

12th November 2019

Planning Services
Mid Devon District Council
Phoenix House
Phoenix Lane
Tiverton
EX16 6PP

By post and email to: planningconsultations@middevon.gov.uk,

Dear Sir / Madam

**Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan: Submission Version Consultation
Representation by Cullompton Rugby Football Club**

This submission is made on behalf of Cullompton R.F.C (CRFC) in response to the above consultation which closes on 15 November 2019. CRFC is supportive of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Cullompton but would like to ensure that the Club's future aspirations for growth are acknowledged and supported within the NP.

Growth of Cullompton R.F.C

As the town of Cullompton has grown, so has the rugby club in terms of both the number of players and supporters. The rugby club's facilities are also used by local schools and community groups. In its current location, there is no room for the rugby club site to expand, to meet demand, through the addition of further pitches and facilities.

Accordingly, CRFC are now considering potential options to relocate to a new ground that will provide them with the additional facilities to meet demand. However, to secure a new ground, there would be a requirement sell the existing rugby club site for redevelopment. The capital receipts gained will facilitate the re-location of the rugby club to a new site, where the level of facilities and number of pitches provided can be increased. In this regard, CRFC is considering the potential to a new site within Culm Garden Village, east of Cullompton.

Engagement with the NP Process

CRFC and its members have engaged with the Town Council and Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) at various stages throughout the plan preparation, including through attendance at public consultation events. This is acknowledged within the NP at paragraph 12.25, highlighting CRFC's most fundamental interest in the NP:

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"Whilst carrying out consultations for the Neighbourhood Plan we have been reminded that the current site and facilities enjoyed by Cullompton Rugby Club are a significant constraint on its growth and development."

The NP quotes a letter from CRFC's Project Manager to MDDC dated 16th September 2015:

"As a Club we are in desperate need of more pitches for all our players to be able to use."

Allocation of the Current Rugby Club for Residential Development

Given this, CRFC is extremely disappointed to discover that, while the 2019 'Submission Version' of the NP does not preclude redevelopment of the current rugby club site, it is not explicitly supportive as was the case in the 2017 'Pre-Submission Version'. The 2017 version of the NP included a specific policy (Policy WL03) in relation to Cullompton Rugby Club, which stated:

'Residential development on the Rugby Club site, as identified on map 10, will be supported provided the development is required to enable the Rugby Club to relocate to an alternative site within the Neighbourhood Plan Area that is better in terms of quality of facilities, size, suitability and convenience.'

The supporting text to Policy WL03 (in the 2017 document) clearly explained the reasons behind CRFC's plans to relocate to facilitate expansion. In the 2017 document, the Town Council agreed with the rugby club that *'it needs bigger and better facilities if it is to continue to be successful and serve the demands of the local population.'* It also noted specifically that the Town Council were supportive, in principle, for the development of land currently used by the rugby club for up to 280 dwellings.

It is unclear to CRFC why the Plan has been altered in relation to the redevelopment of the rugby club. Previously, the NP proposed an allocation supporting redevelopment to enable relocation, whereas now it is almost silent on such a proposal. It only briefly acknowledges that the current site constrains the growth and development of the club.

CRFC therefore considers that the NP should reintroduce a policy on the redevelopment of the rugby club. We are concerned that the NP, in its current form, does not do enough to give CRFC comfort that there are planning grounds for its relocation. The relocation of the rugby club is an aspiration of the local community that has not been recognised in the Submission Version of the NP.

Culm Garden Village

CRFC support the inclusion of Policy SD06 in the NP which relates to Culm Garden Village, the strategic allocation in the Mid Devon Local Plan Review to the east of Cullompton. In particular, we support the requirement for a comprehensive masterplan. This will allow the local community, of which CRFC is a part, to have input into the proposals. CRFC would seek to use this as a platform for the site to include appropriate provision for the relocation of the rugby club.

The relocation of CRFC to Culm Garden Village would comply with criterion (iv) of the policy, which states:

'Plan for complementary facilities in and adjacent to the housing areas that can serve the needs of the whole community of the neighbourhood area, including sports, education, health / wellbeing, community and faith spaces.'

We support the policy requirement for a masterplan which includes sports provision. However, we suggest the supporting text could be amended to reference CRFC's intention to relocate to Culm Garden Village.

Summary

CRFC are disappointed that there is no site-specific policy in relation to the redevelopment of the existing rugby club for alternative purposes to allow for relocation in the Submission version of the NP (2019). The 2017 Pre-submission version included such a policy and allocated the site for residential development. This would enable CRFC to relocate to a new site within the NP area that would be in line with the Plan's objectives for the Garden Village. We consider this policy should be reintroduced.

That said, we are supportive of the requirement for a comprehensive masterplan at Culm Garden Village and the inclusion of sports provision to serve the local community.

We trust the above comments are useful and will be taken into consideration as part of the plan-making process. Please contact me using the below details should you have any specific queries.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature.

PHILIPKERR FRICS

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a loop and extending downwards and to the right.

Appendix next page

Appendix – plan and aerial

Cullompton Rugby Club- extent of land in playing field use



Promapv2
LANDMARK INFORMATION

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Plotted Scale - 1:1706. Paper Size - A4



Extent of Rugby club land in relation to the surrounding planning position



