

CULLOMPTON TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE TO MDDC LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION (MARCH 2014)



PREFACE AND KEY CONCLUSIONS

In August 2013 Cullompton Town Council (CTC) wrote a report to MDDC in response to MDDC consultation: "*Cullompton Town Council aims for the development of Cullompton. August 2013.*" This report was voted upon and agreed by the majority of the town council. The position statements of the Cullompton 2013 report remain the same in March 2014. The Cullompton 2013 report raised concerns that most of the identified housing land was already under development and likely to be fully used long before the ten year period (up to 2026) was up, and there would not be sufficient development land from 2026 to 2036 available. It is therefore helpful for Cullompton that the MDDC January 2014 Local Consultation discusses housing development from 2014 to 2026, but also from 2026 to 2033. This enables the town to take a much longer view of development.

CTC is currently in the process of writing a Neighbourhood plan, of which MDDC are aware. The Neighbourhood Plan has several public consultations within the programme, but these do not coincide with MDDC consultation. However they do provide key statements in relation to the MDDC 2014 Local Plan. A summary of the conclusions of consultations to date is provided later in the Document.

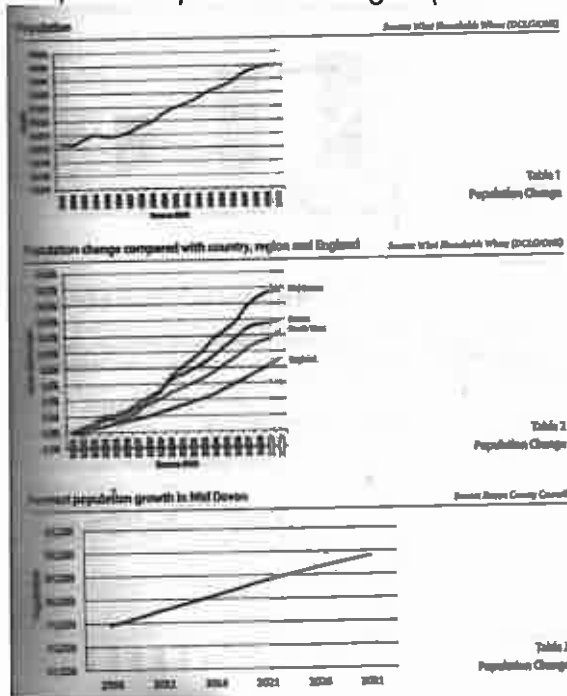
Major Conclusions:

- It is clear that Cullompton will continue to grow as a market town. The overall position of CTC is that the proposed growth of Cullompton over the next twenty years is to be seen as a positive move.
- Assuming housing development can be undertaken alongside infrastructure and commercial development, CTC favour Option 1 (Town Focus) and Option 2B (New Community at J28)
- CTC has concerns about Option 2A (new community at Junction 27). It remains unconvinced about the viability of the retail park and other commercial developments at Junction 27.
- Irrespective of whether Option 1 or 2B are taken forward, CTC wish to press for the development of Junction 28 to allow for existing and future development of the town up to 2036.
- CTC considers the development of the M5 corridor p31 policy S7 to be critical to the economic growth of the town and therefore DISAGREES with Mid Devon's assessment that it needs to reduce the commercial and retail land available in Cullompton.
- There are a number of additional proposals and issues relating to leisure, green space funding, land and infrastructure that CTC wishes to be incorporated into the Local Plan

BACKGROUND

The population graphs on MDDC Local Plan Review Option Consultation Document page 9 (copied below) indicate that the Mid Devon Population has increased more than the national average between 1999 and 2010. The population of Cullompton has grown by more than 10% during this time. MDDC suggest future population growth will be between 10% and 15% whilst DCC suggest a growth of 25% plus. It is therefore clear that Cullompton will continue to grow as a market town, whether this is through MDDC option 1 or 2B, and will therefore need substantial infrastructure developments.

Graph of Population changes (taken from MDDC Local Plan Consultation p9)



Population (source DCC statistics)

	Cullompton	Remainder	Town Area	East Devon	Mid Devon	Devon
2001	8,742	16,107	24,849	125,520	69,774	704,493
2011	9,687	17,864	27,551	132,457	77,750	746,399
change	945	1,757	2,702	6,937	7,976	41,906
% change	10.8%	10.9%	10.9%	5.5%	11.4%	5.9%

Percentage of Fuel poverty Households (source DCC statistics)

	Cullompton	remainder	Town Area	East Devon	Mid Devon	Devon	National UK
	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%	6.0%	6.6%	6.3%	6.1%

N.B. An increase of local employment in Cullompton where workers could walk to work might help reduce fuel poverty. This would also support the NPFf guidelines on sustainability.

Provisional conclusions of Neighbourhood Plan Consultations

Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base Summary Conclusions (Provisional)	Sustainability Objectives (Provisional)
<p>Natural & Rural Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cullompton's natural environment may not be of the highest status, in terms of statutory designations, but the open and natural environment surrounding the town of Cullompton is special • Protecting and enhancing the natural environment is important • The viability needs of the farming community must be understood and planned for • Public rights of way need protecting and enhancing and making accessible • Local green space should be a cherished facility and existing green space should be developed and improved • Flood risk is increasing and presents a significant constraint to future development 	<p>Sustainability Objectives (Provisional)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve and enhance sensitive or locally valued elements of landscape and heritage • Increase access to these landscapes and heritage without harming their overall value • Foster good care of local soil by encouraging traditional uses. Increase access to local food and/or the means to produce it • Maintain water supply and quality • Encourage a reduction in water usage • Preserve and enhance local natural drainage features • Preserve and enhance the biodiversity of the local area by managing existing areas sensitively and providing opportunities for new flora and fauna to thrive • Build natural ponds to attract wildlife and act as increased water storage during flooding
<p>Built Environment & Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town's heritage and historic environment is recognised although not fully appreciated • The need to conserve and protect the value of the historic core must be balanced against the economic well-being of the town centre • Air quality remains a detrimental factor that requires mitigation • The motor vehicle is a major impediment to town centre improvements 	<p>Sustainability Objectives (Provisional)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sensitive to the design context of various areas in Cullompton or where appropriate promote characteristic new design • Improve the quality of Cullompton's air • Reduce emissions generally and minimise exposure of local people to emissions • Improve local usage and/or access to renewable energy sources, in both the private home and public domain
<p>People & Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local housing need is not understood • The local housing market needs more understanding • A thorough review of potential housing development sites and their impact needs to be undertaken 	<p>Sustainability Objectives (Provisional)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable local residents of all social and economic backgrounds to access a range of appropriate high quality housing • Increase the choice of housing

Cullompton Town Council response to MDDC Local Plan consultation March 2014.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cullompton and its local economy needs a major boost • Many working residents commute to work • There is a need for more local better quality employment opportunities • Not enough local people regularly use the town centre services and facilities • New supermarkets have impacted on the town centre • More and better employment sites need to be made available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote economic growth that will benefit the local populace in the form of local jobs or services • Be appropriate in type, location and timing with respect to the above • Enable the growth of existing businesses whilst providing opportunities for a range of new ones • Contribute to an overall improvement in the skill of the workforce in Cullompton • Enable the core of the town to thrive as both an economic and social centre
<p>Highways, Transport & Travel</p>	<p>Sustainability Objectives (Provisional)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic in town is a major nuisance • Parking in and around the town centre is inadequate • Servicing arrangements for town centre businesses needs improvement • Most households use their car for most journeys, local and distant • The willingness of the local community to use alternative modes, if they were available, is uncertain • Cycle routes need improving and extending • The highway network must be made fit for purpose • Junction 28 of the M5 must be improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a more visitor and pedestrian friendly town centre • Encourage and facilitate greater non-car use for trips • Maintain a good quality and adequate public transport service • Improve motorway junction to support development and growth • Develop a more effective and efficient highway network
<p>Leisure & Lifestyle</p>	<p>Sustainability Objectives (Provisional)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor community facilities in Cullompton are first class and offer huge potential • The needs of young people need to be better understood and planned for • Local schools and health providers need to be involved in planning for growth • Better quality public open spaces and recreation facilities are needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the town retains or improves upon its supply of schools, community facilities and transport • Ensure community and leisure facilities are easily accessible for all members of the population • Increase opportunities for healthy recreation and leisure pursuits
<p>Our Community</p>	<p>Sustainability Objectives (Provisional)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cullompton is a good place to live, work and do business • There is localised deprivation • Local crime is not a big issue • Cullompton needs a more positive image that engenders local pride and attracts inward investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the identity of new and existing communities (distinct areas or groups within Cullompton) and encourage the integration between these • Reduce the opportunities for crime or anti-social behaviour

Arts, Culture & Tourism	Sustainability Objectives (Provisional)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town lacks a coherent arts and cultural agenda • There is significant tourism potential that could be exploited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Cullompton's role as a focus for arts and cultural activity • Encourage sustainable tourism

Consultations directly related to the MDDC Consultation Plan

- Cullompton Town Council met with Mr P. Williams planning officer for a long question and answer session relating to the MDDC plan.
- The Cullompton Traders met with Mr P. Williams planning officer for a long question and answer session relating to the MDDC plan.
- Cullompton Town Councillors attended the public meeting held in Willand Village Hall with MDDC. This was very busy.
- Cullompton Town Councillors attended the MDDC meeting at Cullompton Library. This was very busy with many members of the public attending and talking to MDDC officers and Town Councillors.
- Cullompton Town Council had a meeting in Cullompton Town Hall with representatives from the many local parish councils to discuss Junction 27 and Junction 28 developments.
- Several Cullompton Councillors had a meeting with DCC officers in County Hall Exeter to discuss Cullompton growth, infrastructure, Junction 28 and Junction 27.
- Cullompton Town Council met with the developers of Junction 27 who explained the Junction 27 project and answered questions.
- Cullompton Town Council has displayed posters of information, in the Cullompton Library for public information. They have also had a front page article in the Culm Valley Gazette.
- The Neighbourhood Plan group held an open public meeting to hear views from the public. They will also be conducting an online detailed survey using survey monkey and holding further public consultations as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan Guidance.
- So far Cullompton has received three negative responses to the large scale expansion of housing: (i) a farmer concerned about the impact on his farm, (ii) a person objecting to building on any green fields anywhere ever, (iii) A person suggesting Cullompton did not need to grow any bigger at all.

MDDC may have additional information on this that Cullompton does not have.

DETAILED RESPONSES

MDDC Policy S1-5: Sustainable Development, Development Priorities, Amount and Distribution of Development & Housing

A. General Comments:

The principles set out under sustainable development policy S1 and policy S2 are supported by CTC.

p20 S2 *"B) Building a strong competitive economy through access to education, training and jobs, the creation of new enterprise, economic regeneration and flexibility of uses to respond to changing circumstances."*

The above statement is very important to Cullompton. CTC believes Cullompton has a key location on the M5 corridor and major economic expansion is possible. It would encourage MDDC and DCC to actively work to help Cullompton *"build a strong, competitive economy"*.

p25 *"Cullompton is the second largest settlement in the district, but is close to and has less economic importance than nearby Tiverton. Cullompton has a good supply of readily available employment land with access to the M5 at Junction 28."*

CTC would wish to see MDDC and DCC make more use of Junction 28 and the opportunities it offers to benefit the town and the town hinterland. They would also like the current Highway Authority restrictions on Junction 28 that stop development removed so that development can take place. DCC had made it quite clear in their meeting with CTC that there will be no additional M5 junction (i.e. a possible J28A). Developments would be at Junction 28 or Junction 27.

p 23. *"The diverse development needs of the community will be met through the provision of approximately 8,400 dwellings and 154,000 square metres of commercial floor space between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2033. Development will be concentrated at Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton, to a scale and mix appropriate to their individual infrastructures, economies, characteristics and constraints. Other settlements will have more limited developments which meets local needs and promotes vibrant rural communities."*

CTC acknowledge the need for more housing in MD and the part that Cullompton needs to play in delivering this. It believes that at the current rate of house building most of the sites to the west of Cullompton will be full or nearly completed by 2026 and that the expansion along the A373 Honiton Road is a sensible and logical next step after 2026.

B. New Housing Developments

p20. S2 A. *A development focus at Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton as Mid Devon's most sustainable settlements, with long-term option of a new community in an accessible location (subject to consultation on Policy S30 and a limited level of development in identified villages. Option 1 refers to focusing on housing development in all three towns. Option 2A refers to a new community at Junction 27*

Cullompton Town Council response to MDDC Local Plan consultation March 2014.

Willand. Option 2B refers to a new community (approximately 2,940 houses) at Junction 28 Cullompton, CU11 East Cullompton Urban Extension from April 2026.

The Cullompton Policies map (January 2014) indicates in yellow existing land for development known as the North West Extension. This is likely to begin building in 2015. The Town Council have had one meeting with developers and would welcome further meetings as the master plan develops.

CTC support the expansion of housing and commercial land on the Honiton Road (2014 CU11 East Cullompton). They feel that in addition to the existing land allocated in the 2013 MDDC plan substantial further land needs to be allocated.

Site	Policy reference	Gross site area. Ha	Potential No of Dwellings as local Plan Options.
North West Cullompton	CU1	43.3	1,100
Growen farm	CU2	22.6	400
Land South of Tiverton Road	CU4	1.9	45
Ware Park and Footlands	CU5	2.1	38
Court Farm	CU6	1.4	35
Land at Exeter Road Al.	CU7	1.4	35
Bradninch Road	CU8	1.1	25
Land at Colebrook	CU9	16.8	300
Land at East Culm Farm	CU10	5.31	120
East Cullompton	CU11	181	3,000
Total		277	5,098

MDDC P64 and P65 chart of housing numbers

It is felt that the best location for substantive housing is along the Honiton Road the A373 (2014 CU11 East Cullompton). CTC also supports the use of further land identified at CU1, NW Cullompton, CU2 Growen Farm, CU3 Knowle Lane, CU4 South Tiverton Road, CU5 Ware Park, CU6 Court Farm, CU7 Exeter Road, CU8 Bradninch Road, CU9 Colebrook, and CU 10 East Culm Farm.

However, the Cullompton experience has been that small-scale, piece meal development has not always brought the appropriate additional infrastructure to the town. ***One advantage of larger-scale, long term development (as proposed in Option 1 or 2B) is that it will bring in much needed infrastructure, and can be planned for in the short medium and long term.***

The expansion of Housing through Option 1 or Option 2B or both would allow the Town to grow and bring in much needed infrastructure, particularly to Junction 28 on the M5 and the existing road network. Currently the Highways authority limitations on Junction 28 are stopping substantial housing and retail development of Cullompton.

This restriction of development is counter to DCC policies on economic development and MDDC aims to build a strong competitive economy. (MDDC p22 Policy S2).

The long-term agreement of housing on the west up to 2026 and on the east from 2026 to 2033 should enable Junction 28 and other road network improvements to be put in place. In addition a clear long term development plan to 2033 would encourage developers, of housing, commerce, office and retail to invest in Cullompton, particularly due to the M5 corridor effect. Furthermore, such long term development would benefit Cullompton in the provision of infrastructure (for example, by SW Water, DCC, internet and phone communications groups, schools, transport – cycle paths, buses and trains)

CTC is therefore supportive of Option 1 and Option 2B from 2026. Irrespective of whether Option 1 or 2B are taken forward, CTC wish to press for the development of Junction 28 to allow for existing and future development of the town up to 2036.

With regards to Option 2A, CTC has concerns about the retail park being proposed for Junction 27. It believes that the food produce section would close down the various Cullompton Markets. However the retail park ideas of an international standard concert hall, on par with the Bridgewater Halls Manchester and Sage Gateshead would be welcomed. If the concert hall was not built to this same exacting international standard, which is hugely expensive, it would be unable to attract international orchestra and opera and the main point of the proposal would be lost.

CTC has concerns about Option 2A (new community at Junction 27). It remains unconvinced about the viability of the retail park and other commercial developments at Junction 27.

MDDC Policy S6 Open Space

P30 policy S6 *“New developments will provide the following levels of onsite public open space:*

- a) On sites of 25 dwellings or more 20 square metres of children’s play space per dwelling and 10 square metres of informal open space per dwelling and;*
- b) On sites of 500 dwellings or more, in addition to criterion a), 40 square metres of sports provision per dwelling.”*

The MDDC policy S6 Open Space provides many opportunities for Cullompton. The Town already has a network of public footpaths and walks and a series of public walks leaflets. However, it also has a number of projects ripe for future development. CTC would suggest that rather than create lots of small new open space areas as identified in policy S6 that housing developer funding is used to improve and enhance areas such as the CCA fields, Improve footpaths by removing styles and steps and making public footpaths wheelchair accessible.

A. Leisure Facilities:

CTC would remind MDDC that after its survey of public open spaces in the Town in 2012. It formulated the following policy: To focus on the development of better larger play spaces rather than lots of smaller ones which quickly fall into disuse. These were presented to MDDC in the **Provision of Leisure Facilities in Cullompton May 2013** Leisure facilities document.

In this document, CTC put forward the following suggestions:

- to substantially expand leisure facilities in Cullompton to bring the town up to a similar standard as Tiverton and Crediton.
- to use all the Meadow Lane Land owned by Mid Devon for leisure development connected to the Leisure Centre and for this area to act as a focal point for the 12 plus age group.
- that these Leisure facilities should include tennis courts, climbing walls, Multi-Use Sports Area; fitness studios etc.
- identified the Linear Park in the North of Cullompton, the Upcott Field in the Centre of Cullompton and the Knights wood Park in the south as core play parks to receive investment and upgrading
- Cullompton has several leaflets promoting local walks, most of these walks are inaccessible to wheelchair users, and it would be helpful to develop some of these existing walks into wheelchair accessible walks as per Devon County Council guidance.
- to develop a new cycle route made from Cullompton that connects with the National Cycle Route 3 in Willand, enabling locals and tourists to access the wide range of Devon Cycle trails.

The proposal put to the NW extension developers to consider doing a land swap with MDDC Housing who own the land on Meadow Lane so that it can be developed solely for leisure would benefit the leisure centre, the secondary school and the community.

CTC would request MDDC to actively pursue this land planning swap, and incorporate the Meadow lane land into the MDDC Local Plan for recreational use only (eg. tennis courts, flood-lit MUGA etc). The land is currently marked as green Space in the local plan map but MDDC have got outline plans for houses. CTC would like the MDDC housing plans removed from Meadow Lane.

It may well be that as the NW extension develops further large play areas, incorporating play parks and football pitches or an all-weather MUGA would need to be developed. The Honiton Road may need similar development.

B. Cullompton Community Association (32 acre) Public Fields:

The Cullompton Community Association 32 acres of public open space is central to Cullompton as a growing town and yet remains under-developed. **There is no reason why housing developer green space funding could not be used to fund improvements to this site. CTC wish to see this option included in the MDDC plan.**

The 32 acres of the CCA fields are in the flood plain. They are regularly flooded and often, even in summer the water table is so high that the grassland remains boggy. It is an ideal site for improvement as a nature and environmental area, with ponds, and many better public access facilities. Because of its location close to the Town Centre and behind TESCO it receives a lot of public use.

The CCA have plans and maps for the development of the 32 acres of fields. Options include creating small ponds to attract wildlife, creating more walkways, perhaps a DCC style accessible circular route. Perhaps a fitness trim track that allows joggers and others to get fit using a fitness circuit. Such trim tracks exist in other parks, e.g. Ferry Meadows Peterborough. Housing Developer green space funding could contribute to bringing these improvements to the CCA fields, making a really excellent countryside park, with ponds to feed the ducks, more walks and seating, raised flower beds and an extensive range of environmental planting with fruit trees and bushes to attract wildlife. **This would be a very good use of housing developer led green space funding.**

The key dilemma is the Eastern Relief Road and the route it will take. However if the aim is to make the CCA an excellent countryside park then this can work in conjunction with the Eastern Relief Road project, and developer led funds be set aside for this use.

C. Other green spaces:

(i) Woodmill Hospital in Cullompton has many wheelchair-based patients who make use of the sports facilities at Culm Valley Leisure Centre to improve fitness. However, this group are barred from the beautiful countryside around Cullompton because the footpaths are not accessible by wheelchairs.

(ii) The River walk from Honiton Road to Old hill is beautiful, passing along the banks of the River Culm. If several housing developers green space funding were used to improve this walk removing styles and steps, replacing these with ramps and wheelchair accessible gates this would be a major improvement to existing green space rather than creating new ones. For example the developer of the Cummings Nursery site could substantially improve the public footpath that goes from Honiton Road to Old Hill, removing styles and steps replacing these with wheelchair accessible gates and ramps. This substantial upgrading of an existing "green space" amenity would be better than creating a new small play park for the local houses as there is already an existing play park. Previous developers in discussion with the Town Council indicated a willingness to improve this walk. We would encourage MDDC and the new developers to support this programme and write such support into the MDDC 2014 Local Plan.

(iii) Water meadows along Millennium Way. These are lovely water meadows, often underwater and separated from Millennium Way by a high bank. There is the opportunity to build a multipurpose public walkway cycle route below the bank, fully away from the road from Station Road to Willand Road. This would be creating a NEW GREEN SPACE in an area that is of no use for housing because of the flooding, but is scenically attractive.

This land is not in the MDDC Local Plan for development, but we would wish it included as a potential green space development, funded by housing developer funds.

(iv) Goblin Lane is an existing public right of way. It has several good view points from the hills above the town. Goblin way is within the North West Extension building programme. There are great opportunities to create a good, tarmac, landscaped, multi-use accessible footpath with benches and viewpoints. This would make good use of the S6 Green Space Policy, and be a more creative way to provide recreational space within that development.

Previous housing developments provided small play parks, MDDC is now trying to decommission many of these play parks in Cullompton as the high cost of maintenance and repairs makes them untenable. Therefore a more creative use of green space policy to improve and make wheelchair accessible footpaths around the town as per the DCC footpath guidelines would be of more long term "green space" benefit to the community. The Charity Countryside Mobility works closely with DCC to advise on improving accessible footpaths. There is no reason why MDDC could not involve these agencies in using the green space policy to improve and make accessible the many footpaths around Cullompton, working with the housing developers.

In summary, MDDC and DCC and house developers have substantial opportunities to improve the CCA fields, footpaths, viewpoints and recreation areas rather than create new ones. These improvements could also link with the Healthy Community requirements.

These priority issues are not currently addressed in the MDDC local Plan and CTC would like them included.

D. An additional potential multi-use Open Space:

The field next to TESCO is not identified in the MDDC plan for development. It is only identified as CU14 Eastern Relief Road. The potential for this site are:

- Eastern Relief Road
- Cycle route
- Bus station (see S9 response)
- New medium sized retail shops (see S8 response)
- New road link from Eastern Relief Road into Longbridge Meadow Industrial Estate enabling the entrance beside the Weary Traveller to be closed. (Longbridge Meadow is indicated as a potential railway Station site, so to locate a bus station in the same area is a sensible planning option.)

CTC would like this piece of land (CU14) added to the available building land in the MDDC plan, to cater for the options above.

MDDC Policy S7 &S8: Employment and Town Centre

P31 2.29 refers to the potential of developing the M5 corridor as a location for economic growth. *"Improvements to rail links and good connections between jobs and homes were considered important."*

CTC supports this view. It would like to see substantial economic growth around Junction 28, The Kingsmill Industrial Estate, the Cullompton Business Park, and larger retail spaces possibly near TESCO.

MDDC P65 3.41 *The employment land review has recommended a reduction in the amount of employment land delivered as part of the urban extension, now expected to provide 10,000 metres gross internal floor space.*

CTC disagrees with Mid Devon's assessment that it needs to reduce the commercial and retail land available in Cullompton. We consider the development of the M5 corridor p31 policy S7 and the employment opportunities it engenders to be critical to the economic growth of the town.

A. Job Creation in Cullompton:

The following bullet points emphasise a coherent plan to increase employment opportunities in Cullompton:

- Increase of land for industrial estates.
- Increase of land for new retail outlets.
- Improve and simplify planning for retail businesses within the core of the town.
- Market Cullompton as a place to attract inward investment.
- Expand the fibre computer connection to the Industrial estates and hinterland of Cullompton.
- Attract new businesses and new shops.
- Promote Tourism / Leisure in area, stressing for example that within 10 minutes' walk of the Cullompton Town Centre there is a golf course, fishing lakes, bowls, rugby, football, and cricket and rifle clubs. As well as many pleasant walks through hills and along the river.
- Look at developing the Culm River valley with proper walkways to attract tourists and locals.

B. Retail:

CTC believe currently empty premises in the High Street could be filled with additional restaurants, art and craft, "Niche market" shops. However, whilst every effort is made to attract shops into Cullompton High Street, many of these premises are small and have problems loading and unloading goods. There are many gaps currently in the shopping experience in Cullompton that fall into this bracket (e.g. clothing shops, stationary shops, electrical retailers, phone shops, garden centres, car sales/repair).

With a growing population, CTC therefore believe there is a need for some medium sized retail outlets in another location, such as at Tavistock (Devon) and Wadebridge (Cornwall) to enhance the smaller retail experience.



This picture is of a new shop development at Wadebridge in Cornwall. The white shop at the end is a large café restaurant. The café draws footfall. The shops along the right hand side are a clothes shop, a shoe shop and a general purpose shop.

Fosters chemist in Cullompton has about one third the floor space of these shops. New shops such as these with three times the floor

space of Fosters in Cullompton would be ideal for the town. They have dedicated rear loading areas and good public access in the front.

These medium sized outlets could be housed Exeter Road (CU7) (the old antique centre). With the new ALDI opposite, this is a potential good retail site within the town. Alternatively, new units could be housed on the field next to TESCOs. As such, these outlets would be close enough to the Historical Town Centre to support their viability and, with careful use of signage and extension of footpaths, to increase footfall.

C. Commercial Development and Business Parks:

CTC welcomes the idea of commercial development at a location close to the M5. It proposes that Junction 28 and the existing business parks at Kingsmill Industrial Estate, Cullompton Business Park, Alexandria Industrial Estate and the existing MDDC CU12 Weeks Farm are all developed and expanded to bring jobs to the town. This proposal is supportive of the NPFF guidance on significant developments being sustainable.

CTC therefore considers the development of the M5 corridor (p31 policy S7) to be critical to the economic growth of the town and therefore disagrees with Mid Devon's assessment that it needs to reduce the commercial and retail land available in Cullompton.

MDDC Policy S9: Infrastructure

Cullompton will continue to grow, with more houses and hopefully matching infrastructure. Infrastructure improvements depend upon how big Cullompton becomes but it is clear that continued growth will put pressure on a range of Cullompton services.

A. M5 Junction 28:

CTC note that this junction is currently running at high capacity. There are improvements with traffic lights being installed during 2014. However, the junction is a complicated issue to resolve, crossing as it does the M5, the railway line and the

river on one bridge. It also had very tight access to the M5 services and industrial estates. There is also concern regarding pedestrian safety. However, current Highway Authority restrictions on Junction 28 that stop further development.

Any substantial development of Cullompton (Option 1 or 2B) would need to improve Jct. 28 further than the existing improvements. In tandem, a concern regularly raised by CTC with DCC is that Jct. 28 prevents expansion of the Kingsmill Industrial Estate and other commercial development on the Honiton Road in the region of Mole Valley, restricting economic growth of the town and job opportunities. However, a new road into the Kingsmill Industrial Estate from the Honiton Road, A373, could mean that the existing left turn into Kingsmill could become one way, for left turn traffic only, with HGVs entering the A373 from a large roundabout somewhere beyond Mole Valley Farmers and progressing along the A373 to the M5, rather than turn across it at present.

CTC believe that substantial improvements to Junction 28, above and beyond those currently planned, are ESSENTIAL if either Option 1 or Option 2B are to be successfully implemented.

B. New Bus Station:

p 25 "The national Planning policy Framework (NPPF) advises that planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant developments in locations which can be made sustainable."

CTC are delighted that MDDC have included construction of a new Railway Station in Cullompton to support economic growth, commuters, trade and tourists. MDDC have included this in the Local Plan, this is positive. However, DCC have indicated that this is a long-term project.

CTC would like to see a NEW BUS STATION developed. This would be close to the M5 junction 28 to allow for National Express and Mega Bus to call into Cullompton whilst acting as a hub for local bus services. This could be built many years before a railway station is constructed. In particular it would act as a bus station for workers commuting to Exeter and Taunton and pupils accessing post 16 education in Tiverton Taunton and Exeter. An ideal location for the bus station would be in land CU14 Eastern Relief Road adjacent to the TESCO store. The TESCO store already has two good pedestrian routes to the town centre.

The bus station terminus is not currently detailed in the MDDC plan. Under the NPPF guidance that the fullest use is made of public transport CTC request that MDDC include a bus station for Cullompton in the MDDC Local Plan.

C. The Eastern Relief Road:

A report on route options has been delayed but is expected in the summer of 2014. CTC are aware that the cost of finding other land and relocating the sports facilities on the CCA were considerable and this would be taken into account when costing

the whole project. We are also informed that the Eastern Relief Road would be unlikely to start before 2020.

CTC strongly supports the need for an Eastern Relief Road as soon as possible to relieve traffic congestion within the town. This is not a unanimous view, as there are those opposed to the Eastern Relief Road going through the CCA fields.

D. New Road Link: Jonathan Guscott (MDDC) had indicated that given the right circumstances, strategic planning could look for a ROAD link between the A373 through the fields to Duke Street, Old Hill making use of the existing road bridge over the M5 and the rail bridge and eventually linking this with the Eastern Relief Road.

This link is outside the boundary of CU11 and CTC would like to see CU11 boundary extended south to include Duke Street / Old Hill and the M5 road and railway bridge, so that future developments could include this possible road link.

E. Other Highways/Road Infrastructure:

CTC wishes to see more **ROADS** capable of carrying high volume traffic such as Millennium Way and Swallow Way, providing a core critical road network for the new housing developments.

CTC would like to see the High Street become one way from the Manor Hotel to the Library with short term parking on one side of the road as is done in Tiverton. However, we understand that this road could never become fully pedestrianized because of the many lanes leading off High street with houses whose occupants need access, e.g. Middle Mill Lane.

Reduced HGV traffic in the High Street and short term parking should contribute to Town Centre regeneration and improve air quality.

Not currently included in the Local Plan, but supported by CTC:

- (i) Expand Knowle Lane alongside the rugby club into a two lane road with a wide pavement to provide access for further housing development at Knowle Lane and safe access to the Rugby Club and improved access to Swallow Way.
- (ii) Expand Ponsford Lane into a two-lane road ready for future housing development at Knowle Lane, perhaps with a roundabout at the Tiverton Road Junction with Ponsford Lane.

F. Effect of Closure of M5 on Cullompton

A key issue for Cullompton, unlike Crediton or Tiverton is the consequence of closure of the M5, due to accidents. At these times, Cullompton High Street becomes the only alternative route for M5 traffic. In the recent 2014 and 2012 floods

there were problems on the B3181 north and south of Cullompton. If that had coincided with an M5 closure there would have compounded the problem.

CTC feels that DCC and MDDC have not paid sufficient attention to the importance of this issue in the past in relation to Cullompton's Road network. It would therefore welcome a more detailed response in the MDDC local plan in relation to M5 closure and improvements needed on the strategic road network of Cullompton.

G. Education:

CTC have been informed that 6,000 new houses are needed to obtain a new secondary school. Therefore the planned growth of Cullompton (either Option 1 or 2B) is not enough to generate a new secondary school. However it is likely over time the existing secondary school (Cullompton Community College) will need to expand its buildings.

One option would be a "land swap" between the grassland at Meadow Lane next to the secondary school, which is owned by MDDC housing. If this land could be fully used for improved sport facilities then some of the school's existing sport land could be used for new school buildings.

Cullompton Town Council would urge MDDC to actively consider the Meadow Lane land swap to ensure the secondary school has land to expand onto in 2020.

CTC believe it is not realistic to expect Cullompton Community College to gain a sixth form at present as some 250 pupils are required in order to be viable. However it was possible for some post 16 courses to be taught at the school. This means that Cullompton needs to continue to have a good bus service to connect to major centres, Taunton, Exeter Tiverton so that pupils can get the bus to post 16 education. A Bus Station would assist in increased transport issues arising from increased post-16 education.

St Andrews and Willowbank Primary Schools are at virtual capacity. Neither site has room for physical expansion. CTC note that as Cullompton continues to grow, there is therefore an urgent need by DCC to obtain a new site for building a new 2 to 11 nursery and primary school combined. CTC also believe that, should Option 2B (CU11 Eastern Cullompton settlement) go ahead, a further primary school may be needed.

MDDC Policy S10 Environment.

Cullompton has some beautiful countryside, rolling hills, river and streams and an identified list of local walks. These public rights of way need to be safeguarded and enhanced through developer led funds. CTC believes this could be enhanced by making or creating an environmental area within the CCA fields along the river, the leat and along water meadows beside Millennium Way.

The MDDC policy S6 Open Space provides many opportunities for Cullompton. The Town already has a network of public footpaths and walks and a series of public walks leaflets. In addition the Town has the Cullompton Community Association 32 acres of public open space. **There is no reason why housing developer green space funding could not be used to fund improvements in the 32 acre CCA field. CTC wish to see this option included in the MDDC plan.**

The CCA consists of some 32 acres of green walkable countryside within the floodplain. When the Eastern Relief Road goes through the CCA field, **there should be consideration given to providing extra recreational public accessible land to offset that lost to the road.**

The expansion of housing at Knowle may require some recreational land to be provided. There is potential to develop the stream valley under the road bridge and make a valley walk along a tarmac multi-use path connecting Knowle Lane houses to the Town Centre.

The North West Extension, behind College surgery may require additional recreational areas, environmentally enhanced through planting. As well as a clear safe separate pedestrian routes into the town centre.

Long term it would be good to have a multi-use cycle path connecting Cullompton to National Cycle Route 3 at Willand and Tiverton Parkway. This could be an enhanced environmental feature, which also promotes tourism.

The open space policy, improvements to the CCA, improvements to public rights of way and footpaths, making them wheelchair accessible, and developing new green spaces could also link with the Healthy Community requirements.

MDDC and DCC and house developers have substantial opportunities to improve existing green space, footpaths, viewpoints and recreation areas rather than create new ones. **This issue is not addressed in the MDDC local Plan and CTC would like it included.**

SUMMARY

Cullompton's continued growth in housing needs to be matched by growth in infrastructure, commercial development and M5 Junction 28 improvement.

CTC believe that the issues raised and solutions presented as part of our response to the MDDC Local Plan Consultation form a cohesive, integrated vision that will self-support long term economic, environmental and employment benefits.

