

CULM GARDEN VILLAGE DELIVERY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting held on 25 September 2025 at 2pm

Meeting held via MS Teams

Present – Board Members

Cllr Nick Allan, Kentisbeare Parish Council
Cllr James Buczkowski, Cullompton Town Council
Phil Courtney, Kingacre
Alex Holburt, substituting for Dominic Fryer, Danescroft
Cllr Steven Keable, Mid Devon District Council (Chair)
Richard Marsh, Director of Place, Mid Devon District Council
Rev Edward Hobbs, Vicar of St Andrews
Steve Reardon, Cullompton Town Council
James Turner, Lightwood Land, Landowner Forum

Apologies for absence

Ian Harrison
Steve Havers, National Highways
Jonny Hill, National Highways
Jamie Hulland, Deputy Director Climate Change, Environment & Transport, Devon County Council
Stuart Jarvis, Principal Transportation Planning Officer, Devon County Council
Cllr Dan Thomas, Cabinet Member for Highways, Devon County Council
Neil Woofenden, Kentisbeare Parish Council

Also present

Paul Brockway, Project Lead, Hyas Associates
Clare Manders, Hyas Associates
Tina Maryan, Area Planning Officer, Major Projects Cullompton, Mid Devon District Council
Adrian Welsh, 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. There were no comments on the Minutes and Action Log.

3. Transport & Movement updates

Town Centre Relief Road and cricket club relocation

Since the last meeting there has been good progress in all areas.

Linked to cricket club, conversations are progressing to ensure the project moves forward within the programme. The outfield has been inspected and confirmed as ready to play next season. Clubhouse work is ongoing. Demonstrable progress has been made in the last few weeks.

The relief road is still on target to meet the delivery programme, and it is expected to be able to go out to tender this year and complete the road by the end of the 2027/28 financial year.

Adjustments are being made to the junction with Exeter Road and Meadow Lane to respond to issues raised.

M5 J28

The government is reviewing all the projects on their list through the autumn with a decision expected by end of the year.

The response to questions from DfT has been submitted with letters of support from Richard Foord MP, neighbouring Councils, National Highways, Peninsula Transport and the East Cullompton developers. The questions covered a variety of topics including on the strategic case, support for the project, costs and funding including in terms of the local contribution achievable, deliverability, confirmation that scheme could start construction by March 2029 and the project's alignment with the government's high level missions: housing and economic delivery.

There is not much detail on what happens next, however the next step to continue dialogue with DfT.

The total cost of all projects on the list is about £3bn. The Councils are not aware of the total budget, but it is likely to be considerably less than £3bn. It is important to ensure that the scheme is projected in its best light which is why the letters of support are vitally important.

The Councils intend to continue lobbying and would encourage other agencies to do the same.

Richard Foord confirmed that the letter referred to a decision by the autumn, but he would be surprised if we hear anything before the Budget.

Helen Bone confirmed that Homes England have submitted their own supportive response.

If the project is not selected, this would be significant in a range of ways. National Highways have confirmed they cannot permit any more than 500 houses without the junction. The impact on delivery of the garden village is not clear as the majority of the allocated site and the remainder of the garden village is reliant on the junction. However, this significant housing delivery is dependent on junction, and the Councils have a strong case that aligns with government missions. From the list of projects, it would appear that J28 is the only one that is directly related to housing delivery and job creation, with the added incentive of delivering the sports hub.

If the project is not selected, the Councils would have to reconsider where the funding would come from.

Train Station

Network Rail has received confirmation from the Treasury that the funding has been approved. Network Rail are re-mobilising and are moving forward again. The funding window requires the station to open in spring 2028. There is a Metro Board meeting tomorrow so the Councils should start to have more clarity on the detail.

Community stewardship at CGV

Infrastructure delivery and placemaking

Paul Brockway gave a presentation on infrastructure delivery and its role in placemaking.

Strong local support is contingent on delivery of associated infrastructure in a timely way. A key role of the Phasing & Delivery Strategy is to help understand this in more detail. Delivery of infrastructure is crucial for placemaking.

The understanding of infrastructure delivery at key stages to be set out in the Phasing & Delivery Strategy will inform what is needed and when. The three key stages are set out as: 1) creating East Cullompton, 2) establishing East Cullompton and 3) completing East Cullompton.

The many inter-relationships and inter-dependencies make it quite complicated. The Phasing & Delivery Strategy is working through what this means and how it will work. Infrastructure needed for each phase is relatively consistent wherever these phases are.

Infrastructure divided into themes in the Phasing & Delivery Strategy: movement and transport, activity and landscape and green infrastructure. The Phasing & Delivery Strategy will ensure the right infrastructure is delivered at the right time – and from a placemaking perspective as well.

Within the Phasing & Delivery Strategy work, MDDC is looking at what opportunities there are for community stewardship of green space and community assets.

Community stewardship

Clare Manders presented the paper circulated with the agenda.

A key next step is to establish a working group potentially with a separate group for community engagement. The purpose of the group and its suggested composition is set out in the paper. The group could potentially have a broad remit, and a high number of contributors so there could be an evolving membership, with a core working group supplemented by others to discuss specific topics and stewardship opportunities.

Helen Bone said that Homes England has a team of experts on community engagement who could possibly be involved if they have capacity, and it was confirmed that MDDC would be keen to have them involved.

Edward Hobbs is keen ensure that that Church perspective is included. Ed Moffatt (Diocese) is involved in new community development across Devon and would be interested in playing a part in the spiritual needs of the new community. If the garden village is fully built out, it would be a Parish in its own right.

The next step is to call the first meeting of the working group. It was agreed that it was good to start these conversations now and make sure the community engagement project engages with all relevant stakeholders.

4. Other key workstream updates

Sports hub

Development of the sports hub is an active area of work at the moment. Positive conversations have been had with Kentisbeare Parish Council and good progress has been made on cricket as an anchor for the wider sports hub. Further engagement has taken place with both the England Cricket Board and Devon Cricket Foundation, including on the potential for a centre of excellence.

The ECB is presenting the opportunity to other national governing bodies and Sport England in October to start to broaden the sports hub project out to other sports and open the door to other funding opportunities. MDDC is continuing to liaise with clubs individually, but there has been no recent meeting of all the clubs together. MDDC is looking to have another meeting of the sports hub steering group with governing bodies and clubs after the national session – so end of October/start of November 2025.

The ECB sees this as an exceptional project and is fully embracing it, giving it energy and momentum. The sports hub is also an additional supportive aspect for the funding bid for J28.

Planning applications

Work is ongoing on technical level and the applications are progressing through the system. There is considerable collaborative work with the applicants to ensure the proposals reflect the wider ambitions for the garden village.

5. Project overview & Delivery Plan

Project delivery plan review, key milestones and dependencies and risk register

The papers were circulated with the agenda. Some of the project delivery timeframes have been extended a little, in part to reflect progress on J28 and the timeframes associated with that. However, the key milestones and dependencies have not changed. The risk register shows a reduction in risk in respect of loss of capacity funding for technical work to align with MDDC's corporate risk register.

There were no comments arising.

6. AOB & close

Future meeting schedule dates are agreed as:

Friday 12 December 2025 at 10am

Thursday 19 March 2026 at 2pm

Friday 19 June 2026 at 10am

This is Richard Marsh's last meeting with the Board as he is moving on to pastures new. The Chair thanked Richard very much for his professionalism, integrity and depth of knowledge and the Chair's overall good experience with Richard and whole team.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.