

CULM GARDEN VILLAGE DELIVERY BOARD
MINUTES of a meeting held on 20 March 2025 at 10.30am
Meeting held via MS Teams

Present – Board Members

Cllr Nick Allan, Kentisbeare Parish Council
Helen Bone, Homes England
Cllr James Buczkowski, Cullompton Town Council
Philip Courtney, Kingacre Estates
Dominic Fryer, Danescroft
Ian Harrison
Steve Havers, National Highways
Rev Edward Hobbs, Stakeholder Forum
Jonathan Hill, National Highways
Jamie Hlland, Deputy Director – Planning, Devon County Council
Cllr Steven Keable, Mid Devon District Council (Chair)
Steve Reardon, Cullompton Town Council
James Turner, Lightwood Land, Landowner Forum
Neil Woofenden, Kentisbeare Parish Council

Apologies for absence

Cllr Andrea Davis, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport, Devon County Council
Stuart Jarvis, Principal Transportation Planning Officer, Devon County Council
Richard Foord, MP
Richard Marsh, Director of Place, Mid Devon District Council
Adrian Welsh, Manager Growth, Economy and Delivery, Mid Devon District Council

Also present

Paul Brockway, Project Lead, Hyas Associates
Tina Maryan, Area Planning Officer, Major Projects Cullompton, 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. There were no comments on the Minutes and Action Log.

3. Transport & Movement updates

Town Centre Relief Road and cricket club relocation

Significant progress is being made, and the project is keeping to the programme. This includes land assembly, detailed design, working towards procurement and going out to tender. The acquisition of new cricket club site is complete.

Acquisition of land and progressing the detailed design are priorities. Start on the construction of the road is targeted for summer 2026 with completion by winter 2027. DCC are looking to progress some of the Meadow Lane works and the junction with Exeter Road

next financial year. DCC are looking at options for the Exeter Road junction as revisiting the design of the junction came out strongly in the consultation.

All agreements between Homes England, MDDC and DCC have been executed, and a press release is being prepared.

M5 J28

DfT had an investment panel meeting in mid-February with a recommendation to approve the proposal to Outline Business Case stage and it is now with Ministers. DCC remain optimistic. The upcoming spending review is a potential time for an announcement and DCC would then have 18 months to 2 years to finalise the business case.

DfT's SW regional contact came to Devon to see how major schemes are progressing and DCC took the opportunity to bring him to Cullompton and tell the story around working together and the ambitions for growth at Culm Garden Village, linked to the government's agenda on accelerating housing delivery. It was a very positive engagement to build on existing momentum. DCC stressed that the Town Centre Relief road was a very good first step but progress with J28 cannot be delayed as planning applications are building up in the background.

Train Station

The project reached the stage last summer where the final business case for stations at Cullompton and Wellington was submitted to DfT, but no decision was taken because the election was called. Station designs are almost complete but are waiting for the comprehensive spending review. Government departments are indicating their priorities to the treasury by end of month/April, and a Treasury view is expected by the end of summer.

There has been good dialogue between Peninsula Rail and the Rail Minister. Peninsula Transport has been through the exercise of consulting on their strategic implementation plan. The consultation has concluded, and decisions were made at a board meeting last week to firm up priorities for the implementation plan. The two stations are on the list of projects which are short term strategic priorities, and also J28 is in the category of schemes under development and waiting for review by the government. There is no intelligence on how DfT are seeing things at the moment. In debates on devolution and in the current bill for railways it is clear that the government is seeing some of these project being delivered primarily through mayoral strategic priorities. Devon does not have a mayor so there is a need to push to keep these projects alive.

Last week an agreement was signed by DfT for new rolling stock for the SW Peninsula. This should mean that if the stations can be delivered, there will be a regular timetable of trains stopping at Cullompton and Wellington. The new timetable has already programmed in trains stopping at both stations.

Homes England have been invited to join the investment committee by DfT and will continue to make the case for J28 and are equally keen to support on the train station too. Homes England will continue to ask what they can do to support ambitions and will continue to work with MDDC and attend as many Board meetings as they can.

4. Other key workstream updates

Work is continuing on a number of interrelated workstreams which are important in order to progress planning applications.

Phasing & Delivery Strategy

The document will add more detail to what was set out in the Masterplan SPD, in particular the sequence of development in relation to infrastructure and phasing and delivery milestones. The strategy will also seek to set out a clear approach to community stewardship, but this element of the work is at an early stage and MDDC is working through various opportunities before engaging further with stakeholders.

Progress has already been made on revisiting earlier work and engaging with stakeholders to understand what is required and when it is likely to be required, so clarifying the approach to delivery. The document will set out how planning applications will deliver certain things at certain times so that quality and keeping to the vision are embedded from the early phases. At the moment, the work is on understanding key delivery questions and key pieces of shared or common infrastructure across land ownerships and is looking at what needs to be delivered in step with housing – a complicated picture to resolve.

The slide showing the infrastructure and facilities to be provided did not include faith, but it is on the list of facilities to be provided.

Strategic Design Code

The Strategic Design Code is looking to provide more detail to that set out in the Masterplan SPD and embed a coordinated approach to design considerations. The document focuses on strategic elements to drive overall quality and deliver a well-planned scheme. The Code seeks to respond to current issues such as climate change, net zero, and patterns of working and living, and to set a common language to design. The document will be a material consideration in determination of planning applications. The work is being carried out by LDA Design who are the same consultants that produced the Masterplan SPD which gives an element of continuity. The document is not yet ready to be shared, but the intention is to engage with stakeholders once there is a more worked up draft to gain broader input into document.

Planning Applications

Planning applications have been received for the majority of the allocation area. These will need to deliver a suite of facilities and infrastructure across the allocation, and wider.

Sports Hub

The Masterplan SPD poses the question of the long term potential of the area between Horn Road and Dead Lane and whether it could include sporting infrastructure. The Masterplan SPD is flexible on sports provision and allows a dispersed approach within community greens, but also permits off-site provision, such as in the area shown. Planning policy and the Mid Devon Playing Pitch Strategy sets out requirements for sports pitches. There is a substantial set of requirements for just the Local Plan allocation, but longer term there

would be a further requirement for additional facilities. A number of conversations have taken place with various clubs and governing bodies, as well as other key stakeholders and a steering group set up. At the steering group meetings, there was broad agreement that a potential sports hub is worth exploring but needed specialist input to understand how it might work spatially and in terms of delivery.

Consultants were commissioned to carry out this work and good progress has been made. Initial concepts have been produced for sports and recreation, including green open space, an opportunity to include park run and to provide a buffer between the facilities and Kentisbeare village. The area also provides an opportunity for a future all-through school to be co-located with the sports hub. The plans are a blueprint only and will rely on clubs and governing bodies to help to implement and deliver the facilities.

Work not finalised yet but good progress. Have initial concepts for sports and recreation, including green open space, opportunity for park run etc, and provide a buffer between the facilities and Kentisbeare village. Also provides an opportunity for future all through school to be co-located with the sports hub. MDDC will engage further with Kentisbeare on the buffer area.

5. Project overview & Delivery Plan

Project delivery plan review

The project delivery plan was circulated with agenda. The Delivery plan maps out potential timescales and stages of work for each workstream, leading towards delivery of the scheme. Many of the workstreams are interdependent with each other.

Key milestones and dependencies and risk register

These documents were circulated with agenda, and reflect what key dependencies are in the project plan, as well as the key risks

6. AOB & close

The next meeting will be 20 June 2025 at 2-4 pm – hopefully timed to coincide with the government's spending review.

A list of further meeting dates will be circulated.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.