

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 28 July 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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## Cranbrook Town Centre

### Report summary:

This paper provides an overview of the progress made to support the delivery of Cranbrook town centre, funded by the Enterprise Zone programme. This paper provides information on the progress being made on the acquisition of land within the town centre and delivery of modular space.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That members:

- 1) Note the progress made with the Enterprise Zone programme funded work in relation to Cranbrook town centre
- 2) Endorse the principle of supporting delivery of modular space through capital investment through the Enterprise Zone programme
- 3) Endorse the principle of developing a proposal for a Health, Wellbeing & Leisure Hub

### Reason for recommendation:

To support the ongoing development of Cranbrook as a sustainable community and to ensure that assets and services are delivered in step with the growing population.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Medium Impact

**Risk:** High Risk; A significant proportion of the new homes in the District over the next 10 years will be delivered at Cranbrook. It is essential that the growing population is supported by the necessary assets and services and that, in the context of an austere wider financial environment, these can be funded in a cost effective and sustainable manner.

**Links to background information** [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 6th January, 2021, 6.00 pm - East Devon](#) – item 24 [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 4th September, 2019, 5.30 pm - East Devon](#) – item 19

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
  - Outstanding Homes and Communities
  - Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
  - Outstanding Council and Council Services
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## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 In January 2021 Cabinet considered a paper on Cranbrook Town Centre. This paper concluded negotiations with the Consortium, with an updated offer from the East Devon New Community Partners (EDNCp). Cabinet resolved to agree the updated offer from the EDNCp and funding options for its delivery, with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be prepared.
- 1.2 Through the Enterprise Zone programme funding has been made available to support the delivery of Cranbrook Town Centre. This includes funding towards a feasibility study for the development of modular commercial space (Cranbox) and support for the development of a health, wellbeing and leisure hub.
- 1.3 A more detailed overview is provided in the paper 'Cranbrook New Community: 10 years in'.

## 2.0 Modular Commercial Space (Cranbox)

- 2.1 With a third party, the Consortium will be delivering core elements of the high street within Cranbrook, comprising retail units on the southern side of Tillhouse Road, supermarket, town square and a children's nursery. On the land that EDDC is seeking to acquire within the town centre, either through the S.106 agreement or the negotiations as set out in section 2 of this report, detailed work will need to be undertaken to develop schemes that provides a complementary offer.
- 2.2 The development of modular /container buildings will allow the delivery of commercial and community space, whilst other areas of the town centre are being developed. This will encourage footfall within the town centre, along with the provision of low cost space for SMEs.
- 2.3 The concept of Cranbox is a part of the Cranbrook business ladder, which was identified in the Economic Development Strategy for Cranbrook, published in 2014. There has been considerable further work undertaken to support the development of the town centre, including specific aspects around the provision of modular /container

building and meanwhile uses. However this has not been arranged in to a single feasibility study that reviews the range of opportunities and creates a financially sustainable proposal that meets the needs of all partners.

2.4 EDDC appointed LDA Design to prepare a high level feasibility study to support the delivery of modular/container space and uses on land parcel TC2 in Cranbrook town centre. This contract commenced in June 2021.

2.5 The feasibility study will provide recommendations, including:

- The type of modular /container building that could be accommodated within the site, including the number of units that it would be viable to deliver.
- The context for the proposal, providing a complementary offer to the development of TC4a (supermarket, with range of town centre units).
- The type of units that can be delivered on site both rapidly and cheaply. The units will need to adaptable to changing needs of the occupier and community.
- How the scheme could accommodate a range of uses.
- Approach to managing the facility.
- Marketing and promotion of the space

2.6 The preferred option from the feasibility study will be developed into a business plan. The business plan will be supported by a sketch scheme for the site to demonstrate that the scheme will work spatially. The business plan will also support soft market testing and market engagement.

2.7 LDA have started to develop conceptual schemes for the TC2 site. The initial sketch schemes would cost in the range of £2.6m-£3.8m to deliver, with the development of circa 40 modular units and would require infrastructure works to enable delivery.

2.8 LDA are currently reviewing phasing of these schemes to create a scheme that is of a more modest scale, which could be implemented in advance of the completion of the supermarket, with a lower level of investment. A phased development would require initial investment of £1-1.5m to deliver, with the opportunity of development further phases in the future.

2.9 One of the issues that LDA have identified through the feasibility study is the increased cost in delivering modular space. Due to recent increases in the cost of building materials, the historic cost savings of delivering modular space instead of permanent buildings has significantly reduced. There have also been a significant increase in cost of delivering permanent building, this is mainly due to increased cost of building materials.

2.10 Once the study has concluded a paper detailing an investment proposal will be presented to Cabinet.

### **3.0 Health, Wellbeing & Leisure Hub**

3.1 To support the development of a full range of facilities within the town centre, there has been some consideration on the facilities that will be brought forward commercially and those that will require support. The development of a Health, Wellbeing & Leisure Hub is an important facility within the town with land for a Health & Wellbeing Hub secured in the existing S106 legal agreement. To support the development of projects within

Cranbrook Town Centre external funding is being sought to develop a proposal for a Health, Wellbeing & Leisure Hub.

### 3.2 The project seeks:

- To define the range of facilities that will be accommodated within the Health, Wellbeing & Leisure Hub, develop a business case and identify an appropriate site within Cranbrook town centre (RIBA Stage 0 and 1)
- To develop a conceptual design for the Hub and develop a business case. This will include a review of funding options and ownership models (RIBA Stage 2)
- Finalise the design of the Hub, to support the scheme to planning application stage (RIBA Stage 3)
- Agree land acquisition from the development consortium as per section 2 above should the facility not be planned on already transferred land.

3.3 EDDC is seeking £90k external revenue funding from the One Public Estate Programme, with £90k match funding secured from the Enterprise Zone Programme.

## 4.0 Conclusion

4.1 EDDC are continuing to work with the EDNCp and wider partners including the Town Council to support the delivery of a town centre that is fit for purpose. The support of the EZ programme has enabled access to specialist support to develop a temporary commercial space scheme, and support the development of a health, wellbeing and leisure hub

4.2 Once the current work on the delivery of community and commercial space has concluded, Cabinet will be presented with investment proposals.

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### **Financial implications:**

At this stage there are no direct financial implication outside existing budget provision.

### **Legal implications:**

There are no significant legal comments to make at this time, Legal Services will assist as needed as projects progress.