

Report to: Cabinet
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Subject: Cranbrook Strategic Delivery Board

Purpose of report: To set out the key issues associated with delivering critical community infrastructure in Cranbrook and the subsequent challenges for future service delivery in the town.
To recommend the establishment of a Strategic Delivery Board to provide a forum, in conjunction with the County and Town Councils, for coordinating the delivery of assets and services going forward.

Recommendation: It is recommended that members;

1. Note the key issues associated with the delivery of assets and services in Cranbrook and that a further briefing session is held to explain these in further detail
2. Endorse establishing a Strategic Delivery Board and the accompanying Terms of Reference
3. Recommend to Full Council that the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and the Lead Member for Cranbrook are appointed to the Board and that it receives an annual report detailing the work of the Board and associated progress.

Reason for recommendation: To support the development of Cranbrook as a sustainable community and ensure that the growing population is supported by the timely provision of assets and services.

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Financial implications: The success of Cranbrook is a major element in facilitating and encouraging housing growth in the district and the council has benefitted financially not only through the S106 receipts mentioned within the report but both through the growth itself in council tax receipts as well as through government incentive schemes such as New Homes Bonus (£4.6m in 2017, £4.2m in 2018 in totality). The continued growth of the district and the future incentives form a vital element in the mitigation of the future financial pressures anticipated from 2020/21 as detailed in the medium term financial plan

Legal implications: Each authority must ensure that it is operating within its own Constitution/Standing Orders. Legal Services are happy to assist with any further advice needed but at this point have no particular comment to make.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk

Whilst the establishment of a Strategic Delivery Board is in itself low risk, the delivery of assets and services in Cranbrook is fundamental to the successful achievement of the vision for the town. The work of the Board will play an important role in coordinating delivery and, as such, in mitigating the risk that these are either not delivered or are provided in an unsustainable manner.

Links to background information: • [Cranbrook Development Plan Document](#)

Link to Council Plan: Encouraging communities to be outstanding; Continuously improving to be an outstanding Council.

1. Background

1.1 The construction of Cranbrook began in 2011 but the planning process stretches back well before then. The outline planning application for the first 2,900 homes was submitted in 2003 and planning permission was finally issued in October 2010. During this time it took four years to negotiate the accompanying s.106 agreement which is indicative of the complexity of this scale of project. This agreement sets out the requirements relating to the provision of key facilities and infrastructure needed to support the development of a sustainable community. This ranges from supporting bus services and a Community Development Worker through to the delivery of play areas and schools.

1.2 Cranbrook is being delivered through a commercially driven model with no public sector control of land. The s.106 agreement therefore plays a critical role in establishing the trigger points for the delivery of facilities including financial payments and the availability of land. It is, though, ultimately a relatively inflexible legal document which was negotiated in a different financial era. It has become clear that certain of the facilities that are set out in the agreement are either no longer fit for purpose or sub-optimal in the way they are currently set out/configured.

1.3 In recognition of the need to address this, there has been ongoing activity over the last 4 years to actively reinvent how these facilities come forward. This has focused on two key buildings – the Town Council offices in conjunction with the Library, and a proposed Health and Wellbeing Hub which would marry up obligations around children's and youth centre provision with primary care and a leisure centre.

1.4 Broadly speaking this activity has sought to align and combine facilities in a way that will enable financially sustainable buildings to come forward that in turn will support cost effective service delivery. This has also attempted to ensure that, as far as possible, the facilities are scaled to support the expansion of Cranbrook from the 3,500 homes that currently have planning permission to the circa 8,000 homes that are anticipated in the Cranbrook DPD. This will equate to an ultimate population of around 20,000 people.

1.5 The process of trying to marry up infrastructure and service requirements and ensure that these are future proofed, including in relation to as yet undetermined planning applications, has proven to be extremely complex. Ultimately there has been no resolution as to what form key facilities should take and how they should be delivered. Nonetheless we are now at a stage where critical trigger points are being reached. Most recently DCC has served notice on the Consortium regarding the delivery of the Children's Centre facilities. This requires the Consortium to agree the specification for the facilities, plus lay out, construct and complete them no later than 10 June 2021 or the first occupation of 2500 dwellings (whichever shall be the later). We are therefore in danger of defaulting to a scenario that may not be fit for purpose or affordable over the longer term.

2. Assessment

2.1 Given the looming trigger points we are rapidly approaching the point of no return. This should not be seen purely as an issue relating to built facilities. Rather it goes to the heart of how public services are delivered in the town to meet the needs of a young, growing population, including those with particular needs, both now and in the future. This is an issue which spans all three tiers of local government. Cranbrook Town Council will continue to play a more significant role in terms of holding assets and delivering services than other towns in the District.

2.2 Looking forward the objective has to be to find a cost effective and sustainable model for the delivery of public assets and services that is responsive to the needs of a growing population. This demands a clear corporate approach, not just between the local authorities but also with other key public sector partners such as the Clinical Commissioning Group.

2.3 The work undertaken in relation to Cranbrook's status as a Healthy New Town has highlighted the cross cutting nature of much of the activity involved. This in itself is symptomatic of the fact that the key determinants of good health are themselves wide ranging, spanning activity and leisure (District), ensuring the children get the best start in life (County) and working closely with the schools. This is aside from any mainstream primary care or public health service.

2.4 To date efforts to deliver facilities in the town centre have highlighted a number of key issues that need to be resolved upfront in order to expedite successful delivery. These include a clear understanding of;

- the strategic business case
- who the client is
- the business plan
- the brief and specification
- the budget and funding package
- procurement strategy
- project management and delivery
- ownership and management of facilities
- the ongoing service delivery model and associated costs

2.5 These requirements may sound basic but in an environment where the Consortium are likely to have an ongoing role and involvement and there is a need to future proof the facilities to cater for a growing population, it is surprisingly complex. Clear leadership and direction is required in order to successfully resolve these issues.

3. Proposal

3.1 In order to provide oversight and ensure that the three tiers of local government can speak with one voice it is proposed to constitute a Strategic Delivery Board to focus on the delivery of future assets and services for Cranbrook. This is a mechanism that has worked successfully to help manage major developments elsewhere, for example at Bicester, and would operate in an advisory capacity.

3.2 It is recommended that the Board should be comprised of two members each from the Town, District and County Councils. It would need to take the forward view of forthcoming assets and service delivery well in advance of specific trigger points being reached. As well as local government representation other public and private partners could be invited to specific meetings as required. The intention is that this will lead to a clear Implementation Plan that is owned not just by local government but also by wider partners such as the Clinical Commissioning Group.

3.3 It is considered that the Board should meet quarterly in the first instance although this can be more or less frequent as required. Whilst focused on the delivery of initial assets in the town it is expected that this will help to define and set the model for future service delivery more widely. For example this could include setting an objective for all public sector assets to be revenue positive going forward. The Board would need to ensure that the answers to each of the bullet points highlighted above are clearly defined.

3.4 Proposed Terms of Reference for the Board are contained at Appendix A. It is a specific recommendation of this paper that these are endorsed. The Terms of Reference include provision for these to be reviewed annually. It is a further recommendation of this report that Cabinet receive an annual report detailing the work of the Board.

3.5 It should be noted that the Strategic Delivery Board will not be a formal joint committee which is capable of taking binding decisions on behalf of the three Councils nor will it meet in public. Rather it will act in an advisory capacity with papers then being considered through the relevant Committees of the three Authorities as required.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The original vision for Cranbrook was as a freestanding new community which would be capable of supporting its own assets and services. In a constrained financial environment there is a need to actively reinvent how these will be delivered on a sustainable basis. Without this there is a significant risk that Cranbrook will become an austerity town, bereft of the facilities and services that the population both expect and demand. This paper identifies that the delivery of key assets in the town centre is at a critical stage and puts forward a proposal for charting a clear path forward to ensure their successful delivery. The proposed Strategic Delivery Board is considered to be the best means to ensuring the necessary coordination and oversight.

Appendix A

Terms of Reference for the Cranbrook Strategic Delivery Board (hereafter referred to as the 'Board')

Purpose

- To support the development of Cranbrook as a sustainable community by ensuring that there is a clear plan for the delivery of key community infrastructure, assets and services in the town in step with the growing population.
- To provide a forum for the three tiers of local government to consider the coordinated and cohesive delivery of assets and services and to provide advice to each Authority accordingly.
- To ensure that there is a strategic business case to support the delivery of assets and cost effective services on an ongoing basis.

The Board has been established to support the coordinated development of Cranbrook as a new community through focusing on the delivery of key assets and services. It will act in an advisory capacity and will provide advice to each tier of local government. It is expected that the Board will develop an Implementation Plan for the delivery of assets and services in the town and provide oversight for its delivery. This will include ensuring that each asset is supported by a strategic business case. Executive decision making and financial decisions will remain the remit of each individual Authority.

The Secretariat for the Board will be provided by the organisation that is chairing the Board and will revolve on an annual basis. The Secretariat will minute all meetings of the Board and maintain a record of any declarations of interests. Agendas will include a standard item requiring declarations of interests to be made. Members with a disclosable pecuniary or personal interest in respect of a particular matter being considered by the Board should act in accordance with the Councillor's Code of Conduct of the relevant organisation that they represent.

The Board will be supported by officers from the Growth Point delivery team drawing on support from officers from across the County, District and Town Councils as well as external partners as required.

Substitution of members will be permitted provided written notification has been provided to the Secretariat 7 days in advance of the meeting. However it is expected that the use of substitutes shall only occur in exceptional cases.

Objectives

The Board is responsible for overseeing the delivery of assets and services in Cranbrook. It provides a coordinating vehicle to help develop a corporate position between all three tiers of local government. Specific objectives are to;

- Develop an Implementation Plan for the delivery of key assets and services in the town
- Ensure that the Implementation Plan includes a clear understanding of the following in relation to individual assets;
 - the strategic business case
 - who the client is
 - the business plan

- the brief and specification
 - the budget and funding package
 - procurement strategy
 - project management and delivery
 - ownership and management of facilities
 - the ongoing service delivery model and associated costs
- Engage with public and private sector partners and secure the cooperation and buy-in of key stakeholders.
 - Monitor risks, progress and effectiveness of delivery
 - Identify and secure funds including coordinating applications for funding.
 - Ensure consistency of approach between all three tiers of local government so as to be able to speak with one voice
 - Develop a communications plan to ensure clarity around key messages and to manage expectations with the community

Membership

The membership will comprise

- Two members of Cranbrook Town Council
- Portfolio Holder for Economy and Skills, Devon County Council
- Representative of the Broadclyst division, Devon County Council
- Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development, East Devon District Council
- Lead Member for Cranbrook, East Devon District Council

External Partners

External partners, both public and private, will be invited to attend Board meetings where wider input is required to support asset and service delivery

Chair:	Shall revolve annually between Cranbrook Town Council, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council.
Quorum:	Shall be a minimum of 3 members which must include at least one from each of Cranbrook Town Council, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council.
Meetings:	A minimum of 4 meetings per year on a quarterly basis, although meetings may be called more frequently on an “as and when required” basis to deal with operational matters.
Decision making:	Decision making will, as far as is possible, be by consensus. In the event that this is not possible areas of disagreement and the position of individual organisations will be recorded and recognised in the subsequent advice/recommendations.
Review	The group’s terms of reference as well as its outcomes and successes will be reviewed annually.