

EAST CULLOMPTON MASTERPLAN SPD

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

Reason for Report: To inform members of the outcome of the public consultation and to consider the draft masterplan that has subsequently been produced taking these comments into account, and to seek a recommendation to Council to adopt the revised East Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Members note the comments received at the Stage 2 public consultation (Appendix 1) and proposed changes set out in Appendix 2.**
- 2. That the Cabinet recommend to Council that the Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document for East Cullompton (Appendix 3), which incorporates changes made following the Stage 2 public consultation, be adopted.**
- 3. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Place to amend and finalise the document to reflect any agreed changes following Planning Policy Advisory Group and Cabinet meetings.**

Financial Implications: The consultant contract was awarded following a procurement process. The cost of the contract is funded through Homes England capacity funding. There will be no financial implications arising from adoption of the document as it adds detail to existing planning policies only.

Budget and Policy Framework: The budget for the production of the SPD utilises Homes England capacity funding (see Financial Implications).

The Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 requires strategic allocations 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 in relation to the East Cullompton allocation.

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.

Risk Assessment: Policy sets out that masterplanning should take place before applications are submitted. Delay in adoption of the Masterplan SPD could in turn delay the delivery of housing on the site 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.

If the Masterplan SPD is not adopted, the Council may become vulnerable to planning applications being submitted which do not accord with the Council's aspirations for the East Cullompton and could lead to uncoordinated development which would not meet the Council's quality aspirations.

Equality Impact Assessment: No equality issues are identified for this report.

Impact on Climate Change: The draft Masterplan SPD has regard to climate change within the confines of adopted planning policy. A Supplementary Planning Document cannot introduce new policies, or expand on existing adopted policy, but the SPD does expect developers to follow the guidance set out within the document when assessing the carbon impacts of their proposals.

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

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 A draft Masterplan SPD for East Cullompton was approved for consultation at the 9 August 2022 Cabinet meeting and public consultation took place between 21 September and 1 November 2022. The consultation included 6 staffed events at Cullompton Farmers' Market, The Walronds, Cullompton, Cullompton Tesco, Kentisbeare Village Hall (x 2) and Willand Village Hall. There were also display boards at The Hayridge, Cullompton and Kentisbeare Village Hall, and a dedicated consultation website. The consultation was advertised by letter, press release, posters and on social media.

2.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

2.1 There were 6,928 website visits during the consultation period, most directed from a search engine, the Culm Garden Village website, Facebook or QR codes.

2.2 A total of 207 people attended the staffed events.

2.3 A total of 52 people commented via the consultation website. In addition, 20 emailed public responses and 2 completed paper questionnaires were received, as well as 7 responses from landowners/promoters.

2.4 Consultation responses were also received from Cullompton Town Council, Kentisbeare Parish Council and Bradninch Town Council, Devon County Council, Historic England, Network Rail, Lead Local Flood Authority, Natural England, National Grid, National Highways, Sport England, Environment Agency and Blackdown Hills AONB.

2.5 Details of all responses received are included in **Appendix 1**.

2.6 Some of the responses related to issues that are outside of the scope of the SPD, the focus of which is to add detail to existing Local Plan policies. These

responses included comments on the wider garden village proposals that will be subject to consideration in the Council's emerging Local Plan, and changes to the triggers for infrastructure delivery that are either set out in Local Plan policies, or subject to parallel workstreams.

2.7 Where the responses relate to detail in the SPD, the document has been amended to reflect these responses wherever this would improve the document and better reflect consultee requirements and aspirations. Where changes have not been made, these decisions have been justified. **Appendix 2** is a summary table of changes requested with commentary on whether or not the changes have been made.

2.8 The revised Masterplan SPD document following public consultation is attached at **Appendix 3**.

3.0 **REVISIONS TO DRAFT MASTERPLAN SPD FOLLOWING CONSULTATION**

3.1 The following key revisions have been made to the draft Masterplan SPD as a result of the consultation. Please also see the table at **Appendix 2** for full details of the changes made and not made.

3.2 A373 Honiton Road. Following advice from Devon County Council Highway Authority, references to a 20mph speed limit along Honiton Road have been deleted as this is not achievable for an A road. The SPD retains the need for further technical work to be carried out and the emphasis on the need for design solutions to slow speeds.

3.3 Town Centre Relief Road. The text has been updated to reflect the policy position that the TCRR must be delivered before occupation of new homes within the urban extension. This is subject to any changes arising from the Junction 28 capacity modelling currently being carried out by Devon County Council and any further technical work agreed by Devon County Council to demonstrate higher or lower capacities.

3.4 Road network. Link to Kingsmill Industrial Estate added and text updated to clarify that streets could take a different alignment to those shown in the Masterplan, subject to preferred junction location.

3.5 Active travel. Approach to delivery of active travel crossings between East Cullompton and Cullompton clarified. Infrastructure delivery table amended to include delivery of active travel in early phases and in line with capacity improvements to J28.

3.6 Primary school. Text amended to include flexibility on location of primary school to north or south of Honiton Road and addition of requirement for safe school access and appropriate space for drop off away from primary streets.

3.7 Healthcare. Text added to expand on potential uses within community hub and multi-use community building, including a health hub. Officers are in discussion with the NHS about healthcare provision within East Cullompton.

- 3.8 Fordmore Farm community hub. Text clarified to explain why Fordmore will be principal centre, that it will expand to provide broader range of uses including further retail and community space, that it will be accessible (via primary street and active travel) and that it would have potential to expand further if proposals for the wider garden village proceed. Further explanation added on what community hubs should contain and that some residential will be permitted within community hubs where it does not detract from intended character or limit community hub functions.
- 3.9 Commercial area. Text changed from 'integrating employment' to 'integrating commercial' to make it clearer that appropriate retail will be permitted in the commercial area. The text already refers to appropriately scaled retail being provided in this area. This is to allow larger scale retail uses where these are not appropriate within the community hubs.
- 3.10 Sports and leisure. Text amended to confirm size of space at Fordmore Farm is sufficient to provide a multi-pitch hub rather than individual pitches but final location of sports pitches to be confirmed through planning applications. SPD makes specific reference to sports being provided in accordance with MDDC's Playing Pitch Strategy. Reference to community buildings to include catering for a range of indoor sports and activities.
- 3.11 Green space. Text expanded on green space uses, including allotments and what can be included within the community greens and green corridors. Community growing space such as orchards in community greens and traditional allotment sites provided separately within strategic GI. Changes made to make clearer the requirement that detailed proposals demonstrate an appropriate building and landscape treatment to rural edge.
- 3.12 Fords. Following representation from the Environment Agency, text has been amended so that fords are not prioritised, but the aspiration for some fords to be included as crossings to remain to reflect the placemaking principle of celebrating water, with the requirement for alternative routes to be available and signage to ensure safety.
- 3.13 Self-build. Additional text on self-build added as guidance for developers.
- 3.14 Pylons. Text changed to include a 10m green corridor above any undergrounded electricity lines and wording added that where powerlines are undergrounded, they do not have to follow the existing overhead line which could allow better accommodation of easements.
- 3.15 Heritage. Maps to be changed to refer to indicative settings of heritage assets with further assessment required for planning applications. SPD strengthened to specify further work required by developers prior to their layouts being set. Text changes made to archaeological assessment.
- 3.16 Biodiversity net gain. Wording changed so that the off-site BNG can be delivered in suitable areas that provide accessible greenspace for the allocation or adjacent to the allocation boundary. Text changed to expand the explanation of the country park.

3.17 Country park. This is outside the area for the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD but could start to be delivered through off-site biodiversity net gain and sports facilities.

3.18 Process. Process diagram not sufficiently clear on where Design Code and Phasing and Infrastructure Delivery Plan fit within the planning process. The diagram has been updated and the approach to both these documents clarified. Both documents will need to be agreed developed and agreed with landowners / developers. The text on the Design Code within the body of the SPD has been updated and expanded to clarify the strategic nature of this document. Appendix 1 setting out the Design Code contents has been deleted.

4.0 **PLANNING POLICY ADVISORY GROUP**

4.0 A draft of this Cabinet report and Appendices, including the revised Masterplan SPD, was taken to Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) on 17 January 2022. PPAG approved the draft East Cullompton Masterplan SPD to be taken to Cabinet on 7 February 2023 with no amendments.

4.0 **HRA/SEA SCREENING**

4.1 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. Planning Practice Guidance states that SPDs do not require a sustainability appraisal but may in exceptional circumstances require a strategic environmental assessment if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already have been assessed during the preparation of the Local Plan. Officers do not consider that the East Cullompton Masterplan SPD would have significant environmental effects that were not identified during preparation of the Local Plan.

4.2 However, for completeness, HRA and SEA reports were prepared as part of the public consultation material. The screening reports indicate that the draft Masterplan SPD is 'unlikely to have significant effects on the environment' not already assessed through the preparation of the Local Plan.

4.1 Historic England has commented that the draft SPD does identify the risk of harm to heritage assets. However, given the small number of heritage assets concerned, they consider that undertaking a full SEA would be a disproportionate task to ensure the protection of the heritage assets. A reasonable alternative would be a discrete study that focused on the small number of affected assets. A thorough and focused study would obviate the need for a full SEA.

4.2 An initial heritage assessment was undertaken to inform the SPD and the SPD identifies areas where there is a risk of harm to heritage assets and requires that as planning applications come forward, developers will be expected to fully consider the impacts on these heritage assets including through the submission of a heritage chapter in their accompanying Environmental Statement. Officers

are continuing to engage with Historic England to ensure the ongoing approach to heritage is robust, but do not consider that a full SEA is necessary.

- 4.3 Natural England has commented that based on the information provided, they concur that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed SPD that have not already been assessed within the Sustainability Appraisal of the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan 2013 - 2033.
- 4.4 In relation to the HRA screening, whilst Natural England agrees that it is likely that the SPD will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of European sites, they would advise that the reasons for reaching this conclusion should include consideration of whether the SPD provides the design framework needed to ensure that all the mitigation measures identified as necessary in the Local Plan HRA will be fully incorporated into the development. The HRA identifies that provision of green space and protection and enhancement of biodiversity sites are likely to mitigate impacts on European sites. The SPD makes provision for both provision of amenity green space habitats and includes a requirement for developers to demonstrate biodiversity net gain. Further assessment will be required by developers through Environmental Impact Assessments to be submitted with planning applications.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 An analysis of the consultation responses has been undertaken and amendments made the draft Masterplan SPD. Once adopted, the revised Masterplan SPD will provide an updated framework to guide development in a coordinated and comprehensive manner and will have full weight in decision making as a material planning consideration.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consultation responses

Appendix 2: Summary table of changes requested with commentary on whether or not the changes have been made

Appendix 3: Revised draft East Cullompton Masterplan SPD

Contact for more information

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Background Papers

Cabinet report 9 August 2022
[Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 9th August, 2022, 10.00 am - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](#)

Background documents on the Culm
Garden Village website
[Home | Culm Garden Village](#)

Circulation of the Report

Councillor Richard Chesterton, Cabinet
Member for Planning & Regeneration