

Report for: Scrutiny

Date of Meeting:	9 th September 2024
Subject:	Cullompton Infrastructure update
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Steve Keable, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Richard Marsh, Director of Place and Economy
Exempt:	Not Applicable
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	N/A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation

This report seeks to provide members with an update on new infrastructure investment and delivery in Cullompton.

Recommendations:

1. That Members note the report.

Section 2 – Report

1. Background

- 1.1. Planned growth in Cullompton is dependent upon both major investment into infrastructure in the town and timely delivery of this infrastructure. Specifically, this includes the Cullompton town centre relief road and an upgrade to Junction 28 of the M5 motorway. Requirements around this infrastructure are set out within the Council's adopted Local Plan.
- 1.2. In addition to this, the Council has also been working hard with partners to promote and secure delivery of a new railway station within the town. Although delivery of the station is less essential in unlocking planned growth, it does play

an important role in providing transport connectivity and capacity and has an important role in providing an alternative to private car usage.

Updates on key infrastructure investments:

2. Cullompton Town Centre relief road:

- 2.1. Members will be aware that a bid was submitted to Government (via Homes England) in spring 2024. This bid sought the additional funding required to enable delivery of the relief road and was the latest attempt by MDDC and its partners in securing the balance of funding required to deliver the road (this following on from bids to the Levelling Up Fund, rounds 1 and 2.)
- 2.2. Progression and determination of the bid was delayed owing to the General Election called in July 2024 and, since that time, the Council has been awaiting confirmation of any decision in relation to the bid.
- 2.3. At the time of writing this report, the Council is still awaiting formal confirmation of any decision in relation to the funding request. However, it should be stressed that the Council does remain fully committed to the delivery of the relief road project.
- 2.4. Whilst awaiting confirmation of any decision in relation to the grant funding application, it should however be noted that the Council (Mid Devon in conjunction with Devon County Council) has made a significant and proactive step forwards in relation to the relief road project by commencing the first phase of works to enable the relocation of Cullompton Cricket club from their current pitches on the route of the proposed relief road to a new site on Horn Road (East Cullompton). These works commenced on 27th August 2024 and are expected to complete during September. This is a significant step forwards in supporting and enabling delivery of the relief road project.

3. Junction 28 Motorway Junction upgrade:

- 3.1. The upgrade to Junction 28 of the M5 is the crucial next steps in the upgrading of Cullompton Highways infrastructure after the delivery of the relief road. It is required to both address existing traffic and congestion challenges which blight the town, but also to support the delivery of the next phase of growth at Culm Garden Village.
- 3.2. A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) by Devon County Council (DCC) as Highways Authority in May 2024. This work was funded by Mid Devon District Council using funding secured from Homes England. The submission followed extensive public consultation and sought approval to progress through subsequent rounds of business case development and ultimately to full delivery of the junction upgrade.
- 3.3. At the time of writing this report, no decisions have been communicated in relation to the bid but some clarification questions have been received in relation

to the bid submitted. No timetable has been given for full evaluation and decision on the bid, but no decisions or announcements are expected before the Autumn. Members will be kept informed of any developments.

4. Cullompton station re-opening:

- 4.1. Members will be aware of recent announcements relating to the cancellation of the 'Restoring Your Railways' programme – of which Cullompton station was an integral part.
- 4.2. However, despite this, announcements do also seem to have allowed room for some projects from within the cancelled programme to continue – if sufficient funding can be found at a Governmental level and if projects can demonstrate good value for money/a sound business case.
- 4.3. In the case of Cullompton station; the project is at an advanced stage of scheme development, is well-supported, has a strong business case and has always had a strong benefit cost ratio (value for money assessment.) It is therefore considered that this project remains highly viable and that it would support and compliment other projects within the town – including the Garden Village proposals.
- 4.4. In light of this and despite recent announcements, officers will therefore continue to press the case for the Cullompton station in the hope that Government reviews during autumn will see value in continuing support for the project and enable delivery along the timescales previously set out.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as projects are already known about and accounted for.

Legal Implications

No direct legal implications arise from this report.

Risk Assessment

No specific risks are considered to arise from this report.

Impact on Climate Change

No direct implications arise from this report and impact upon climate change has been considered in detail for each project discussed within the report at other decision points/in other reports. However, the relationship between investment in infrastructure and carbon emissions/the environment should be noted.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Not applicable

Relationship to Corporate Plan

Timely delivery of infrastructure is essential to the Council in meeting its wide ranging corporate plan ambitions and in supporting delivery of planned growth set out within the adopted Local Plan. There is therefore a strong relationship between the projects discussed and the Corporate Plan.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 30 August 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 30 August 2024

Chief Officer: Richard Marsh, Director of Place and Economy

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 28 August 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 30 August 2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Richard Marsh, Director of Place and Economy. rmarsh@middevon.gov.uk

Background information