

What is the Cullompton High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)?

The Cullompton HAZ is part of a national project aiming to unlock the potential of high streets across England, enabling economic, social and cultural recovery. Cullompton is one of only 10 successful High Streets in the South West region to receive funding. The overall aim is to make Cullompton Town Centre a more desirable place for businesses, visitors, investors and local people by:

- Encouraging new and sustainable cultural activity in the high street areas,
- Helping to improve perceptions of the high street and its heritage
- Restoring and enhancing the local character of the high street area.

What projects is the HAZ undertaking?

There are 4 main projects that are being undertaken:

- Public realm improvements around the Higher Bullring
- A grants scheme for building repairs, historic reinstatements and shopfront improvements. This is mainly focused around the Fore St area of the town. Building owners can apply for grants of between 50-90% of the value of the proposed works.
- A cultural programme of activities in the town centre. We are working with creative Cullompton to fund a number of exciting events and activities to celebrate the town's history and bring culture to the town centre.
- An updated Cullompton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAMP) and a shopfront design guide.

Who is funding the HAZ project?

Grant funding of up to £1.1m has been provided by Historic England and matched with support from Mid Devon District Council, Devon County Council and Cullompton Town Council.

What are the aims and benefits of the Public Realm project?

The overarching aim of the project is to:

- Enhance the heritage setting of the town centre and the war memorial
- Reduce the dominance of motor vehicles
- Provide an extended space for community events and cultural activities while providing a focus for civic pride.

By creating a nicer environment, this will result in longer dwell times in the area and likely increased footfall. The ability to hold large cultural events will also attract people to the area.

What are the design principles of the public realm proposals?

- Reduction in car parking to create a larger public realm
- Improve the function of the space, making it less cluttered with more strategically placed street furniture
- Incorporating more green landscaping, providing low maintenance planting and more space to allow the trees to thrive
- Use high quality materials including natural stone that are appropriate to the heritage setting
- Create a more pleasant space for people to sit, providing robust, low maintenance and comfortable street furniture

- Create a new square framing the war memorial
- Create a larger public realm that can be better used by the markets and other community uses

Who is leading the project?

Mid Devon District Council is leading the project, but Devon County Council is designing and delivering the project. Going forward the County Council will be liaising with all stakeholders.

Why are parking spaces being lost?

The proposals include a reduction of 10 car parking spaces near to the war memorial. This is necessary to deliver the benefits of the scheme and create a more useable and enhanced public realm. A parking survey has been undertaken which demonstrated there was sufficient capacity elsewhere in the Bullring and in the local car parks.

With the reduction in parking spaces there will still be 27 on street bays in the vicinity (one hour max stay with no return within 1 hour). In addition there are 46 parking spaces in the St Andrews car park, where there is no charge for the first hour, £1 for up to 2 hours and £2 for up to 4 hours and 114 spaces (including 2 disabled bays) in the Forge Way car park. Charges are £1.50 for up to 1 hour, £2.70 for up to 2 hours and £6.00 for up to 10 hours. These charges are Mon to Sat 8am – 6pm.

Why is the bus stop being moved and provided on street?

Currently the bus stop is within a layby immediately in front of the war memorial (approx. 2-3m from the war memorial). Moving the bus stop west and providing on- street, allows the creation of a public square around the war memorial, enhancing its setting and providing a larger space for people to enjoy and the community to gather, capable of holding events such as the farmers market, remembrance Sunday, Christmas light switch on. Whilst many of these events currently happen, the larger space will facilitate greater attendance and allow other events to be held.

The centreline of the road will be moved over and there will be sufficient width within the carriageway to accommodate a bus stop and allow traffic to pass in both directions. The County Council have digitally tracked manoeuvres using the relevant vehicles to always ensure the safe passage of traffic in both directions without impacting on current traffic flows.

What happens if two buses arrive at the same time?

The current bus stop is designed for 1 bus and is used by service 1, which for most of the day is scheduled there at 14, 34, 54 minutes past each hour and service 373 which is scheduled there at 55 minutes past the hour. As two journeys are scheduled within a minute at 54/55 minutes past the hour, often the two buses are there at the same time. When this happens, the waiting bus blocks the road until the parked bus pulls off.

The new bus stop is designed for 1 bus, however there is the possibility that a second bus could pull into the adjacent loading bay, if it is free. This does improve the existing arrangement.

The County Council are exploring the possibility of rearranging the timetable to avoid two buses arriving so close together.

Will the revised location of the bus stop impact on the Tiverton Road Junction

The proposed works commence beyond the Tiverton Road junction, therefore this will remain unchanged. Visibility splays have been checked to ensure there are safe sightlines.

Is the public realm enhancements dependant on the Cullompton Relief Road

The scheme has been designed to be delivered in advance of the relief road, to bring benefit to the town centre now. The scheme still maintains the existing traffic flows.

Will the construction works cause disruption?

The construction works will unavoidably cause some disruption to residents and businesses but this will be minimised where possible.

The works will be undertaken in 4 phases. The initial phase comprises works to the highway, where the new kerbline will be installed, the pedestrian crossing relocated and the carriageway resurfaced. During this initial phase of works, there will be 3 way traffic management in place. This will last for 3 weeks. However the traffic signals will be removed during the morning and evening peak.

The other 3 phases will commence at the Tiverton Road end and work towards St Andrews Road. Traffic management on the highway is not necessary during these phases; however sections of the footway will be closed. Pedestrian access and loading/unloading will be maintained, but there will be some disruption to the properties that use the vehicle access to the area behind the Bullring and to the properties that front onto the bullring. The County Council will be liaising with residents and businesses to discuss and agree access arrangements.

The contractor will liaise with residents and businesses throughout the works to update them on programme and phasing.

Where will the contractor's compound be located?

The compound will be located at the far end of the St Andrews Road carpark. This is where the welfare/site offices/material storage/plant will be located. There will also be a small compound within the area of works.

What are the working hours?

The contractor will normally work Monday to Friday between 07.30 to 18:00. However, there will be elements that will be undertaken outside of these hours to accommodate the needs of the adjacent businesses. For example the shop entrances could be paved after 18.00.

Is the road being narrowed?

The current road width is being maintained, the new kerb line will be along the edge of the parking bays and to bus layby. However the centreline of the road is being altered.

What consultation has been undertaken on the scheme?

Consultation has been ongoing throughout the design of the project. Initial consultation was undertaken in summer 2021 to gather views on how the Bullring space is used and how it could be improved. Material was available on the Councils website and exhibition boards were provided at the Cullompton Community Centre and the Hayridge Centre. Additionally, three face to face public consultations took place held at the Cullompton Farmers Market, Art week at the Walronds and at Tesco's carpark in Cullompton.

In addition three further consultation events were undertaken during the autumn. These included:

- 'Autumn Fest' Farmers Market in Cullompton on the 9th October 2021;

- A 'walkabout' and plenary discussion of the Cullompton Town Centre Regeneration Partnership Group – 19th October 2021;
- A Town Centre Traders and Businesses Open Evening at the Hayridge Centre – 17th November 2021.

Further consultation was undertaken in summer 2022 to seek stakeholders comments on the concept design. The concept designs and feedback survey were available to view on the Council website and also at the Hayridge Centre in Collumpton.

Two events were also held where members of the project team were available to answer any questions on the proposals. These were held on 26th July (10am -1pm) at the Walronds Garden and on 30th July (9am -1pm) at the Farmers market.

Further meetings were held with businesses in September to better understand their concerns and follow up meetings were held in November and March 2023.

Further public consultation will be undertaken as part of the Traffic Regulation Order process. This will follow the standard TRO process and be advertised in due course.

What will the scheme look like?

The proposals will incorporate high quality materials. The materials selected will be appropriate for the heritage setting, suitable for a small market town, be durable and affordable. The paving around the war memorial will be natural stone, in random sizes, with a granite banding to frame the square. The vehicle access will also be natural stone as well as the banding around the tree pits. Elsewhere the paving will be a concrete paving slab with a yorkstone aggregate.

The benches around the trees will be curved stainless steel and around the war memorial will be stainless steel and hardwood. The remainder of the street furniture including bins, bus shelter, cycle racks will tie in with the benches to provide a comprehensive design. The planters are timber to match the benches around the war memorial and a light coloured stone elsewhere.

The stainless steel benches and street furniture have been selected because they are hard wearing, are low maintenance, will not scratch and are more resistant to sap from the trees.

What will happen to the markets during the works?

The Farmers market will be relocated to the Forge Way carpark and the Wednesday market will be relocated to the other side of the High street, outside of the Baptist Church.

Will the area be open to hold events during the works?

As the area will be a construction site, events and activities will not be held during the construction phase. However, space will be available around the war memorial for Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. The Christmas tree can be erected in late November and the Christmas lights can go in the trees except for the 3 trees nearest St Andrews Road, where construction works will be ongoing during December.