

CULM GARDEN VILLAGE DELIVERY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting held on 22 March 2024 at 10 am

Meeting held via MS Teams

Present – Board Members

Cllr James Buczkowski, Cullompton Town Council

Philip Courtney, Kingacre Estates, Landowner Forum

Cllr Andrea Davis, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport, Devon County Council

Richard Foord, MP

Dominic Fryer, Danescroft, Landowner Forum

Ian Harrison, Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership

Jonathan Hill, National Highways

Jamie Hulland, Deputy Director – Planning, Devon County Council

Cllr Steven Keable, Mid Devon District Council (Chair)

Fionnuala Lennon, Homes England

Richard Marsh, Director of Place, Mid Devon District Council

James Turner, Lightwood Land, Landowner Forum

Eleanor Ward, National Highways

Apologies for absence

Cllr Nick Allan, Kentisbeare Parish Council

Cllr Queenie Broom, Kentisbeare Parish Council

Stuart Jarvis, Principal Transportation Planning Officer, Devon County Council

Steve Reardon, Cullompton Town Council

Also present

Paul Brockway, Project Lead, Hvas Associates

Tina Maryan, Area Planning Officer, Major Projects Cullompton, Mid Devon District Council

Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager Growth, Economy and Delivery, Mid Devon District Council

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone.

2. Minutes and Action Log from last meeting

The Minutes and Action Log were circulated before the meeting. The Minutes were approved and no points were raised on the Action Log.

3. Transport & Movement updates

M5 J28

Public engagement on the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) ran from 13 December 2023 to 5 February 2024. There was an online consultation and public events in Cullompton which were very well attended with around 200 people visiting the exhibitions. 868 public responses were received and 16 responses were received from local organisations. The headlines were 92% support for the Town Centre Relief Road, 95% support for improvements to J28, and 79% support for the preferred option. There were around 500 additional comments, key points raised being that the scheme is much needed due to levels of congestion in the town and dangerous queuing onto the M5 mainline. There was concern

around how quickly the scheme might be delivered and how much growth could be accommodated before the TCRR and/or J28 is delivered. Benefits for the High Street and local economy were highlighted, and concern was raised around the issue of parking/ loading in the High Street quickly resulting in congestion.

A report seeking approval to submit the SOC to DfT was taken to DCC's Cabinet on 13 March and was approved.

Jamie Hulland expressed thanks to all the team that had worked on the engagement. Timescales were challenging and a huge effort had been made by all. It was positive to get such a strong response and a clear direction of travel. DCC are finalising the SOC to submit in early April. The issue of loading in the High Street is a real challenge, it having a disproportionate impact on congestion in the town. There is a need to look at options to address this although delivery of the TCRR will help.

Cllr Davis was pleased that everybody is supportive of the scheme - lots of people turned up and it is good to have the community supporting positive changes.

Richard Foord confirmed he will be writing letter of support to be submitted with the SOC.

Cllr Keable said that the completion of the heritage project with investment of £2.1m for the refurbishment of The Bullring had made a dramatic improvement to the town.

Town Centre Relief Road

Meaningful discussions were ongoing with Homes England, who had provided capacity funding to update the HIF business case and make progress on land acquisitions. Urgency in the delivery of the TCRR remains both to improve the experience of people in Cullompton and to release the next stage of planned growth. Significant numbers of homes are in the planning system and surety is needed on delivery of the TCRR.

There was a discussion on land acquisitions and the relocation of the cricket club, including engagement with Tesco on the acquisition of their land.

Train Station

Ian Harrison reported that the station project is making its way towards submission of the final business case. It was hoped that it would be submitted by now, but looks like end of March for submission. Further work is being done on the economic case, which continues to look strong. If the final business case is submitted at the end of March, it would be programmed to go to DfT and Network Rail Boards over the next couple of months with the aim to get a decision to start delivery. With the slight delays, Network Rail are talking about entry into service in May 2026.

4. CGV Sports Hub opportunity

Paul Brockway presented slides on the opportunity for a sports hub to the east of the East Cullompton allocation. The cricket club would be relocating to allow for delivery of the

TCRR, and a broader opportunity to deliver multiple sports, possibly co-located with a new all through school was being explored.

MDDC has recently held a workshop with sports clubs, governing bodies, Sport England, Active Devon and Cullompton Town Council and Kentisbeare Parish Council. It was a very well attended and positive workshop, with clubs demonstrating a willingness to share facilities and work together.

Next steps included ongoing engagement with District Councillors and the Town and Parish Council, and establishing a steering group, with a view to putting together concepts and key principles, a framework plan, a delivery plan and governance arrangements. Planning applications would require supporting work and evidence.

There are immediate pressures: the replacement cricket ground is needed to enable the TCRR and will take time for the ground to be ready. There is also pressure on the rugby club due to existing problems with their current ground.

Homes England recognised it is an ambitious project that would also benefit the existing town and asked about delivery and formation of a business plan.

The first step is to set up a steering group. There is enthusiasm from clubs and governing bodies and they recognise the need for a delivery strategy. Funding opportunities were discussed at the workshop and the need for a business case was recognised to plan delivery and so there is something to take to funding bodies.

Land promoters/owners are very supportive and have been working with the cricket and rugby clubs for a number of years. The ECB see this as one of their strategic projects. The Devon Cricket Board have recognised the need for a County Ground and are looking for a location – this would be their preferred option. Smaller clubs could benefit from sharing facilities with larger clubs, for example, cricket and hockey to ensure each club was successful as part of a sporting community. The FA have said they have funding not just for football but to help other sports and bring sport together.

It is anticipated that it would be a 6 month process to produce a masterplan and delivery plan.

5. Project Overview & Delivery Plan update

Capacity funding update

Ongoing work needs funding especially if it is to be done quickly. MDDC have received funding from Homes England for work on the TCRR and J28, for which they are very grateful.

A funding bid had been submitted to Homes England for garden communities' capacity funding to part fund the project team, to produce a strategic design code, and to fund the sporting hub project. Homes England confirmed MDDC would be informed on Monday of the outcome of the bid.

Project delivery plan

The delivery plan was circulated with the agenda. The format has changed slightly to increase clarity. It is a live document that will continue to be updated regularly.

There was a discussion about the level of detail contained in the delivery plan and whether it could contain more, e.g. key infrastructure triggers in relation to housing delivery. Triggers for infrastructure delivery and delivery of housing need to be based on evidence which, for some key items, is not yet fully established (related work is ongoing). Triggers and a more detailed timeline will also be needed for and informed by the PDS workstream.

The current CGV Delivery Plan includes is a simple diagrammatic reflection of potential delivery across a series of key project workstreams. It adopts some currently understood thresholds for delivery of infrastructure relative to delivery of housing (albeit some of these may evolve). There would be a delay between granting planning application for housing led growth and delivery on the ground that reflects some of these infrastructure thresholds. Once there is more certainty over delivery of key items of (mainly transport) infrastructure and trigger points, timings can be further clarified and reported to the Board.

Therefore, the current Delivery Plan reviewed by the Board is a high level position statement based on forward trajectories and current assumptions and realistic aspirations. The delivery position across multiple development and infrastructure components (including some outside the garden village boundary) is complex - the delivery plan seeks to represent a snapshot of the current position for the Board to provide oversight. Behind the delivery plan sits further detail and variations with individual projects having their own delivery plans.

The current delivery plan is useful to the lay person and as an oversight document but there is scope for it to be supplemented for those who wish to take a deeper dive into this. This could include further information which explains the link between the delivery plan and the risk register, indicating key dependencies and the approach to addressing and mitigating.

The delivery plan shows the commitment of everyone working on the project. Significant amounts of work have been done and it is positive that planning applications are live or at pre-application stage to demonstrate delivery. It is useful to demonstrate that everyone is pushing the project forward to delivery.

Risk register

The risk register was circulated with the agenda. The Garden Community funding risk has been split out into 2 risk items - capacity funding/revenue and capital infrastructure funding - to mirror MDDC's corporate risk register.

6. AOB & Close

It was acknowledged that the next meeting on 21st June was the last one scheduled in diaries. It was also noted that some Board members found Friday meetings difficult to attend (even virtually) due to other commitments. Attendees were asked to consider the day and the frequency for future meetings and make any suggestions to the project team ahead of or at the next Board meeting. The potential for the next Board meeting to be one that is held in person was briefly discussed and the project team would reflect on the potential agenda items and make suggestions well ahead of the next meeting.

Notes on Tesco land (not to be included in the public version)

Homes England asked for progress on acquiring the Tesco land.

Tesco had so far refused to engage but MDDC were continuing to press them. If going down the CPO route, there is a need to demonstrate everything possible had been done to engage. As well as engagement with Tesco's land team, a letter has also gone directly to the Board from MDDC's Leader, the response to which was disappointing as it referred the matter back to the land team. Lack of engagement is not unusual for Tesco and it principally comes to back to the value they have attributed to the land, rather than its true value. Funding would be needed to press on with the CPO and be more aggressive with securing the land.

Lightwood and Danescroft are also trying to engage from a different angle to try to get momentum from their side as well.

DRAFT