

Culm Garden Village Stakeholder Forum

Notes of workshop held on 26th November 2019 at The Hayridge, Cullompton Relationship between Culm Garden Village and neighbouring communities and areas

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Graeme Barnell (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, MDDC) welcomed the group who also introduced themselves.

2. Review and summary of key messages

Tina Maryan (Area Planning Officer, MDDC) presented slides on the policy context, masterplanning process and work done to date, as well as the key themes arising from the Stage 1 public consultation on the Vision & Concept and Masterplan SPD Issues, Opportunities & Concept documents.

Questions were answered in relation to the potential allocation of the wider Garden Village through the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

3. Locally Led Discussion 1 – Cullompton

Cllr Gordon Guest (Chair of Planning Committee, CTC) presented slides on the key issues from Cullompton Town Council's perspective, focusing on the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan, tourism, cycle and pedestrian routes, aspirations for the country park, the potential for a sports zone, needs of an ageing population, business and employment, entertainment and community facilities, and the importance of east and west Cullompton being one cohesive integrated town.

It was suggested that lessons could be learnt from Cranbrook, in terms of what went well and what could have been delivered better/sooner. The group considered that delivery of early community infrastructure was essential including physical space for services such as health facilities and children's services. The Project Team is already engaging with health professionals to plan health services delivery and are looking at a whole range of health facilities.

Concern was raised that if new facilities are provided in the garden village, this will increase traffic on the roads as people move from the existing town to use those facilities. Good public transport is essential. The group agreed that transport and the potential impact of increased traffic should be considered across a wider area, including use of rat runs and necessary improvements to the local road network and minor roads.

It was suggested that there should be more of a focus on delivering social housing, not just affordable housing. Although this was considered to be a good aspiration, it was recognised that there was a need to prioritise funding.

Several participants had strong views on sports facilities being located at the centre of the garden village, rather than on the fringe. There was concern that the cricket and rugby clubs were looking to relocate to land within Kentisbeare Parish, on the edge of the garden village area, rather than to a sports zone that had been identified through the masterplanning process. Concerns included increased traffic and safety of pedestrians having to walk along busy roads.

The Project Team explained that the location and provision of sports facilities would be identified through the masterplanning process and that this may be in a sports zone, although what this might comprise and where it would be was yet to be established in detail. However, it is also recognised that Cullompton cricket club has to move quickly to find a replacement site and seed a replacement

pitch in order for Devon County Council to be able to deliver the Town Centre Relief Road in the timescale specified for spending the Housing Infrastructure Fund money. Therefore, it is very likely that Cullompton cricket club will need to submit a planning application for their replacement site before: the wider area of the garden village has been defined through GESP; and the masterplanning process has progressed sufficiently to start identifying with the next level of precision where a sports zone might go and what it may include. In these circumstances, the planning application will need to include information to justify the chosen location in order to satisfy planning policy. Therefore, any cricket club planning application in the near future would proceed and be decided upon separately to the work being carried out through the CGV masterplanning process.

The potential age profile of the garden village was discussed. Cullompton has an ageing population and the garden village will need to include adaptive housing and facilities for parking and storage of mobility scooters. However, new towns generally attract younger people and have a significantly lower age profile than more established towns. It was agreed it was important for the garden village to provide facilities to attract and cater for all ages.

4. Locally Led Discussion 2 – Kentisbeare

Cllr Queenie Broom (Chair, KPC) presented slides on the key issues from Kentisbeare Parish Council's perspective, focusing on the character of Kentisbeare, the importance of a buffer zone (and what this should contain), traffic and roads, facilities and flooding.

The potential for tourism was discussed, and the importance of Kentisbeare retaining its separate identity.

Issues relating to the capacity of Honiton Road to cater for additional traffic were raised. The Project Team confirmed that as well as the work being carried out on the strategic motorway intervention (Junction 28) and the Town Centre Relief Road, there was a need to understand the impact on other roads, including minor roads.

Steven Johnson, the 'Connecting the Culm' Project Manager, briefly explained the project and the intentions to work with communities to create natural solutions to flooding. Various events will be held between now and 2022. The whole catchment flood model will be completed by spring 2020 and will feed into the masterplanning process.

The aspiration for a country park with a lake to assist with flood management was discussed, although there is no detail of this as yet.

5. Locally Led Discussion 3 – Willand

Cllr Barry Warren (Chair, WPC) presented slides on the key issues from Willand Parish Council's perspective, focusing on the character of the Parish and new and approved developments, the sewage works and concerns regarding the possibility of pumping sewage 3km from the garden village, the potential for the country park and cycle routes to extend into Willand and traffic and roads.

It was pointed out that the potential area for the country park and associated cycle paths would be likely to extend into Uffculme Parish before reaching Willand.

There was a question about what, if anything, was being to improve the existing town. There are a number of projects taking place including the Heritage Action Zone and Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan, and the potential for partial pedestrianisation of the town centre.

Concerns were raised about potential (and existing) rat runs, particularly when the M5 is closed, including Stag Corner to Willand and Post Hill to Mutterton and beyond. It would be important to consider the whole road network when planning the garden village, including minor roads.

6. Summary and next steps

Next steps would be to continue with further engagement in the form of workshops on specific topics, with a view to drawing all this work together with other technical work to progress the masterplan documents.

It was agreed that the next workshop would focus on green and blue infrastructure.