

LOCALLY-LED GARDEN VILLAGES, TOWNS AND CITIES.

Cabinet Member Cllr Richard Chesterton
Responsible Officer Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning and Regeneration

Reason for Report: To seek approval for making a bid for Government support under the 'Locally-led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities' prospectus.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

- 1) Approval is given for the submission of an expression of interest to the Government for support under the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) prospectus 'Locally-led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities'; and**
- 2) Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration to compile and submit the expression of interest documentation.**

Relationship to Corporate Plan: A partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver housing on land to the east of Cullompton will help realise an important strategic development site within the submission draft Local Plan Review in accordance with the Corporate Plan's priority of providing the homes Mid Devon needs.

Financial Implications: The Government is making available a package of support for the delivery of housing growth in connection with ambitious locally-led garden villages of between 1,500 – 10,000 homes including capacity funding, access to Government housing funding streams, road and rail capital programmes.

Legal Implications: None anticipated at this time.

Risk Assessment: Accelerating housing supply will reduce the risk of speculative housing proposals coming forward on unsuitable sites and appeals being granted on the basis of an insufficient housing supply in Mid Devon. A successful application will help realise development aspirations for land to the east of Cullompton as set out in the Submission Draft Local Plan Review at less risk due to access to a range of Government support measures including funding streams.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** In March 2016 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published a prospectus titled 'Locally-led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities' which aims to deliver accelerated housing supply through the support of high quality locally-led schemes that will realise a new generation of garden villages, towns and cities. It also follows through on a manifesto commitment for locally-led garden towns and villages in locations where communities want them.

1.2 An offer of support is made for ambitious locally led proposals for garden communities at a smaller scale of ‘villages’ 1,500 – 10,000 homes as well as larger ‘towns’ of more than 10,000 homes. The prospectus invites expressions of interest for Government support by 31st July 2016. We are currently investigating whether it would be appropriate for us to put in an expression of interest on land to the east of Cullompton in conjunction with the land promoters.

2.0 **BACKGROUND.**

2.1 The submission draft of the Local Plan Review identifies land to the east of Cullompton as a suitable location for strategic growth and includes a draft policy for the allocation of mixed use development including 2,100 dwellings with at least a further 500 post 2033. In addition a neighbourhood planning exercise for Cullompton is well underway and proposes spatial allocations including further land to the east of Cullompton.

2.2 In considering strategic options for the Local Plan Review, growth focussed upon land to the east of Cullompton received local support.

3.0 **THE PROSPECTUS.**

3.1 The prospectus sets out details for expressions of interest for support in respect of garden villages. It is this scale of project that is considered of relevance to proposals east of Cullompton rather than garden towns or cities (greater than 10,000 homes).

3.2 Eligibility criteria are summarised as follows:

- A new settlement of 1,500 – 10,000 homes as a new discrete settlement rather than an urban extension. Proposals in locations where there are already a few existing homes are not excluded.
- Expressions of interest are to be led by local authorities but can be supported from private sector developers or landowners.
- Strong community commitment to delivery.
- Demonstrate good, high quality design.
- Location on previously used land or council owned land is encouraged.
- Demonstrate part of a wider strategy to meet assessed housing need.
- Demonstrate how it will be delivered.
- Acceleration of housing delivery and additional housing supply.
- Include starter homes.
- Support small /medium home builders
- Support innovative forms of delivery.

3.3 The Government support package comprises:

- Delivery enabling fund and support –tailored package of support, including funding for staff, studies and assessments.
- Support from ATLAS (Advisory Team for Large Applications)
- Brokerage – Assistance in overcoming barriers through a cross government approach

- Access to Government housing funding streams – starter homes fund, affordable housing, help to buy: equity loan. Of particular interest is reference in the prospects to support in seeking funding from other sources of government funding, for example, the Home Building Fund, the free schools programme, **and other roads and rail capital programmes.**
- Financial flexibilities – support options to improve viability and cash-flow
- Planning freedoms – In exchange of guaranteed housing delivery, work to identify planning freedoms to support housing growth including ensuring there is greater ability to resist speculative residential planning applications.

3.4 The prospectus represents an opportunity to apply for Government support to help deliver the Council's and local community's aspirations for land to the east of Cullompton, which if successful will bolster resources for the project, reduce risk and could result in capital infrastructure investment through the Government's road and rail programmes. Improved road and infrastructure at junction 28 of the M5 has already been identified as being required and the Local Plan, both adopted and proposed via its review aspire to see the reopening of a Cullompton railway station. The prospectus therefore represents an opportunity to raise the profile of the proposals and gain Government assistance in its delivery.

3.5 Expressions of interest must be received by 31st July 2016. Whilst expressions of interest must be local authority led, they are able to be supported from private sector developers or landowners. This is proposed in this instance in order to ensure sufficient capacity is available to support the bid without impacting on the timetable of the priority work stream of the Forward Planning team – progressing the Local Plan Review. Support for the bid will also be sought from the Cullompton neighbourhood planning team and the Town Council.

Contact for any more information	Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning and Regeneration 01884 234346 jclifford@middevon.gov.uk
Background Papers	DCLG prospectus locally led garden villages, towns and cities https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508205/Locally-led_garden_villages_towns_and_cities.pdf
File Reference	None.
Circulation of the Report	Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration