

CABINET

9 AUGUST 2022

EAST CULLOMPTON MASTERPLAN SPD

Cabinet Member Cllr Richard Chesterton
Responsible Officer Richard Marsh, Director of Place

Reason for Report:

To seek Cabinet approval:

1. To go out to public consultation on the draft East Cullompton Masterplan SPD.
2. For the continuation of technical work focused on Junction 28 of the M5, including the utilisation of £800,000 of Homes England capacity funding, to support the development of a Strategic Outline Case/Outline Business Case to support future applications for funding and discussions with key stakeholders about timely delivery of critical enabling infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the document at Appendix 1 is approved for public consultation.
2. 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.
3. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Place to utilise £800,000 of Homes England capacity funding to continue the technical work to support development of a Strategic Outline Case/Outline Business Case in respect of Junction 28 of the M5.

Financial Implications: There will be no financial implications arising from adoption of the Masterplan SPD document as it adds detail to existing planning policies only. The production of the Masterplan SPD and the public consultation costs are funded through capacity funding awarded through Homes England's Garden Villages and Towns Programme capacity funding. Additional capacity funding of £800,000 from the same has been awarded to Mid Devon District Council specifically to progress the production of a Strategic Outline Case for major improvements to Junction 28 of the M5.

Budget and Policy Framework: The work will be paid for from existing Homes England capacity funding.

The Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 requires the East Cullompton allocation to have an adopted Masterplan SPD in place before planning permission can be granted. Once adopted, the revised and updated Masterplan would have Supplementary Planning Document status and will be a material consideration for planning decision making purposes. The Mid Devon Local Plan also requires

strategic improvements to Junction 28 of the M5 motorway to increase capacity at the junction and facilitate delivery of strategic housing and employment allocations in Cullompton.

Legal Implications: The process for preparing and adopting the draft Masterplan SPD is in compliance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. There is a funding agreement in place with Homes England in relation to utilising the Junction 28 capacity funding and the Council will be required to enter into a legal agreement with Devon County Council to further progress the technical work.

Risk Assessment: Policy sets out that masterplanning should take place before planning applications are submitted. Delay in adoption of the Masterplan SPD could in turn delay the delivery of housing as well as affect the confidence of land owners to promote their land. Adoption of the masterplan will provide greater planning certainty and assist the site coming forward for delivery.

The Council's Local Plan focuses growth on Cullompton, including the two strategic allocations at NW Cullompton and East Cullompton, capable of delivering 1,350 and 2,600 homes respectively, as well as employment, infrastructure and facilities. There is also an acknowledged ambition to grow East Cullompton into a garden village of around 5,000 houses, Culm Garden Village having received garden village status from the Government in 2017. Delivery of the Local Plan allocations and the garden village are dependent on a strategic intervention to improve capacity at Junction 28. Without this increased capacity, delivery of the homes, jobs and facilities at Cullompton set out in the Local Plan could be at risk. Production of a Strategic Outline Case to DfT is the first step in delivering the required junction improvements.

Equality Impact Assessment: The consultation material will include an accessible PDF document on the consultation website and there will be a variety of different ways to engage: online, in person, by phone, by social media and by post. No other equality issues are identified for this report, but it is noted that design should have regard to the needs of different groups in community including by age and disability.

Impact on Climate Change: The draft Masterplan SPD sets out ambitions for development at East Cullompton to mitigate climate change and clear placemaking principles that will help to address net zero ambitions. However, the requirements set out in the SPD can only seek to address climate change within the confines of adopted planning policy. A Supplementary Planning Document cannot introduce new policies, or expand on existing adopted policy.

Increasing vehicle capacity at Junction 28 may appear at odds with the Council's climate change declaration and the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. However, the scheme is important to support the delivery of the sustainable growth opportunities at Cullompton contained in the Local Plan.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Masterplan SPD will provide guidance on the planning and delivery of a strategic site for Mid Devon. The Masterplan SPD directly relates to all four Corporate Plan 2020-24 priorities including Homes, Environment, Economy and Community.

The Junction 28 infrastructure project is considered vital to enable development identified in the Local Plan to come forward and make a substantial contribution to delivering the priorities of the Corporate Plan 2020 to 2024; Economy, Homes, Community and Environment.

DRAFT MASTERPLAN SPD

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Policies CU7-CU12 of the Mid Devon Local Plan Review allocate 160 hectares of land at East Cullompton for up to 1,750 homes and associated development within the period up to 2033 (with at least 850 houses thereafter). Policy CU7 of the Local Plan Review requires comprehensive masterplanning of the development including at least two stages of public consultation, and adoption of the masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document before any planning application is determined.
- 1.2 Framework Masterplans bridge the gap between planning policy aspiration and its implementation in order to achieve high quality design and create successful places. They also set out key principles that planning applications will need to have regards to in order to be considered acceptable. Additionally, as masterplans often relate to large strategically important sites that are to be delivered in phases over what may be a long time period, they also need to contain flexibility in order to respond to changing circumstances.
- 1.3 Supplementary Planning Documents provide more detail to planning policies and can only be developed in support of adopted planning policies. Whilst they do not form part of the Development Plan, they are an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.4 Culm Garden Village (which includes the East Cullompton Allocation) was one of 14 areas originally awarded garden village status by the Government in January 2017 following a successful expression of interest by the Council. The background to this was summarised and included within the report considered by Cabinet on 6th July 2017.
- 1.5 With Culm Garden Village receiving garden village status, there is a clear intention and direction of travel towards a garden village of significantly greater scale and covering substantial additional land to that currently proposed to be allocated by policy CU7 of the Mid Devon Local Plan Review. The allocation of additional land to expand the East Cullompton allocation into a garden village of approximately 5,000 homes with associated infrastructure, facilities and open space is intended to be explored through the emerging Mid Devon Local Plan process.
- 1.6 As only the first phase of the proposed garden village is allocated in the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan, it is not possible to set out the masterplan requirements for the whole of the garden village within this current masterplan SPD document. At this stage, it is therefore proposed only to develop a detailed Masterplan SPD for the part of the garden village allocated in the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan (East Cullompton).

- 1.7 However, in looking to respond positively to the opportunity to plan holistically for the wider garden village, the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD looks to establish principles that can be carried through into a potential future allocation. This will ensure that any future garden village allocation grows seamlessly from the existing East Cullompton allocation, whilst not prejudicing the formal Local Plan process that is required to allocate land for development.
- 1.8 The draft East Cullompton Masterplan SPD therefore provides detail to policies CU7-CU12 set out in the adopted Local Plan in sections one to five, then in section 6 explores a potential framework masterplan for a wider garden village.

2.0 **BACKGROUND WORK AND PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

- 2.1 Stage 1 of the required two stage consultation for the Masterplan SPD took place over a six-week period from 18 January 2019 to 1 March 2019. Stage 1 was a means to scope out the content and key issues for the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD, as well as explore the principles and a concept plan for the wider garden village. Accordingly, public consultation took place on two related documents:

- 1) The East Cullompton Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document: Issues, Opportunities & Concepts document set out a number of issues and opportunities based on an analysis of the site, and brought together to inform some initial concepts for the masterplanning of the East Cullompton allocation; and
- 2) The draft Culm Garden Village Vision & Concept Document set out a Vision and a number of key principles to guide development at the proposed new garden village, together with a Concept Plan which starts to add shape to ideas on how the wider garden village might be planned.

Responses on the Stage 1 public consultation were reported to Cabinet on 30 May 2019.

- 2.2 In addition to the formal consultation, the Culm Garden Village project programme includes regular ongoing engagement with various groups, including the Culm Garden Village Delivery Board, Stakeholder Forum and Landowner Forum. Details of these groups can be found on the Culm Garden Village website: www.culmgardenvillage.co.uk.

3.0 **THE DRAFT MASTERPLAN SPD**

- 3.1 LDA Design have been commissioned by MDDC to prepare a draft Masterplan SPD for East Cullompton, and a wider framework masterplan for Culm Garden Village.
- 3.2 Preparation of the document has been underpinned by various evidence base reports and ongoing work including landscape analysis, ecology and ecosystems services, hydrology, movement, employment and skills and future

mobility trends, and the draft has been informed by meetings and workshops with numerous stakeholders, as well as feedback from the Stage 1 public consultation.

3.3 The Masterplan sets a vision and guiding principles for the new development of East Cullompton, provides detail to supplement the strategic development plan policies for the site and sets overarching design principles and requirements that must be complied with at future planning stage. The Masterplan identifies the major land uses and infrastructure to be accommodated and broad principles relating to phasing and delivery. Further detail in respect of phasing and infrastructure delivery needs to be agreed between the Council and landowners in the form of a Site Wide Phasing and Delivery Plan.

3.4 An initial draft of the SPD was presented to the Design West Design Review Panel on 13 June 2022. The Panel was supportive of the landscape-led design approach which they considered would create a characterful place. They highlighted a number of key points for further consideration that were important to achieve the principles set out in the SPD:

- It is essential that the two halves of Cullompton are joined together with attractive active travel routes;
- Isochrones should be included for walking, cycling and e-bike usage;
- Further detail to support the placemaking principles should be included in a site-wide design code;
- The treatment of the pylon run corridors should be considered further, possibly as part of a design code;
- Opportunities for off-site biodiversity net gain should be demonstrated;
- Further consideration should be given to methods to internalise journeys;
- Further work is needed on the treatment of Honiton Road, including traffic calming and placemaking measures, that can be detailed through a design code;
- The climate crisis and resulting impact needs to be more explicitly addressed and made conditions of the next design stages and potential design coding;
- Look at where ideas for work hubs and space adaption could be piloted.

These points have been further addressed in the draft document to be considered, although it is recognised that much of the detail will need to be included in a future site-wide design code. Similarly, detailed improvements to the road network and active travel crossings are outside of the scope of this SPD and are being progressed with Devon County Council and National Highways through other connected workstreams.

3.5 The East Cullompton Masterplan SPD is set out in six sections.

Section 1 provides an introduction and the scope and purpose of the SPD;

Section 2 sets out the Vision;

Sections 3 and 4 provide the influences and contextual information from which the principles and concepts for the masterplan are drawn; and

Section 5 sets out the masterplan itself, identifying spatially the various land uses and placemaking concepts.

Section 6 looks at how East Cullompton could potentially grow into a wider garden village, building on the principles set out in sections 1-5.

3.6 Whilst it is important that the whole of the potential garden village is looked at holistically, an SPD can only include detail to support adopted policy. Sections 1 to 5 of the document concentrate on the existing East Cullompton allocation. The remainder of the garden village is not yet allocated and any further allocation of land must go through the robust processes required to bring forward allocations in the next Local Plan. Because of this, Section 6 can only indicate how a potential future garden village may be developed following the placemaking principles set out in the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD.

4.0 **PLANNING POLICY ADVISORY GROUP**

4.1 The draft Masterplan SPD was taken to the Council's Planning Policy Advisory Group on 14 July 2022. The invitation to attend was extended to all elected Members.

4.2 No specific recommendations were made to amend the document before public consultation, however the following points were highlighted:

- Active travel routes, both within the development and across the M5, railway and river, were essential to the success of the place. The SPD makes specific reference to active travel within the development, and acknowledges the importance of active travel connections with Cullompton delivered from the outset, although the design and delivery of these crossings are outside the scope of the SPD.
- The safe crossing of Honiton Road must be considered. The SPD requires further co-ordinated design work to be carried out by developers and sets high level design principles to ensure Honiton Road is safe, has multiple crossing points, and contributes to place quality.
- There must be a whole site approach to carbon reduction measures. There is a requirement within the SPD (and Policy CU7) for developers to produce a carbon reduction strategy based on the requirements and approach set out in the SPD, including compliance with the carbon reduction hierarchy. However, the SPD must work within the confines of existing planning policy and cannot introduce new policies or targets. The garden village project team will continue to engage with the teams producing the Council's Interim Planning Statement on Climate Change to ensure consistency.
- Active travel routes must be accessible and routes properly surfaced. The SPD requires active travel routes to be accessible but does not go into detail on the actual design of these routes. Design detail could be included in a later design code.

- There must be areas to socialise and a health centre. The SPD proposes several mixed use areas to include areas to socialise. There is no existing requirement in the Local Plan to provide a new health centre at East Cullompton, although developers will be expected to make financial contributions towards expanded provision in Cullompton.

5.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 The public consultation is proposed to take place over a 6 week period in August and September 2022 (dates to be finalised).
- 5.2 Means of consultation will include a staffed event “roadshow” in various venues in Cullompton, Kentisbeare and Willand, and non-staffed exhibition material displays to be left in place for the entire consultation period (venues to be confirmed).
- 5.3 There will be a Stakeholder Forum event during the consultation period, and presentations to Cullompton Town Council and Kentisbeare Parish Council, and Willand Parish Council if they would like one.
- 5.4 In addition, a public consultation website with interactive map will be developed, and there will be opportunities for the public to engage with staff online. There could also be a video online presenting the Masterplan, although the feasibility of this is still being explored.
- 5.5 Publicity arrangements are to include a press release, a link from the MDDC website and Culm Garden Village website, social media posts and letters to residents within and adjoining the East Cullompton allocation.

6.0 HRA/SEA SCREENING

- 6.1 A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required in accordance with Regulations and Directives on any plan or programme prepared for town and country planning or land use purposes and which sets the framework for future development consent of certain projects. HRA and SEA reports have been prepared as part of the public consultation material and are set out in Appendix 2.

7.0 JUNCTION 28 TECHNICAL WORK

- 7.1 Policies CU2 (NW Cullompton) and CU7 (East Cullompton) state that as part of the development of these allocations, capacity improvements will be required at Junction 28 to deliver a strategic highway improvement as demonstrated by capacity studies completed to assess the impact of the traffic generated from the site. The Local Plan currently requires that beyond the first 500 houses at East Cullompton, the Policy CU7 allocation will require a significant strategic intervention at Junction 28 of the M5 motorway.
- 7.2 A Strategic Outline Case is the first step required to progress a bid to DfT to fund improvements to Junction 28. If this is accepted by DfT, an Outline Business Case will then be required. Homes England has made a specific

capacity funding award to the Council to progress technical work leading to the production of a Strategic Outline Case/Outline Business Case. The technical work will include transport modelling, an options assessment and environmental reports.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 An adopted Masterplan SPD is a requirement of policy CU7 of the Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033. The document will provide guidance on how the allocation should be delivered to ensure place quality. Feedback from public consultation will help to shape the final version of the Masterplan SPD which, when adopted, will support the Local Plan, and guide the development of the proposed allocation.
- 8.2 Production of the Strategic Outline Case is essential to progress the required junction improvements required by the Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033, and to bring forward Local Plan allocations at NW and East Cullompton, as well as the future Culm Garden Village.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Draft East Cullompton Masterplan SPD
Appendix 2: HRA/SEA Screening

Contact for more information

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Background Papers

Culm Garden Village website:
www.culmgardenvillage.co.uk

Cabinet reports:

[Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 3rd January, 2019, 2.15 pm - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](#)
[Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 30th May, 2019, 2.15 pm - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](#)