devon County Council, which could be delivered in advance of the relief road. He added that the key considerations in the course of the design included the War Memorial, the street trees, the bus stop, facilitation of loading and unloading and the parking in the area.

The Member informed the meeting that the proposal had set out the creation of an enhanced, expanded and decluttered public realm focused around a new square framing the War Memorial and providing a central focus. He stated that if the recommendations were approved it would mark another important milestone for Cullompton and would demonstrate the Council's continued commitment to delivering significant improvements for the town and its residents.

In response to questions raised in public question time, the Cabinet Member stated that with regard to the consultation:

Recommendation 1 – this was to approve the concept design for public consultation.

Recommendation 2- this was to delegate authority to the Director of Place (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration) to finalise the material and arrangements for public consultation.

Recommendation 3 – this was to instruct DCC to take forward the project through to implementation which would ensure timely delivery of their detailed design work and also ensured that they were fully instructed on the project. The project programme was, and always had been, very challenging given the limited funding window from Historic England. Achieving the sign-off here to instruct DCC saved valuable programme time and made delivery within the funding period possible.

Recommendation 4 – this was to delegate authority to the Director of Place (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration) to work with DCC to build in the views and public consultation responses into the design.

The consultation would be meaningful, but the challenging project programme and the limited available window of project funding was a key consideration which had to also be balanced.

The consultation would focus, where it could add maximum value allowing for programme constraints. Officers from MDDC and DCC would work hard to ensure that consultation findings were incorporated into the final detailed design wherever practicable.

With regard to the question about a parking bay for emergency vehicles, he stated that no disabled parking spaces from the eastern side of the Higher Bullring would be removed, with four disabled spaces shown on the concept design as was currently the case. The spaces had been rearranged slightly to reflect the minor relocation of the existing pedestrian island, which needed to be moved very slightly to continue to allow adequate vehicle turning movements.

In terms of the provision of emergency vehicle parking, it was understood that adequate provision was considered to currently exist for this. This would also form part of the DCC consultation into the Traffic Orders, whereby emergency services would be consulted as part of this process and findings from this would be considered appropriately.

Referring to the bus bay being removed, the Member stated that through the course of their work the project team had sought to ensure that existing traffic flows and vehicle movements were maintained. Sufficient road widths existed to enable vehicles to pass, including when buses were using the layby. DCC had been involved in this design work and were comfortable at this stage that the plans showed sufficient space for passing and the movement of traffic.

With regard to the installation of cameras during the consultation period: Traffic data was available from the Relief Road planning application, and this had been considered by the project team in the development of the proposals, along with consideration of the type of vehicles using the High Street. DCC had stated that contemporary traffic data would be gathered at an appropriate time during the detailed design phase to ensure that the project benefits from up to date and accurate data.

With regard to whether the traders had been involved in the initial consultation, the Cabinet Member stated that the project team had hosted a Town Centre Business Open Evening. All businesses in the town centre were invited to this, with flyers delivered and a press release issued.

Consultants at this event presented the public realm enhancement project, and were able to seek feedback from businesses attending on the developing ideas. A total of 8 town centre businesses attended this session. Overall feedback from the event was generally in agreement with the emerging themes presented, including support for a de-cluttered streetscape, high quality materials and more space around the War Memorial.

In terms of parking provision, survey work and analysis by the project team had concluded that sufficient parking existed elsewhere in the town centre to accommodate the removal of the ten spaces.

With regard to the relief road and the impact of development to the west on the local infrastructure, he stated that the project was following a tight programme, with construction anticipated from spring 2023 for around 6 months. This may mean that it would proceed ahead of any confirmed start date for the Relief Road. The overarching project concluded in March 2024 when the funding window closed, and so it was important to start as soon as feasible. The concept design had been developed, in consultation with DCC, in such a way that it could be delivered as a standalone phase in advance of the Relief Road opening, while also allowing a planned and phased approach to future enhancement works should circumstances allow. Officers from MDCC would continue to work with DCC to ensure that disruption to Cullompton was minimised in the delivery of this and other infrastructure projects around the town.

With regard to the access for traders to the Higher Bullring, the Cabinet Member was able to report that the design had been created so that the traders could drive onto and off of the area.

Consideration was given to:

- The traffic issues within the town to include any closure of the motorway
- The timing of the creation of the relief road
- Parking issues in the town and the impact of the scheme on shop keepers and pedestrians; 10 parking spaces would be removed to deliver quality space in the area
- Whether the responses from the second consultation should return to Cabinet for further consideration and how this would impact on the timescales for the scheme

- Presentations that had been received by the Town Council who were broadly supportive of the scheme and who had raised some points of discussion regarding detail that could be picked up during the Stage 2 consultation such as planting
- Air quality in the town and whether the scheme would improve those issues
- Officers agreed to consider further the space for ambulance parking near to Clark's Court

RESOLVED that:

- i) The concept public realm enhancement design (developed as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone project) for the Higher Bullring area of Cullompton, as set out in Appendix 3, be approved for public consultation;
- ii) Delegated authority be given to the Director of Place (in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Planning and Economic Regeneration) to finalise the material and arrangements for public consultation;
- iii) Approval is given to instruct Devon County Council to take forward the project through to implementation, to facilitate timely delivery of their design development work, informed by the concept design, and;
- iv) Delegated authority is given to the Director of Place (in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Planning and Economic Regeneration) to work with Devon County Council to incorporate views resulting from public consultation (to relate to layout and design of street furniture such as benches, planters and cycle parking), where possible.

(Proposed by Cllr R J Chesterton and seconded by Cllr C R Slade)

Reason for the decision: there is a need for the scheme to be approved for a further public consultation process.

Note: *Report previously circulated copy attached to minutes.

6. **NORTH WEST CULLOMPTON MASTERPLAN (00-57-56)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Director of Place seeking approval for public consultation on the draft updated NW Cullompton Masterplan SPD.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report referring to Policy CU1 of the Mid Devon Local Plan which allocated 100 hectares of land at North West Cullompton for 1350 homes, infrastructure and community facilities. The initial SPD had been adopted in 2016 but was now considered to be out of date with 3 additional land parcels being allocated in the new Local Plan. He informed the meeting that 3 planning permissions had been granted on the land totalling 600 homes. Feedback from the consultation would help shape the final version of the Masterplan SPD which when adopted would support the local plan and guide development of the proposed allocation.

Consideration was given to the views of one of the local Ward Members with regard to the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan, Policy CU1 of the Local Plan and the CCA management plan with regard to the transport infrastructure, the number of houses to be occupied before the spine road was established and the impact of construction traffic accessing the site via Tiverton Road. It was felt that the views of local residents were being ignored.

Officers provided a response stating that 3 applications had already been approved; Policies CU1-CU6 of the Local Plan required the spine road to be available before the occupation of 500 dwellings, planning permission had already been granted for 600 dwellings. The S106 agreement for the Persimmon parcel (one sector of the spine road) had a trigger of 100 dwellings with the Barratt/David Wilson Homes agreement stating that the remainder of the spine road to be completed before the occupation of 100 dwellings. Construction traffic would initially have to travel via Tiverton Road until the trigger had been met, and a Construction Management Plan submitted with the planning applications would be consulted on to manage the traffic impacts.

It was therefore: **RESOLVED** that:

- i) That the document at Appendix 1 is approved for public consultation.
- ii) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration to finalise the consultation material.

(Proposed by Cllr R J Chesterton and seconded by Cllr B A Moore)

Reason for the decision: the existing adopted masterplan is out of date, there is a need for a new masterplan to be approved for public consultation.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

7. **UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (1-19-42)**

The Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement informed the meeting that she continued to work with officers to drive continuous improvement highlighting the number of open cases and the number of cases closed.

She outlined the amount of work that had taken place with regard to planning enforcement, which had brought forward several retrospective planning applications to legalise development and that some income had been gained from this. She also outlined work taking place with regard to vehicle and parking enforcement, voids, complaints and fly tipping.

Discussion took place with regard to staffing issues within the Planning Department and particularly within the enforcement team.

8. **NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS (1-36-41)**

The Cabinet had before it and noted its rolling *plan for June 2022 containing future key decisions.

Note: *Plan previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

(The meeting ended at 11.39 am)

CHAIRMAN