

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee



Date of Meeting 11 January 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

The Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document

Report summary:

Main modifications to the proposed Cranbrook Plan DPD have now been drafted and we have been instructed to undertake public consultation on the modifications by the Inspector examining the Plan on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

Strategic Planning Committee recommend that Senior Officers:

- (1) Approve the undertaking of a public consultation exercise as detailed in this report and in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement, of the Cranbrook Plan DPD main modifications schedule, updated policies map and associated policies map modifications schedule.
- (2) Approve that a paper copy of the consultation material be available to view at Blackdown House on an appointment based system only.
- (3) Collate and summarise the consultation responses and submit them to the Inspector for her consideration.

Reason for recommendation:

Progressing the Cranbrook Plan DPD is essential in ensuring that development of the new town happens in a coherent and sustainable manner, delivering the homes, facilities and services required. The consultation on the proposed main modifications to the Plan is the next step in moving toward finding the Plan sound.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance

- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact High Impact

The DPD looks to ensure that the needs of all groups and sections of society are considered and catered for, including gypsies and travellers.

Climate change High Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; The expansion of Cranbrook represents the single largest contribution to meeting the strategic housing requirement in the District under the current Local Plan. It is vital that this comes forward on a comprehensive basis. The Cranbrook DPD is identified in the Local Plan as being critical to securing the long term success of the town.

Links to background information [Cranbrook Plan - Cranbrook Plan Consultation Responses and Submission - East Devon](#); [Cranbrook Plan - Cranbrook Plan Examination - East Devon](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

Report in full

1. The Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document (the Plan) was submitted for examination in August 2019. The Plan allocates land for the expansion of the town, amounting to an additional c. 4170 dwellings and associated infrastructure, as a sustainable settlement and will grow the town to a population of in excess of 18,000 people.
2. Hearing sessions into the Plan were held in January/February 2020 and then further sessions held in November 2020.
3. Additional information was submitted by the Council in relation to viability matters which resulted in a further round of consultation with participants, ending in August 2021.
4. Following this consultation and a direction from the examining Inspector, a schedule of Main Modifications has been prepared between the LPA and the Inspector in accordance with the process set out in the Government's procedural guidance for the examination of local plans. The approval of Strategic Planning Committee is sought to consult upon the schedule and the associated updated Policies Map and its schedule.
5. The modifications pick up on matters which were discussed and debated during the hearing sessions and cover multiple policies. Many of these changes are to provide greater clarity of position but the more pertinent matters are:
 - a. Policy CB10 'Safeguarding of land for a second new station at Cranbrook' has been deleted and merged with the preceding policy CB9 which relates to public transport enhancement.
 - b. The requirement to underground the 132kV high voltage power line through the Cobdens and Grange expansion areas has been deleted. Further work on feasibility and costs had been undertaken by Persimmon Homes which identified both that the costs had increased from our previous evidence and that one of the key benefits,

being the amount developable land released for development if the pylons were undergrounded), reduced from our previous expectations. Combined this meant that financially the policy to underground the cables was no longer realistic.

- c. Policy CB12 (now policy CB11) relates to the delivery of custom and self-build housing and as submitted the policy required not less than 4% of housing to be custom and self-build. This is now proposed to be a fixed rate of 4% as a result of concerns raised by the developers about the uncertainty that such a policy creates and the potential impact on viability should the rate be capable of being moved.
- d. Since the submission of the Plan the Use Classes Order has been revised and made structural changes to the classes within which different uses sit. Accordingly numerous consequential changes to the Plan were required so that it aligns with the current Use Classes Order.
- e. A new sports hub is proposed at the Treasbeare expansion area (CB3). As submitted this required a number of sports pitches to be provided:
 - i. 2 x senior rugby
 - ii. 2 x junior (midi) rugby
 - iii. 2 x senior football
 - iv. 3 x junior football
 - v. 1 x floodlit senior all-weather pitch (land only)

Lengthy discussions have been held with the owners and prospective developers of the site with regard to this arrangement. Following additional technical work undertaken by them and discussions with Sport England and the National Governing Bodies for football and rugby, modifications are proposed to the plan. These reduce the junior football pitch requirements from 3 pitches to 1 pitch, increase the size of the all-weather pitch from senior football to senior rugby and provide a financial contribution toward the delivery of the all-weather pitch which is currently unfunded. The aim of these modifications is to make it cost neutral to the developers and at the same time maximise the future flexibility of sports provided, while protecting and enlarging the adult pitches.

- f. Viability has been a concern for some of the participants to the examination process and these concerns have been shared to some extent by the Inspector. In order to ameliorate these concerns, in addition to the points above some items have had funding removed or reduced from the Plan and accompanying Cranbrook Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP):
 - i. Off-site sports contributions toward cricket, bowling and hockey removed in full totalling £0.7m
 - ii. Blue light services building contribution reduced from £1.9m to £1.4m, a saving of £0.5m
 - iii. Health and wellbeing hub contribution reduced from £8.769m to £7m, a saving of £1.769m
 - iv. Contribution toward town council offices removed in full totalling £2m (note that some capital funding is to be provided from the existing S106 agreement)
 - v. A bridge crossing of London Road between Bluehayes and Treasbeare had been included at a cost of £2.3m. At the hearing session, debate was had on the necessity of this item and it is no longer proposed for inclusion. A residual budget of £0.5m is included for an enhanced at grade crossing of London Road for pedestrians and cyclists. Therefore an overall saving of £1.8m.
 - vi. A new roundabout had been budgeted for at the Cobdens expansion area. This has been changed to an enhanced right hand turn junction with a cost saving of £0.8m.

The loss of financial contributions towards community infrastructure is unfortunate but is necessary to make the plan sound. Alternative sources of funding will need to be found in many cases.

6. The procedural guidance states that the consultation should reflect the nature and duration of that undertaken prior to the submission of the Plan and run for not less than 6 weeks. The adopted Statement of Community Involvement details how we will undertake Plan consultations.
7. In this instance it is proposed that consultation be undertaken Monday 17 January 2022 – Monday 28 February 2022.
8. The following documents will be published on the Cranbrook Plan DPD pages of the Council's website –
 - i. Schedule of main modifications to the Plan (appended)
 - ii. Schedule of modifications to the policies map (appended)
 - iii. Updated policies map (appended)
 - iv. Track changes version of the Cranbrook Plan DPD which also incorporates the Council's additional modifications which are not the subject of consultation due to their very minor nature (appended)
 - v. [Updated Sustainability Appraisal](#)

The final two documents listed above are not formal consultation documents on which the Inspector will take into account comments made. The track changes version of the Plan is useful for readability of the proposed modifications. The Sustainability Appraisal is updated to take account of the main modifications and other consequential changes since the original production of the document, such as the publication of an updated National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Temporary legislation due to COVID-19 which stopped the requirement for a copy of the above to also be available for public inspection at the Council's main office expires on 31st December 2021. The government has indicated that legislation to extend these provisions will not be made and so a paper copy will need to be made available during the consultation period. It is recommended that this be on an appointment based system to align with the COVID-19 working practice measures of the Council.
10. Due to the very specific nature of the consultation, where comment is sought only on the drafted main modifications and policy map changes and having regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not proposed that any in-person events are organised or attended.
11. The examining Inspector will consider all the representations made on the proposed main modifications before finalising their examination report and the schedule of recommended main modifications. Further hearing sessions will not usually be held, unless the Inspector considers them essential to deal with substantial issues raised in the representations, or to ensure fairness.

Financial implications:

There are no specific financial implications at this stage.

Legal implications:

The consultation will only be in relation to the proposed Main Modifications and any policies map changes (and no other aspect of the plan). The Inspector will consider all the representations made on the proposed Main Modifications before finalising the examination report and the schedule of recommended Main Modifications. There are no legal implications other than as set out in the report.