

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	4 th June 2024
Subject:	CULLOMPTON STRATEGIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Steve Keable, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager Growth, Economy & Delivery
Exempt:	None which are Exempt from publication under paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
Wards Affected:	Cullompton St Andrew, Cullompton Vale, Cullompton Padbrook It should be noted that given the wider relationship with the Local Plan the paper affects all wards within District
Enclosures:	M5 Junction 28 Major Improvements Plan (Appendix 1)

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

Reason for Report. To update Members with regard to Cullompton Strategic Transport Infrastructure projects.

Recommendation:

- 1. That members note the contents of this report.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on three key transport infrastructure schemes which are essential to address identified issues within Cullompton and also accommodate planned growth in the area, in line with our adopted Local Plan. The schemes are as follows:

- The Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road;
- Strategic Improvements to Junction 28 of the M5 Motorway, and;
- The reopening of Cullompton Railway Station

1.2 The adopted Mid Devon Local Plan proposes significant growth of homes and jobs in the Cullompton area, including Culm Garden Village, which will require improvements to the transport infrastructure to mitigate any impacts of development and support more sustainable travel behaviour among existing and future residents. Without significant transport interventions this housing cannot come forward.

2.0 Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road

2.1 The Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road has planning permission and is a major strategic transport intervention which unlocks strategic growth within the district, as set out within the adopted Local Plan. The scheme is crucial as:

- Its delivery will unlock environmental and air quality improvements within Cullompton's historic town centre;
- Historic England has made it clear that the award of the Heritage Action Zone monies in Cullompton was predicated by a clear expectation of its delivery;
- It will unlock early capacity at J28 M5 and on existing transport infrastructure within the town in advance of a more significant junction intervention, allowing planned growth within the adopted Local Plan to come forward – including at the Culm Garden Village.
- Failure to deliver homes within the required timeframe will significantly increase the risk of unplanned development proposals coming forward in other, less sustainable locations within the District. It will also reduce the ability of the Local Planning Authority to resist such proposals.

2.2 The Town Centre Relief Road will connect Duke Street in the south to Station Road in the north, with a fourth arm added to the Millennium Way roundabout. The route will pass through the public open space and sports pitches, staying close to the railway line to avoid additional disruption to the Cullompton Community Association (CCA) fields. The cricket club will be relocated to the east of the M5, with reconfiguration of the bowling club and football club pitches within the existing area. All of the sports clubs are in agreement with these proposals.

2.3 This scheme also includes upgrades to the walking and cycling routes through the CCA fields and additional links along Meadow Lane to the Community College, supporting walking and cycling opportunities in the town.

- 2.4 The relief road scheme also includes associated works with regard to enhanced vehicular access, pedestrian and cycle provision in the Station Road corridor at the northern end of the relief road's connection with the existing road network. Inclusion of these aspects has an associated benefit to the realisation of connections along Station Road between the town centre, northern end of the relief road and proposed railway station site.
- 2.5 Since inception, the relief road scheme has become more technically complex. To a minor degree, this relates to additional design requirements introduced through the planning process, but the substantive aspect arises from the need for the scheme to accommodate complex flood risk mitigations and the supporting physical structures to do this. This requirement accrues from the complex flood situation on the land which the relief road is due to be constructed. In addition to this, there have been unprecedented increases in construction costs over the last few years. The latest construct cost estimate provided by Devon County Council's consultants (WSP) is therefore now £37m (which includes a significant contingency and accounts for optimism bias in line with industry best-practice.)
- 2.6 The District Council submitted bids to the Government's Levelling Up Fund tranches 1 and 2 to secure the balance of funding required to deliver the Relief Road (beyond the level of Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) monies previously secured), but were unfortunately unsuccessful, despite being informed by Government officials that it was a high quality bid which made it to advanced stages of evaluation. The third round of Levelling Up Fund was not a bidding process but funding was instead distributed by allocation. Devon County Council did not receive any allocation through this process. This is particularly disappointing as Devon County Council had agreed to make the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road its priority scheme for the purposes of LUF3.
- 2.7 Concurrent with these discussions, officers have also been identifying and considering additional funding options and solutions and have been discussing opportunities with various relevant parties, perhaps most notably with Homes England in relation to both the Housing Infrastructure Fund and the Brownfield Infrastructure Fund (BIL).
- 2.8 Discussions in relation to BIL quickly demonstrated that the relief road project would not be a good fit with the programme owing to the limited lifetime of the BIL programme. However, in December 2023, officers secured £77k of additional capacity funding from Homes England to update the existing business case, construction programme/costs and property cost estimate in order to inform ongoing conversations in relation to HIF. Considerable time and effort has been invested in to this work by officers within Mid Devon with support and input from colleagues within Devon County Council.

- 2.9 This work, now completed, has informed discussions with Homes England and has enabled officers to submit a formal request to Homes England for additional funding to support delivery of the relief road via the HIF programme. A cross-agency Board including representatives of DLUHC, Treasury, Homes England and the Department for Transport (DfT) will consider this request, although the exact date of communication of any decision taken by the Board has not been confirmed. If a decision is made by the Board regarding funding before this Cabinet meeting, or if further information is received in relation to the consideration of this application, a verbal update will be provided.
- 2.10 A key component of the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road scheme is land acquisition. Officers have been working closely with Devon County Council and its land agent with regard to land assembly. A particular issue currently exists with Tesco owned land which is in the flood plain which Tesco contest has development potential and value. Officers from both Councils have been attempting to liaise with Tesco plc to attempt to resolve this issue for a considerable period of time and, whilst it is somewhat encouraging that Tesco has more recently engaged with officers after senior-level engagement by officers and members, progress by Tesco continues to be slow. This presents continued risk around delivery should Tesco not proactively and positively engage with the Authorities in terms of the sale of their land to support the delivery of the relief road. To this end, it is also understood that Richard Foord MP has also now written to the Tesco Chairman urging Tesco to urgently progress productive dialogue in relation to the sale of their land.
- 2.11 CPO capabilities exist in order to progress the matter through this route, as necessary and if required. However, given the scheme improves access to the Tesco store and unlocks the provision of new homes with associated additional trade from new residents, it is hoped that this acquisition can be achieved through positive and timely negotiation.
- 2.12 Finally, it should also be noted that in a recent 2024 survey, of 815 local residents, 92% were supportive of the Relief Road proposal; and so should Tesco be resistant to the scheme there would be a significant risk to its local reputation.
- 2.13 With this information in mind, it is expected that a further update report will soon be brought before Cabinet. Dependent upon the nature of the decision taken by the Board in relation to the revised HIF request, clarity will then be provided in terms of any decisions required and any risks/issues/opportunities arising.

3.0 Strategic Improvements to Junction 28 of the M5 Motorway

- 3.1 Congestion occurs regularly in and around Cullompton with queues extending outbound (from the M5) in the morning and inbound (towards the town) in the evening along the length of Station Road between the High Street and M5 Junction 28. Queuing on the northbound motorway off-slip (traffic heading

towards Cullompton from Exeter) occurs regularly in the evening peak, with the back of the queue sometimes reaching the live M5 carriageway, which presents a serious safety concern to National Highways.

- 3.2 Cullompton High Street is dominated by vehicles, which impacts on bus journey time reliability and the pollution from congestion has led to the majority of the town being designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). This, along with narrow pavements leads to an unattractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.3 As explained above, the first stage of mitigation is the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road, which aims to provide an alternative route bypassing the town. The second stage of mitigation is junction improvements to M5 Junction 28, for which a number of options have been considered and assessed against the following scheme objectives:
 - Support efficient and safer operation of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) (i.e. the M5 Motorway);
 - Support efficient and safer operation of the local transport network;
 - Support the opportunity for existing and new residents to make sustainable travel choices;
 - Minimise negative, environmental impacts including carbon, water, and other environmental impacts, and;
 - Support delivery of the development within the adopted Local Plan and longer-term proposals at the Culm Garden Village.
- 3.4 The M5 Junction 28 improvement, together with the construction of the Relief Road, would allow the full build-out of all development allocated within the town under the current, adopted Local Plan as well as accommodating any future additional growth of the Culm Garden Village up to circa 5,000 houses.
- 3.5 The need for a strategic motorway improvement is strongly supported by the local community. In the recent 2024 survey, of 815 local residents, 95% were supportive of the need for improvements to M5 Junction 28.
- 3.6 The Government's recent Network North announcement, which proposed reallocating HS2 funds to other schemes across the country, identifies M5 Junction 28 as a recipient scheme of released funding. Although it is encouraging to be on the Government's pipeline of transport schemes to draw down such funding, the scheme is still subject to the Business Case approval stages. Devon County Council has been working closely with the District Council to identify options to improve M5 Junction 28 and draft the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) with funding from Homes England secured by the District Council. The SOC has been finalised, approved by Devon County Council's Cabinet (13 March 2024) and has now been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT).

Expecting that the SOBC is accepted (in light of the previous Network North announcement), it would enable the drawdown of further funding to develop the scheme and progress an Outline Business Case through the Large Local Majors Fund process prior to progressing to construction stages. The SOC

submission will be published online at DCC's Transport Planning webpages ([Transport planning - Roads and transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/transport-planning)) as soon as practicable.

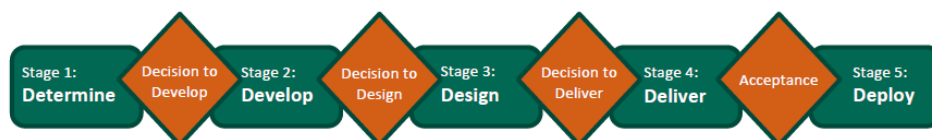
- 3.7 A total of 25 improvement options have been considered, with detailed technical work carried out on each of these. Each of the options assessed has challenges in terms of delivery due to constraints which include the close proximity of the railway, M5 and floodplain. Throughout the process, there has been engagement with National Highways, Network Rail and the Environment Agency. Following the extensive 'option assessment' process of evaluating potential schemes, against the objectives, the preferred option was selected. The preferred scheme proposes a new motorway junction to the south of the existing M5 Junction 28. This preferred option meets all of the project objectives, is considered the most deliverable by the project team and key stakeholders, and had strongest support from the public engagement sessions.
- 3.8 The new junction, as shown in Appendix 1, would be additional to the existing all-movements junction and would include south facing slip roads only enabling traffic access to or from the M5 motorway via a southbound on slip (towards Exeter) and northbound off slip (from Exeter). Access to and from the north of the M5 would be via the existing motorway junction. The new junction would consist of a single bridge across the railway and M5 and can only provide south facing slip roads due to its proximity to the existing M5 Junction 28 and the associated constraints. As more traffic travels between Cullompton and Exeter, there was a strong case for a junction to the south, and it also links well with planned growth at Culm Garden Village to the east of the motorway.
- 3.9 Public engagement on the scheme proposals was held between 13 December 2023 and 5 February 2024. A survey was hosted online on Devon County Council's 'Have Your Say' pages with paper copies available on request. This was complemented by two community drop-in sessions hosted in Cullompton serviced by County and District Council officers along with the engineering consultants.
- 3.10 It should be noted that, as the J28 junction solution incorporates the relief road, there is again the requirement for the Tesco owned land within Cullompton to be secured in order to deliver this solution, along with other land interests. This again reiterates the need for productive, positive and timely discussions with Tesco in order to support planned growth and development within Cullompton.
- 3.11 Officers will continue to keep members informed of progress in relation to the J28 SOBC and scheme and further reports will be brought before Cabinet, as required.

4.0 Reopening Cullompton Station

- 4.1 There have been long established aspirations to reinstate stations at Cullompton and Wellington, with associated enhancements to the rail services along the Bristol – Exeter corridor. Both stations closed in 1964 with the loss

of a stopping train service. A key driver for delivering these projects is that both areas are proximate to significant planned growth. The reopening of new stations is an important part of the multimodal approach to meeting the travel needs of the region.

- 4.2 A site for a new railway station, north of Station Road in Cullompton, is allocated within the adopted Local Plan.
- 4.3 In 2019, Mid Devon District Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council became the Project Sponsors, working in partnership to develop the business case for re-opening both stations.
- 4.4 In May 2020, the partnership was successful in securing funding of up to £50k from the Department for Transport’s “Restoring your Railway” Ideas Fund. This funding was used to support the development of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). In 2021, the joint project was successful in securing £5 million from the Department for Transport to fund the next stage of both stations development through to the preparation and submission of a Full Business Case.
- 4.5 In 2022, after significant progress and success under the oversight of the local authorities, the project lead transferred to Network Rail in light of the fact that the project was transitioning in to a delivery phase and that design, delivery and cost certainty was necessarily required by Network Rail and the Department for Transport (DfT) given the stage of the projects.
- 4.6 This transfer of project oversight also reflects the RNEP (Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline, 2018) process and reflects guidance around ‘A New Approach for Rail Enhancements’ (RNEP). This process sets out the key stages that rail enhancement projects (including the provision of new stations) will need to undertake to be successful. There are five stages of activity separated by formal investment decision gateways. The first three stages, “Determine”, “Develop” and “Design” relate to project development. The last two stages “Deliver” and “Deploy” focus on construction and at this stage all investment decisions would have been taken. Each of these key stages is separated by decision gateways to determine whether or not to proceed with the enhancement.



Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline, A New Approach for Rail Enhancements, Department for Transport, March 2018

- 4.7 Following a considerable amount of work the Cullompton and Wellington Railway Stations Re-instatement project is currently at stage 3. A Full

Business Case has been submitted to the Department for Transport and we await a decision on whether the scheme passes through the Decision to Deliver Gateway. Government will need to agree and endorse this Full Business Case before engaging in a 'Decision to Deliver' with all the relevant parties. Funding for the next stage of work (Delivery) will be agreed as part of this decision. It should be noted however, as part of the Government's Network North announcement in October 2023, a funding-in-principle announcement has been made regarding these two stations. It is hoped that the project can now gain the necessary Government/Ministerial approvals to pass through the 'Decision to Deliver' gateway.

- 4.8 At the time of writing a Prior Approval application for the Cullompton Railway Scheme is being considered by the Development Management team. The current planned opening date for passenger use at the new Cullompton Station is May 2026.

5.0 Next Steps

Cullompton town centre relief road:

- 5.1 Whilst awaiting a decision from Homes England with regard to the recent HIF resubmission for additional funding to enable delivery of the relief road, officers are working to ensure that key activities/work continues in order to enable swift delivery should a positive funding decision be confirmed. Notably this includes seeking to continue positive progress with Tesco in relation to the acquisition of their land by negotiation and continuing other key land-related workstreams.
- 5.2 Should funds/a positive decision not be forthcoming from Homes England, officers will continue to undertake activities to de-risk the relief road project as much as possible. This will ensure that the Authorities (Mid Devon and Devon) are in the best position possible to secure alternative funding sources as they become available and will also support the continued progression of the J28 scheme.
- 5.3 A further update report/decision report in relation to the relief road will be brought before the Cabinet as soon as possible following confirmation of any decision in relation to our HIF re-submission.

Junction 28 Strategic Intervention:

- 5.4 Now that the SOBC has been submitted, it will be necessary to wait for feedback and decision from the Department for Transport regarding the J28 improvements funding request. If approved by the DfT in line with expectations established through the Network North programme announcement, funding will be granted to Devon County Council to prepare an Outline Business Case which will enable further development of the design and Mid Devon will remain engaged with this work in order to support and drive timely progression and,

ultimately delivery. Further reports will be brought before Cabinet as appropriate.

Cullompton railway station:

5.5 In terms of the railway station; officers will seek to continue to work closely with the rail organisations and Somerset Council to support delivery of the railway stations (at both Wellington and Cullompton). Current key milestones are securing land, determination of the Prior Approval planning application and Government's assessment of the Full Business Case with the hope and expectation that a positive decision will lead to timely delivery to achieve the target May 2026 opening. Again; further update reports will be provided at key milestones and will be used to ensure that the Cabinet remains update on progress.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The strategic transport interventions outlined above are critical to the delivery of the District's local plan aspirations and the enhancement of the quality of life of local residents. Officers will continue to liaise closely with partner organisations to pursue funding opportunities and assist in the schemes' timely delivery in order to support planned growth and development within the District.

Financial Implications

Cullompton Town Centre relief road:

The current shortfall for delivering the relief road scheme is in excess of £24m (accounting for the existing HIF grant of £10m plus existing S106 contributions). Given the importance of the scheme, this report details how officers have continued to actively explore additional funding opportunities to address this shortfall in order to ensure timely delivery of the relief road to support the delivery of planned growth.

Should the District Council secure gap funding from Homes England it will need to act promptly with Devon County Council to deliver the scheme within agreed timescales. Should any grant offer be made by Homes England, a further report would then be brought before Cabinet detailing the full terms of any offer and the implications to the district council. Details would need to be finalised, understood and approved prior to entering in to any revised or replacement Grant Funding Agreement.

For clarity at this point in time, it is worth noting several important points:

- MDDC expects to instruct Devon County Council (as Highways Authority) as our delivery partner and deliverer of the relief road. MDDC expects to cap its contribution to the relief road and that DCC, as Highways Authority, will undertake to deliver the relief road in line with the £37m construction estimate generated through the Highways Authorities consultants and as discussed with Homes England.

- The partners' (MDDC and DCC) would be held to delivery of the relief road by Homes England within set time parameters. Timely progress will therefore need to be made in land acquisition discussions and in construction works.
- HIF grant is predicated upon repayment of the grant funding through S106 receipts from development unlocked. MDDC will therefore need to seek to ensure the recouping of the grant funding through any S106 Agreements entered in to with developers. Any recovery will be subject to viability and would ultimately flow back to the Authority for investment in to other housing delivery projects within the District.

It is also worth noting that previous consideration has also been given to the potential for the District Council or County Council to fund delivery of the road in the absence of any grant funding by borrowing the required money via the PWLB (Public Works Loan Board). Modelling undertaken by officers has demonstrated that, whilst significant receipts could be generated from development to repay borrowing (via S106), significant uncertainty exists in relation to the timing of any receipts and the potential amount of any receipts. The level of risk that this would pose to the Authority, as a rural district authority with limited financial means, therefore means that this is not an approach which officers could recommend. High level discussions with the County have also confirmed that the County council would also not be in a position to proceed to borrow this required funding to unlock delivery on the predication of repayment through future S106 receipts.

Finally, it should be noted that if the request for the additional HIF funding is not approved by Homes England, the Council may be ejected from the HIF programme and the £10m secured under the previous Agreement will also fall away. It will be necessary to understand the full implications of any Board refusal as the position in relation to the submission becomes clearer and any implications known.

Junction 28:

Funding for the development of the Strategic Outline Case for improvements to Junction 28 was secured by the District Council from Homes England. If the County Council approach to Government, through the Large Local Majors programme, is successful, the estimated cost of developing the Outline Business Case of £2.25m would be funded by DfT. Given the identification of this project within the flagship 'Network North' programme prospectus which details reallocation of HS2 funding throughout the country, it is expected and hoped that this project will progress in a timely manner.

The total scheme cost for M5 Junction 28 scheme (incorporating the relief road) is currently estimated to be £195m although this is a high level estimate at this stage of the process. If the business case stages are supported, the scheme will be funded mainly from the DfT, but developer contributions may also be sought through the planning process, if required, to provide match funding. More details will be included in the next stage of the Business Case although it is noted that the original 'Network

North' prospectus referenced 100% grant funding for the initiatives and projects identified within the programme (i.e. suggesting no need for localised match funding.) This would be important to the District Council as it would support financial contributions via S106 to other important scheme components, such as affordable housing and public open space.

Cullompton railway station:

The latest work undertaken on the rail project has been funded by the Government's Restoring Your Railways fund. The Government is currently assessing the submitted Full Business Case to establish whether it will fund the delivery of the project. It is encouraging however, that as part of the Government's Network North announcement in October 2023 a funding-in-principle announcement has been made regarding both Cullompton and Wellington stations. It is hoped that the project can gain the necessary Government/Ministerial approvals to pass through the 'Decision to Deliver' gateway.

Legal Implications

Land acquisition with regard to the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road is currently being progressed by the County Council's land agent supported by the County Council's legal staff. A formal compulsory purchase order process will be initiated immediately following a positive outcome on funding. Although it should be noted that preliminary work regarding this process has already been undertaken in order to ensure swift progress should we receive funding for the scheme.

With regard to the Highways schemes all funding options will have legal implications and will be subject to legal agreement (e.g. Grant Funding Agreement, Section 106 etc.) dependent on the nature of the funding mechanism. These cannot be specified until the precise nature of the funding packages is known and further detailed information will therefore be provided for consideration and decision in due course and as exact detail becomes known.

No significant legal implications are anticipated at this time with regard to the Railway Station project other than in connection with land acquisition and technical licensing which will be undertaken by Network Rail.

Risk Assessment

Fundamentally, investment in strategic transport infrastructure at Cullompton is required in order to unlock and enable planned growth in line with the adopted Local Plan. Without investment and delivery of this infrastructure, planned growth cannot come forwards or may be delayed.

This is why it is imperative that funding is secured to support delivery and this is why officers from within the District council continue to invest considerable time and effort in seeking to secure the required funding – despite the fact that many of these interventions do not fall directly within the remit of the District council.

Cullompton town centre relief road:

Significant risk accrues to the Authority as a consequence of continued delayed delivery of the relief road and this is why the relief road features at the highest risk level ('25') within the corporate risk register.

Specific risk issues associated with continued non-delivery of the relief road include;

- Failure to unlock planned growth (in accordance with the Local Plan) owing to continued non-delivery of the relief road, including at the Culm Garden Village (a flagship Homes England Garden Community);
- Failure to support Cullompton to address wider issues, including Air Quality, in order to allow the high street to realise its full social and economic potential;
- Delayed or under delivery of new homes to meet forecast housing need/demand (noting that recent Council performance on delivery has been strong);
- A failure to deliver new homes, including affordable homes, to address the current housing emergency prevalent within Devon and the wider region, and;
- An increased risk of challenge to the adopted plan/infrastructure requirements by developers – including those who may seek to make speculative applications which do not accord with the spatial strategy as set out through the adopted Local Plan.

In terms of delivery risks (assuming full-funding of the project is approved/secured), some are noted within the body of this report, although it is worth noting that;

- The Council's (Mid Devon and Devon) will be expected to commit to delivery of the road within a set timetable and, unless proactively managed, risk will accrue to the Authority through any delay in development stages. Mitigations for this will be proposed, as appropriate, in due course;
- A fully quantified risk assessment has been prepared with regard to the town centre relief road and informs the construction cost estimate. The project is subject to its own risk management procedures as part of its overall project management;
- Work is currently being undertaken and continuing regarding land assembly which will de-risk the project and assist in unlocking the scheme's delivery/ultimately support the J28 Strategic Intervention project.

Junction 28:

The strategic highway schemes will unlock capacity at J28 M5 allowing for planned growth within the adopted Local Plan to come forward – including at the Culm Garden Village. This planned growth is considered vital to sustain the pipeline of housing delivery in order to meet future Housing Delivery need and support both the current, adopted Local Plan and the forthcoming Local Plan; Plan Mid Devon. Failure to deliver the strategic intervention in a timely manner may impact upon the ability to deliver homes within the required timeframe and this would significantly increase risk to the Authority, with the prospect of unplanned development coming forward in other locations within the District.

Ultimately, continued delay in progressing delivery of the Junction 28 strategic intervention would also undermine confidence in the Garden Village proposals and

could risk delivery in the manner previously foreseen. Continued engagement with Government is necessary to ensure that this does not occur given the strategic alignment in objectives relating to the delivery of significant numbers of high quality new homes in this location – with the Government having supported this initiative, virtually since inception, via the Homes England Garden Community programme.

Cullompton railway station:

Project risks regarding the rail project are reviewed regularly by the rail steering group and a risk assessment is an important part of the Network Rail's project management responsibilities incorporated within its Business Case. Risks are also reviewed as part of regular meetings with Network Rail and DfT Rail. The risk owner for the project is Network Rail. District Council officers liaise closely with Network Rail to assist in mitigating risks where possible.

The project is subject to external risks, including cost inflation, and is also dependent upon timely progressing of key workstreams – including negotiations with adjoining landowners. District Council officers regularly engage with Network Rail personnel in order to ensure that this issues are monitored, progressed and managed.

Impact on Climate Change

The relief road project is a scheme with planning permission which will deliver significant environmental improvements within the town centre, unlock significant development within Cullompton and reduce issues currently associated with congestion and pollution. The scheme is therefore considered, on balance, to be one which should be pursued and delivered in order to deliver the benefits associated with the scheme. However, the road will of course create new highways infrastructure which will continue to support the use of private and public vehicles, despite the associated environmental impacts of emissions from such vehicles.

An initial Environmental Appraisal has been undertaken of the Junction 28 scheme to identify sensitive environmental features which may act as constraints on the scheme. The M5 Junction 28 scheme will also be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment to support the planning application and identify appropriate mitigation where required.

The strategic case for the new railway station proposal is part of a multimodal approach to catering for the demands from new development in the area. Sustainable transport is an important part of that approach and the project will encourage pedestrian and cycle access.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The schemes are subject to Equality Impact Assessments which demonstrate how the scheme will reduce economic and social inequalities, or promote wider growth and economic / job creation opportunities particularly as they impact the most vulnerable residents or hardest hit communities.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

These infrastructure schemes contribute towards all four corporate priorities of economy, homes, community and environment and assist in the delivery of many of the aims identified within the Corporate Plan.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer:

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151: Andrew Jarrett

Date: 20th May 2024

Statutory Officer:

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer: Maria De Leburne

Date: 20th May 2024

Chief Officer:

Agreed by or on behalf of the Corporate Director: Richard Marsh, Director of Place and Economy

Date: 20th May 2024.

Performance and risk:

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager: Steve Carr

Date: 20th May 2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Adrian Welsh

Email: awelsh@middevon.gov.uk

Background papers:

Cabinet Report 7 March 2023 [230307 Cullompton TCRR -Cabinet Report V2.pdf \(middevon.gov.uk\)](#)