

# Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2033 Submission Version



Cullompton Town Council  
October 2018



## **Amendment Schedule**

|           |                             |               |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------|
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| Version 2 | Informal consultation draft | February 2016 |
| Version 3 | Pre-submission version      | October 2017  |
| Version 4 | Submission version          | April 2019    |
|           | Approved version (made)     |               |

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All individuals and groups involved in the production of this Neighbourhood Plan document have declared any relevant pecuniary or personal interests throughout.

# Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan

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# Foreword

Welcome to the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan Submission Version 2019

This is a plan for the parish of Cullompton that will guide developers and planners through the next twenty years. The Submission Version of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan and its policies have been developed through an extensive process of community dialogue and consultation. It reflects the concerns and aspirations of the community as expressed by the many groups and individuals who engaged in the surveys, public consultations, workshops and discussions with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group or Cullompton Town Council. The Neighbourhood Plan also provides a firm foundation for continued community involvement with major planning projects such as the Garden Village, and the provision of high-class sports and recreation facilities, which will become particularly significant in Cullompton given the extensive housing development anticipated over the next decade. The Plan also provides some protection as we move forward into the sphere of influence of the Greater Exeter Plan.

Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan has occupied us for much longer than anticipated because we wished to publish after the Mid Devon Local Plan Review had taken place. This extended period of preparation has enabled us to look closely at the impact of developments such as the North West Extension and the Garden Village, as well as how the Swimming Pool Project can best be supported.

We are grateful to everybody who engaged in neighbourhood planning for Cullompton over the past few years. You have all contributed to the evolution of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan in some way. There are restrictions on what the Neighbourhood Plan can do. It is at heart a planning document, not a spending proposal or even a wish list. Within the constraints imposed, we have tried to incorporate the spirit of what we have been told should be the direction of future development within the parish to ensure that it is a vibrant place to live and work and meets the needs of its diverse population over the next two decades.

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will be Cullompton-specific additions to the national and district policies that guide planners and developers. Every policy is intended to add value to existing policies and provide locally relevant context and reasonable requirements for future development that is consistent with national planning guidelines.

A special thank-you is extended to everybody who contributed to completing the task of producing the Submission Version of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan, particularly the members of the Steering Committee, our consultants, the working groups and the Town Council.

**Michael Speirs**  
Chair (2011 to 2015)  
Cullompton NP Steering Group

**Gordon Guest**  
Chair (2015 to present)  
Cullompton NP Steering Group

# 1 - Introduction

## The Community's Plan

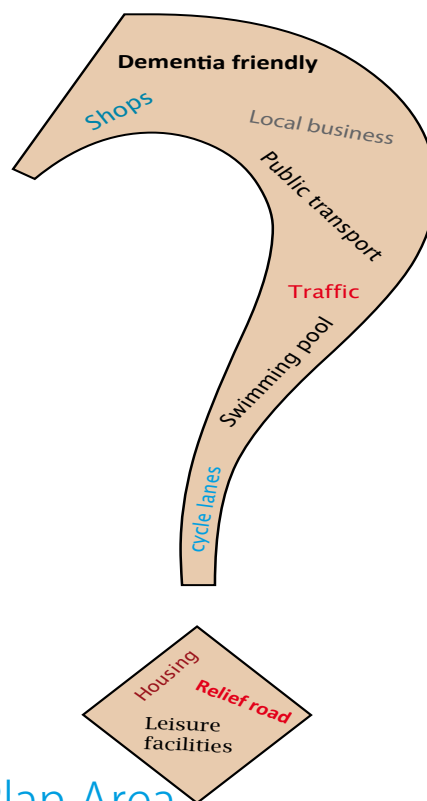
1.1 This Neighbourhood Plan is the community's plan. It represents the community's vision and priorities for how they would like to see the Cullompton area develop and change in the coming years and in doing so it sets out the local, neighbourhood, planning policies which will be taken into account as and when any proposals for development come forward in Cullompton's parish area.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is not a plan which can cover every issue identified as being important to the community: it has a focus on responding to proposals for development and the appropriate use of land. It puts us, as a community, in the driving seat when it comes to having a say over what, how and where development should take place where it requires planning permission.

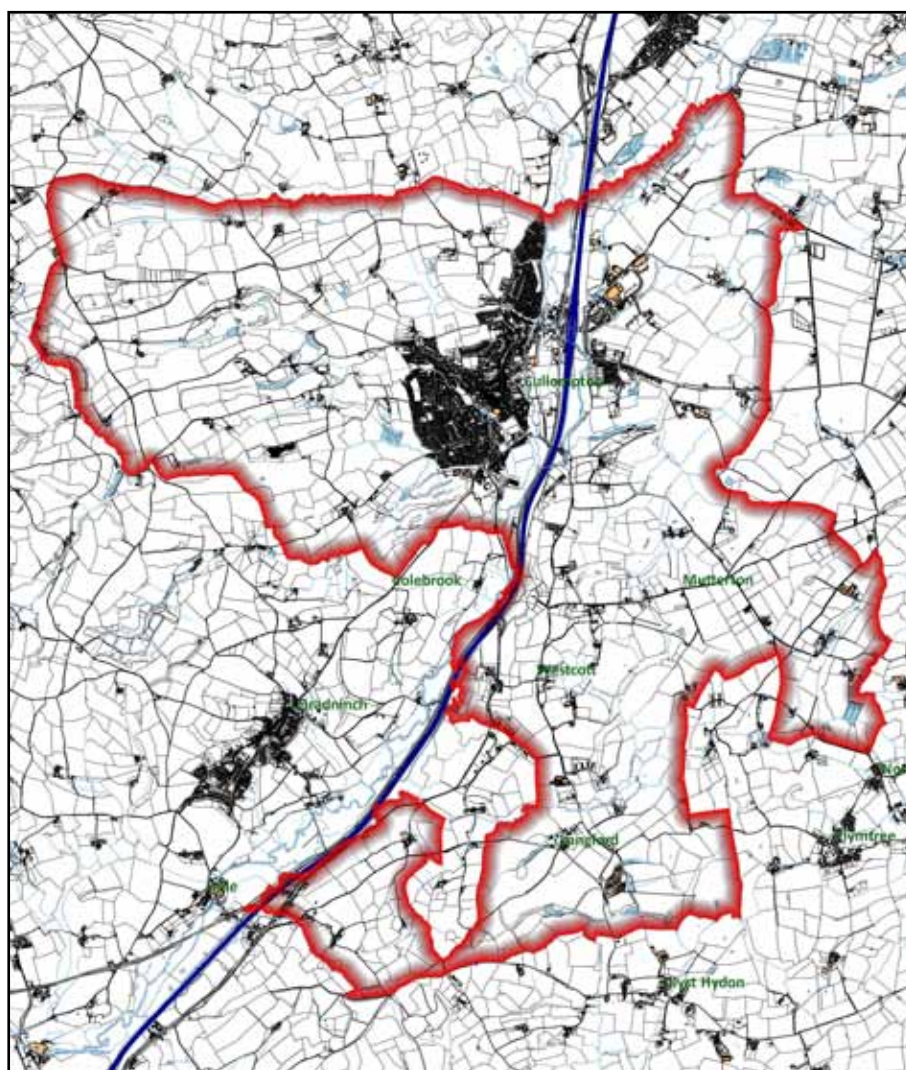
1.3 The Plan covers the period up until 2033, and is therefore in line with the Local Plan produced by Mid Devon District Council as the local planning authority.

## The Plan Area

1.4 The Cullompton neighbourhood plan area (the whole parish) was designated by Mid Devon District Council on the 30 April 2014. Map 1 below shows the extent of the area that is the subject of this Neighbourhood Plan and its policies.



The Plan Area  
Map 1: Cullompton Parish and Designated Neighbourhood Area



## **A Vision Statement for Cullompton**

Cullompton is a market town with a distinct character and identity rooted in a rich history that will be conserved as the town grows into the future as a vibrant centre for its residents and the surrounding rural area.

To meet the needs of a rapidly expanding population, the town will provide an excellent mix of housing reflecting the distinctive character of the town through varied external finishes and integration of the various styles and types of housing required to meet local needs and encourage families to settle in the town and become part of the community. The housing and amenities will integrate the needs of people and nature, retaining the feel of a country town through abundant use of trees, flowering-trees, hedgerows and imaginative use of water management.

The high street will be a pedestrian-friendly economic and social centre for the community, providing a mix of shops, offices, dwellings and places to eat. Further retail will be encouraged in the smaller trading estates bordering the town centre. The leisure pursuits of all age groups will be catered for by excellent sports and activity facilities and easy access to the natural, nearby features of countryside and water.

Taking advantage of its location, the town will be a communications hub with good links by rail, road, paths and broadband to the region and beyond.



# 2 - The Planning Process

2.1 The development and preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken by a Steering Group comprised of representatives of groups in the town along with Town Councillors and County Council officers.

2.2 It was understood from the outset that for the Plan to be truly representative of the planning issues of relevance in the area and to be the community's plan, we would need to carry out a thorough and on-going consultation process with those who live and work in the parish area of Cullompton. We also recognised that the Plan could not be properly developed without the input of organisations and agencies with a district, county, sub-regional or national remit and an interest in the area.

2.3 The process and the types of consultation exercise and discussion that we have gone through is documented in detail in a Consultation Statement, which accompanies the Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The key methods we have used have included:

- Public exhibitions, meetings and events
- Regular articles in the Cullompton Crier
- Use of social media (including website and Facebook)
- Local newspaper and noticeboards
- A community questionnaire delivered to all households
- Focus groups and workshops
- Survey and discussion with local businesses
- Directly contacting wider-than-local organisations and agencies (strategic stakeholders) which have an interest in planning issues in the area

- Consultation 'windows' during which comments have been invited on draft documents

2.4 The development of the Plan was based on a desire to be open and to welcome comments and contributions from all quarters. Our aim has been to encourage discussion and debate within the community about the issues and opportunities that face us and strive to achieve a community consensus. This Neighbourhood Plan represents the product of this process.

2.5 Having developed the Plan through this iterative and inclusive approach, the Regulations required us to carry out a formal consultation on the pre-submission version of the Plan and engage with the community, local stakeholder and strategic and statutory organisations. Having undertaken this consultation in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations, the Plan has been readied for formal submission to the local planning authority and examination of the Plan by an independent Examiner. After that, assuming that the Plan passes through the Examination successfully, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a public referendum where residents on the electoral register will



be asked if they support the final version of the Plan. If the referendum answer is a “yes” from a majority of voters turning out on the day, the Plan will be “made” (or adopted) by the local planning authority, Mid Devon District Council.

## Environmental Impact

2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan is also subject to sustainability testing as it is developed, to help establish the Plan’s positive or negative impact on the social, environmental and economic character of the parish area. This has been done through a strategic environmental assessment (SEA). The purpose of the SEA is to identify impacts and, if necessary, propose possible amendments to policies to lessen any potential negative impacts which could arise as a result of the Plan’s policies and/or proposals. The findings and the recommendations from the SEA is documented in detail in the SEA Report<sup>1</sup>, which accompanies the Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The on-going assessment process has influenced the policy content of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## The Neighbourhood Plan’s Status

2.7 The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan, once made, will be a statutory development plan. That means that its policies will have significant bearing when it comes to being used by the local planning authority at Mid Devon District Council to help determine proposals for development submitted through planning applications. It will form the local tier of planning policy across our parish area. It sits with the district-wide Local Plan, produced by Mid Devon District Council (also a statutory development plan) and underneath the umbrella of national planning policy in the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as the main planning policy documents relevant to the Cullompton area. Other important planning documents which govern specific issues are the Minerals and Waste Plans produced at the county-wide level.

2.8 The Neighbourhood Plan’s policies, however, cannot guarantee that a development proposal will either be refused or be granted permission; but the policies will carry significant weight, alongside policies of the National

Planning Policy Framework and the Mid Devon Local Plan when the local planning authority weighs up the appropriateness of the proposal in question.

1 [https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/Cullompton%20NP%20SEA%20Submission%20ER\\_v1.0\\_190107-1.pdf](https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/Cullompton%20NP%20SEA%20Submission%20ER_v1.0_190107-1.pdf)

# 3 - Structure of the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 Our Neighbourhood Plan has a locally determined 'framework' in the form of an overall vision for the Cullompton area and a series of aims and objectives which we have set for the Plan. These have been the subject of dialogue with the community and informed by the existing planning policies, plans and contributions of key organisations and agencies, with an interest in the area.

3.2 Having explained our rationale for these (in section 5, that follows), the Plan then sets out our local neighbourhood planning policies on a topic by topic basis, which we believe are necessary to supplement and complement to policies in the Mid Devon Local Plan to ensure the community's agenda for development and growth is achieved.

3.3 The community's agenda, derived through consultation, is reflected in the topics and their themes, and the broad aims and more specific objectives for each topic. The policies under each topic heading are those that we believe will achieve the objectives. Under each topic heading we have set out our neighbourhood policies, along with an explanation of the policy, reference to the national and local policies with which our policy aligns, and why we feel a neighbourhood plan policy is required.

3.4 It is important to note that whilst we have grouped policies under topic headings, when development proposals are being assessed, the whole plan (i.e. all policies) should be considered. Policies under one topic may also apply to proposals which naturally fit under another.

3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan finishes with an explanation of how we will monitor and review the Plan, a glossary which seeks to demystify some of the planning terminology used in our plan and a bibliography which includes the details of documents referred to and current web-links to those documents.

## Community Actions

3.6 Inevitably when carrying out a community consultation, matters not directly related to the use and development of land are raised by the members of the public. Those that are not land-use-related have not been disregarded. They have been referred to the Town Council for further consideration and action.

## Companion Documents

3.7 Several documents will be prepared to accompany the Plan. We are obliged to produce a:

- Consultation Statement
- Basic Conditions Statement
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.8 The Consultation Statement must satisfy the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, Part 5 section 15, and provide a document which:

- contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- explains how they were consulted;
- summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

3.9 The Basic Conditions Statement must be submitted alongside the draft Neighbourhood Plan. We are required to demonstrate how our Plan meets the Basic Conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3.10 The Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed by the local planning authority to consider whether it should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is considered likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. The process to determine whether this is so is commonly referred to as a 'screening assessment'. If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of those regulations. One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making

of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).

3.11 After discussions with the local planning authority, a SEA was carried out on both the Pre-submission and Submission versions of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA reports<sup>1</sup> can be seen in full on the website and are summarised in the Basic Conditions Statement.<sup>2</sup> Changes as a result of the recommendations in the SEA Reports have been incorporated in the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan.

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1 The reports can be viewed at: <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/documents>

2 The report can be viewed at: <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/documents>

# 4 - The Planning Context

## National Policy and Sustainable Development

4.1 In preparing the Neighbourhood Plan we are obliged, by law, to:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- ensure the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a "presumption in favour of sustainable development" (NPPF para. 11). It states that "neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies". The NPPF goes on to say that "strategic policies [in the Local Plan] should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans." Outside of strategic policies therefore, we are encouraged to shape and direct sustainable development in our area through our Neighbourhood Plan. "Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan" (NPPF para. 29). All references in this document are to the Revised National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> (published July 2018).

## Mid Devon Local Plan

4.3 The Town Council appreciates that, in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, it is a basic condition that the Plan should conform to the strategic policies of the development plan for the area i.e. the currently adopted Local Plan. During the preparation of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan we have referred to the Core

Strategy 2026, which was adopted in July 2007, along with the Allocations and Infrastructure Development Plan Document (adopted 2010) and Local Plan Part 3: Development Management Policies (adopted 2013). Together these comprise the development plan for the area. We have demonstrated in the Basic Condition Statement that accompanies the submitted Neighbourhood Plan, how our Plan and its policies is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the adopted development plan for Mid Devon.

4.4 Throughout the period in which we have been preparing the Neighbourhood Plan the Mid Devon Local Plan has been going through a review process that has involved several periods of public consultation. The resultant Local Plan Review will guide development in the District over the next 20 years. It is approaching the final stages in its development and adoption. "It aims to make sure that new homes, jobs and services required by communities are located in the most sustainable places. It will also help deliver the infrastructure, facilities and other development needed to make this possible."<sup>2</sup>

4.5 The Cullompton community has been engaged with this process in as much as the local planning authority has staged several consultation events in the area and had a dialogue with Cullompton Town Council. The Town Council has striven to exert influence over the development of the new Local Plan at all stages through written submissions. We have endeavoured to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan has remained in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the new Local Plan as well as the adopted Local Plan. To demonstrate conformity, references to the strategic policies of the new Local Plan are included, within the supporting statements that accompany the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.6 The Local Plan Review has been through four stages of consultation since 2013. It was submitted to the Secretary of State along with other relevant documents. In September 2017, however, Mid Devon District Council requested an adjournment of the Local Plan Hearings to

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collect/revise-national-planning-policy-framework>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=9842>

commission an independent report to review the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the proposed Local Plan, which itself was subject to a public consultation in the spring of 2018. Preliminary hearings for the examination of the Mid Devon Local Plan Review commenced on 20th and 21st September 2018. Hearings will continue into 2019.

4.7 Cullompton Town Council's position throughout the consultation process has been one of general endorsement of the strategic direction of growth proposed in the Local Plan Review. Cullompton Town Council is pleased that Cullompton will be a strategic development location.

4.8 Since 2013 the Town Council has been calling for additional land needs to be identified in the Local Plan for residential and commercial development. The second round of Local Plan consultation in 2014 left the option open; major growth in the Cullompton area was just one of four strategic development options. In response to the 2014 options document the Town Council clearly set out its position and the case for growth to be focussed on Cullompton.

4.9 Cullompton Town Council is seeking a cohesive, integrated vision that will self-support long term economic, environmental and employment benefits. It is the Town Council's belief that:

- the proposed growth of Cullompton over the next 20 years is a positive move
- the need for a Relief Road to relieve traffic congestion within the town is an imperative
- at the current rate of house building most of the identified 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
- Cullompton's growth in housing must be matched by growth in infrastructure, commercial development and M5 junction 28 improvement
- a new community east of junction 28 to allow for existing and future development of the town up to 2036 is supported provided that measures

are put in place to fully integrate this community with the existing settlement area

- the development of the M5 corridor is critical to the economic growth and prosperity of Cullompton
- with a growing population, there is a need for some medium sized retail outlets to enhance the retail experience and commercial appeal of the area

We are pleased that this 'approach' has been found preferable by Mid Devon District Council and is central to the strategic growth policies of the Local Plan Review.

4.10 As an endorsement of this approach, Mid Devon District Council submitted 'East Cullompton' as a potential development area to be advanced as part of the Government's 'Garden Village Initiative' (see glossary). The Government indicated in January 2017 that it was impressed with the prospect and potential of a 'Garden Village' extension to the east of Cullompton. It has awarded Mid Devon District Council a substantial package of support to advance the initiative.

4.11 Cullompton Town Council lent its support to the application, particularly because of its emphasis on infrastructure. The bid referred to:

- Junction 28 capacity improvements being essential to delivering the Garden Village Project
- Loan funding required for modifications to junction 28 to enable the project, swifter delivery, and continuity of delivery in association with a NW extension to Cullompton
- Brokerage with Highways England, Network Rail and the Environment Agency
- Access to new rail station's funding
- Access to starter homes funding

4.12 Garden villages are intended to be part of a new generation of locally-led development to meet local housing need, with a focus on creating attractive, well-designed places. One of the key benefits of garden village status is that it will assist in delivering urgently needed infrastructure for Cullompton. Mid Devon District

Council's first public announcement after its 'award' was to say, "we propose to prioritise any government financial support to highway improvements including the town centre relief road and M5 Junction 28 improvements together with measures to reduce flood risk".

4.13 Cullompton Town Council is happy to go along with the 'Garden Village' approach to development in east Cullompton if it helps achieve the strategic policies of the Local Plan, delivers a high-quality living environment and facilitate sustainable growth of Cullompton that will offer benefits to all the parishioners of the area. However, it is the Town Council's position that this can only be achieved if the east Cullompton growth area is conceived from the outset as an integral part of the town of Cullompton and not a separate settlement; and master-planned accordingly.

4.14 The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan is designed to be a document which will help facilitate change in the parish area. It seeks to:

- provide support to the strategic policies in the Local Plan and the general principles behind them
- set out a local development strategy that reflects how the community want to see Cullompton change and improve
- provide an additional level of detailed planning policies or a distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policy without undermining the policy
- introduce new local policies to ensure growth can be accommodated and bring net benefits to the whole area
- protect everything that is precious to us and promote its recognition and enhancement
- encourage community action to ensure growth brings the significant community benefits

4.15 With a focus on sustainable development it is inevitable that the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan concentrates on the urban area i.e. the town of Cullompton, and its fringe. In no way, should this be interpreted that the rural parts of Cullompton parish are not important. Indeed, the reason why there are so few neighbourhood plan policies relating specifically

to the countryside parts of the area is because we regard them as special and unsuitable for development of any scale. We support Local Plan Review strategic policy S14 which states that: "development outside the settlements defined by Policies S10-S13<sup>3</sup> will preserve and where possible enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification of the rural economy." Only development that is agricultural or considered "appropriate rural uses" in type and scale will be permitted.

## Cullompton Today

4.16 The starting point for the Neighbourhood Plan is Cullompton today. We have undertaken research and surveys to establish the 'evidence base' for the Plan. The local social, economic and environmental conditions, issues and opportunities as we have identified and interpreted them are described in detail in an Evidence Base Report<sup>4</sup>.

4.17 Cullompton is a historic market town and civil parish in the district of Mid Devon and the county of Devon. The parish area extends some seven miles along the valley of the River Culm, covering nearly 8,000 acres, with over 8,000 inhabitants (in 2011). The town's history dates well back into Roman times and it has been a market town since the 13th century. In the past the town's economy had a large component of wool and cloth manufacture, then later leather working and paper manufacture. A large proportion of today's inhabitants are commuters, but there is still some local manufacturing, including flour and paper mills.

## Natural and Rural Environment

4.18 The rural parts of the Parish fall into one of two, character areas. Land to the west of Cullompton is generally rolling farmland and valley slopes. The landscape to the east and south along the river Culm is categorised as 'lowland plains'. Cullompton boasts three 'county wildlife' sites and a number of other important wildlife habitat sites and within the parish area. The CCA<sup>5</sup> Fields host several notable species and habitats including:

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3 Policy S11 applies directly to Cullompton

4 The report can be viewed at: <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/documents>

5 CCA = Cullompton Community Association

- ponds, ditches and leats
- woodland and trees
- hedgerows and boundaries

4.19 In terms of public access, the Cullompton area has fewer public rights of way than most other Mid Devon parishes. The CCA Fields and High Banks, which runs alongside the River Culm are both popular open spaces for recreation walks and for young people to play.

4.20 Flooding a perpetual hazard in the Culm valley. There were significant occurrences in both 2012 and 2013. In 2009, it was estimated that within the Parish there were 499 current properties in flood zone 2 (at moderate risk of flooding) and 424 in flood zone 3 (high risk).

### Heritage

4.21 Cullompton Conservation Area is focussed on the town centre area. It has 50 designated heritage assets including the Grade I, St Andrews Church (15th C); the Grade II, Trotts Almshouses (16th C) and the recently renovated Grade I, Walronds (17th C). Cullompton also boasts a range of other areas and features of local heritage significance such as Pound Square, Upper/Higher Bullring and the cobbled pathway at the side of the White Hart Public House. The Town Team, of local volunteers, has instigated a variety of projects to recognise and preserve our local heritage.

### Housing

4.22 The parish population of over 9,000 is growing rapidly as a result of new housing developments. It is predicted to increase by 12% between 2006 and 2021. The most significant increase in population will be in the over 65 age group with a predicted increase of 52%.

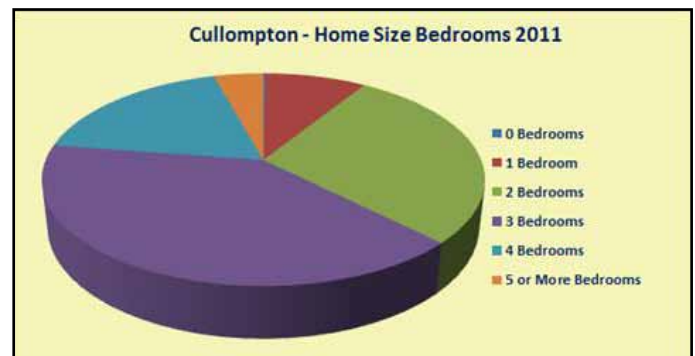
4.23 A review of available housing data shows that:

- there is a relatively high level of home ownership (69%) and correspondingly low proportions of social and private rented housing
- the average house price in Cullompton in 2016 is £191,300, which is considerably lower than the Mid Devon average (£224,673)
- there is a wide range of properties, except for the 1 bedroom-type

### Local Economy and Jobs

4.24 A district profile for 2011 showed that 70% of adults under the age of 75 were in employment, with unemployment relatively low (3%). The level of out-commuting in Cullompton is comparatively high for a Devon market town, with 65% of working residents of Cullompton (in 2011) travelling to destinations outside the town for work, such as Exeter (19%), Taunton and Tiverton.

4.25 The largest employers in the town are located on the Kingsmill Industrial Estate,



a 24ha area to the East of Cullompton. The main employers at Kingsmill include Gregory Distribution, Milk Link, St Regis (paper manufacturers) and an industrial clothing shop. The Kingsmill Industrial Estate benefits from close links to the motorway network and local distributor roads. Tesco is also a significant employer within the town.

### Retailing and Town Centre

4.26 Cullompton's shops are focussed predominantly on the High Street. Tesco and Aldi are the two main supermarkets in the town. The 2012 household survey indicates:

- For food shopping, 32% of residents visit the town centre daily or more than once a week
- Only 13% of shoppers visited Cullompton town centre more than once a week for non-food shopping purposes







4.30 There are regular bus services from the town to Exeter and Tiverton. Cullompton is currently lacking in dedicated cycle routes, but several potential new routes have been identified.

4.31 Cullompton's railway station closed in 1964. Local residents have campaigned for many years to have a new railway station. Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council are in support of this.

### Community Wellbeing and Leisure

- For visits to services, 30% of visitors use the town centre once a week or more
- 74% of residents never visit Cullompton town centre in the evening

4.27 In a 2010 bench-marking survey by the County Council, 75% of town centre visitors rated the town's variety of shops as either 'poor' or 'very poor'. 61% rated the town's leisure and cultural facilities as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Town centre retailing has had a difficult time over the past 10 years. The Community Survey of 2014 showed however that local people still appreciated convenient access to the shops and put forward several ideas of how Cullompton town centre could be made more attractive and successful.

### Highways, Transport and Travel

4.28 The M5, accessed via junction 28, is a major route for residents, commuters, visitors and commercial traffic. This junction is constrained and is often congested during peak hours, on all approaches - which causes further congestion and delay on other local roads.

4.29 An area of the town centre comprising the B3181 route, Station Road and a section of Tiverton Road has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area. The car still predominates travel patterns. 84% of Cullompton households have access to at least one car or van. 67% of the working population of Cullompton drive to work. There is a lack of off-road parking spaces, which often contributes to congestion.

4.32 Cullompton is blessed with some very good, new, community facilities such as the health centres, the Hayridge Library, Cullompton Community Centre and the Walronds. Several have come about largely because of community action. A community campaign to provide a swimming pool in the town is the latest campaign.

4.33 There is a shortage of sports pitches in the area, which could be even more marked as the population and demand increases. There are local football, rugby and cricket clubs in Cullompton, all of whom would like to expand their facilities to cope with a growing demand. The CCA Fields presently provides home for the Football Club. The Cricket Club is located on its own site nearby.

4.34 Cullompton Community College is the only secondary school in the Parish and will be close to capacity with 630 students in September 2017. It is expecting to accommodate a predicted rise to 708 students by September 2019. The two primary schools in the parish are St Andrews and Willowbank. The John Tallack Centre, owned by the John Tallack Youth Centre Trust, provides a vital focus for young people's activities.

4.35 Despite its appearance and appeal as a typical Devon market town, Cullompton is a dynamic and complex settlement area with its own unique set of challenges. These are reflected in the response we received to the Community Survey 2014<sup>6</sup>.

4.36 We have summarised below the context for the Neighbourhood Plan, which has been derived from our analysis of the evidence base:

#### Highways, Transport and Travel

- an inadequate road network that must be sorted out
- the need to reduce substantially the damaging effect of heavy commercial vehicles and private motor cars
- the need to facilitate cheap and easy movement and travel
- the need to improve the M5 access links

#### Town Centre, Heritage and Culture

- a town centre that still has a vital role to play
- a historic environment that needs respecting

#### Housing

- a housing market that needs more understanding
- a housing stock with some inadequacies

#### Natural and Rural Environment

- a countryside setting that needs looking after
- natural resources that need more management

#### Local Economy and Jobs

- a strong desire to grow the local economy
- a need for more and better jobs

#### Community Wellbeing and Leisure

- a desire for the highest quality of services and facilities
- public spaces that can be used and enjoyed
- the need to ensure the town provides

a safe and pleasant experience for all its citizens, users and visitors

4.37 In summary, the Cullompton area needs revitalisation. With pro-active guidance and intervention by the Town Council the process has already begun, but much more is to be done. It will be further stimulated by our commitment to a sustainable growth strategy. The Neighbourhood Plan is intended to facilitate controlled sustainable growth – of the population, the housing stock and the economy. This, we believe, will achieve the scale of revitalisation we seek and secure a bright future for one of Devon's best towns, its surrounding area and its inhabitants.

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<sup>6</sup> The report can be viewed at: <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/Cullompton%20NP%20Community%20Questionnaire%202014%20Report-1.pdf>

# 5 - The Neighbourhood Planning Framework

## Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan Topics and Themes

5.1 The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan has the following topics and themes:

**Topic 1: Sustainable Development.** Ensure all new developments contribute to the overall sustainability of Cullompton as a town and a community

**Topic 2: Highways, Travel and Transport.** Improve mobility, accessibility and reduce the overall use and impact of the motor vehicle

**Topic 3: Housing.** Provide new dwellings to meet a wide range of needs and demands

**Topic 4: Natural & Rural Environment.** Respect and appreciate our natural environment

**Topic 5: Town Centre, Heritage and Culture.** Protect and enhance our historic built environment whilst broadening the appeal of the town and its cultural activity

**Topic 6: Local Economy & Jobs.** Make Cullompton more business friendly and commercially viable

**Topic 7: Community Wellbeing and Leisure.** Provide first class local community facilities and develop community-based services that meet the growing demands of the community



## Deriving Our Aims and Objectives

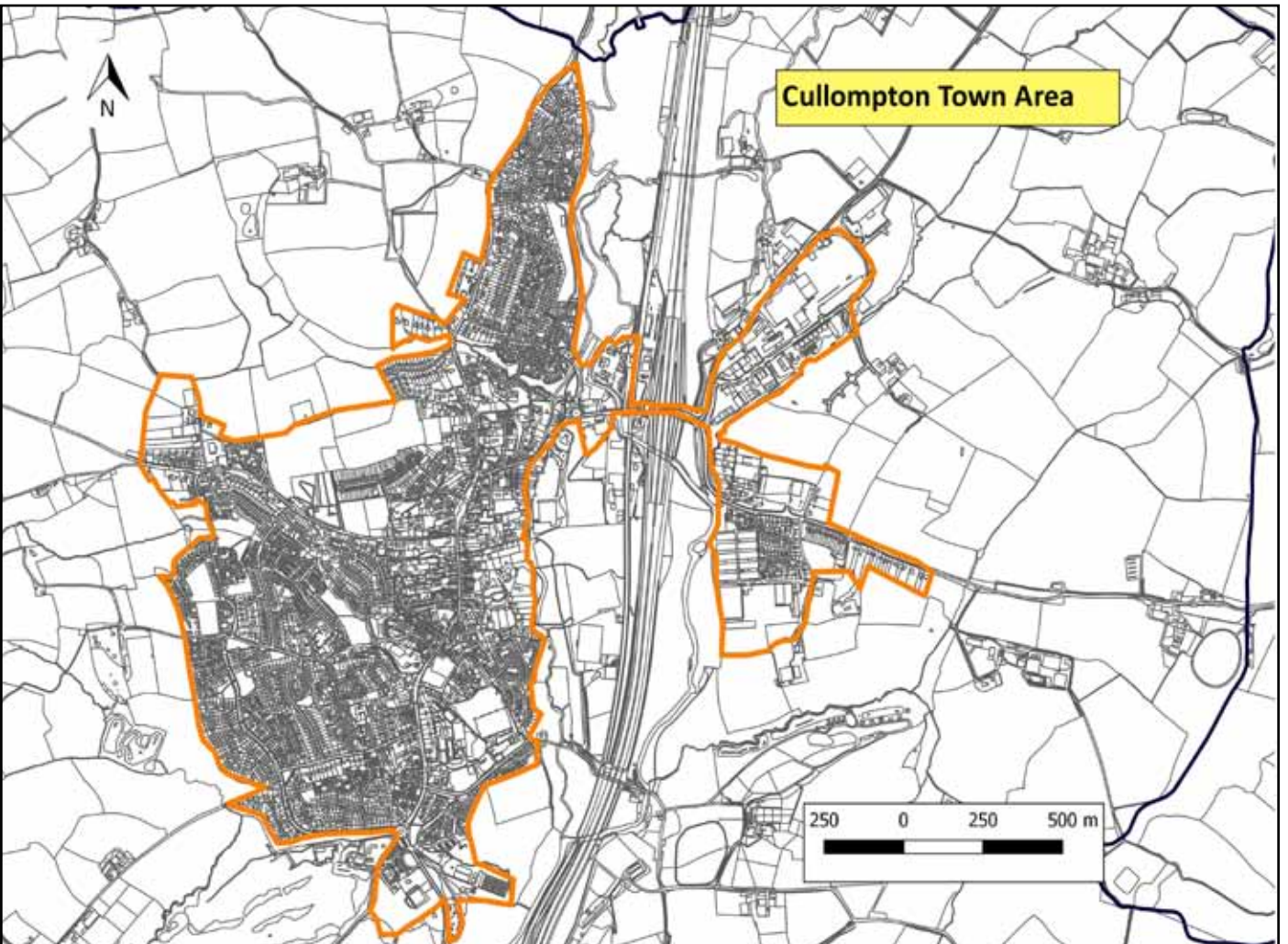
5.2 The process of arriving at an agreed set of aims and objectives started with a 'workshop' event at which the members of the Steering Group along with other interested members of the community took part in a session that examined the evidence and the response we had received to surveys and other forms of consultation. The process and outcomes can be found described fully in a Workshop Report, September 2014<sup>1</sup>. A draft set of aims and objectives were subsequently refined by the Steering Group before being the focus of a community consultation in Cullompton in December 2014. The response was positive and encouraging. Details of what local people said can be found in the Cullompton Consultation Report December 2014<sup>2</sup>. As a result of the reaction and comments we reorganised the topic headings and made revisions to some of the objectives. The final set we believe reflects the community's neighbourhood planning and development agenda. It is this agenda that underpins the neighbourhood plan policies.

5.3 Several objectives and policies relate only to the town area of Cullompton. The boundary on Map 2 below delineates what is meant throughout this Plan by the "town area".



1 The report can be viewed at: <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/Cullompton%20NP%20Workshop%20Report%20Final%20Sep14.pdf>

2 The report can be viewed at: <https://www.cullomptonneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/December%20Consultation%20report%202014-1.pdf>



Map 2: Cullompton Town area referred to in policies H03 and EJ02