

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 7 September 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Cranbrook Delivery Capacity

Report summary:

This report seeks approval for a budget of up to £50k to support additional project management capacity so as to be able to progress multiple projects at Cranbrook over the balance of this financial year.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Cabinet recommend to Council that a budget of up to £50k is made available for the balance of this financial year from the general fund to support project management capacity at Cranbrook.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that there is sufficient capacity in place to support the delivery of a vibrant town centre for Cranbrook and the ongoing expansion of the town

Officer: Andy Wood, Service Lead – Growth, Development & Prosperity, tel 01395 571743, email adwood@eastdevon.gov.uk

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 Low Impact

Climate change Medium Impact. A key objective for Cranbrook is to support the large scale delivery of low and zero carbon development.

Risk: Medium Risk; Without sufficient delivery capacity in place there is a risk that key projects do not progress in a timely way and/or that wider barriers to delivery are not addressed.

Links to background information Cranbrook Local Infrastructure Fund [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 4th May, 2022, 6.00 pm - East Devon](#) item 14, Unlocking the delivery of Cranbrook town centre [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 30th March, 2022, 6.00 pm - East Devon](#) item 22.

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

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

1. Background and context

1.1 Cabinet has received a series of reports over the past three years concerning the importance of unlocking the delivery of Cranbrook town centre and supporting the ongoing expansion of the town. This culminated in March of this year with proposals for the Council to acquire land in the town centre and in May with a proposition to establish a £40m local revolving infrastructure fund for Cranbrook. Subsequent to these proposals being considered Cabinet also endorsed at the July meeting the new Leisure and Built Facilities Strategy. This places considerable importance on bringing forward a new leisure centre to service Cranbrook and the wider area. The October Cabinet meeting will also consider the business case for investing in the decarbonisation of the district heating network serving Cranbrook. This is both one of the single largest capital projects by value that the Council has considered and one that will achieve the most substantial carbon savings.

1.2 With the supermarket development expected to commence this month and the adoption of the Cranbrook Plan also imminent, which will itself form the basis for determining live planning applications for circa 4,000 homes, it is fair to say that, after many years of protracted negotiations, there is now a peak in delivery activity. This is though stretching available project management and delivery capacity. Ensuring that key projects are progressed in a timely manner is crucial currently, both to capitalise on the catalytic impact of development of the town centre commencing and to ensure that potential barriers to the delivery of the expansion areas are addressed before they become real.

2. Proposal

2.1 For the first 6 months of this financial year additional capacity has been provided through a consultant project manager role funded through new burdens monies. It is proposed to dedicate a budget of up to £50k to allow this role to continue through to the end of the financial year. This will enable the following projects to continue to be progressed;

- Developing the feasibility study for a combined health & wellbeing/leisure centre – this will include working with key NHS partners and include utilising One Public Estate funding.
- Working up detailed investment proposals in the town centre – for example in terms of investing in additional retail units
- Bringing forward individual proposals to benefit from the Cranbrook Local Infrastructure Fund to support the delivery of the expansion areas – this includes the next primary school and addressing electricity grid capacity constraints.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Given the history at Cranbrook, the challenge of progressing multiple projects at the same time is a good problem to have. This proposal will ensure that additional capacity is in place to address the capacity constraint throughout the balance of this financial year. Longer term requirements can then be addressed through the next budgetary round.

Financial implications:

This is a request for a supplementary budget in the current year of £50k for reasons outlined in the report.

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications requiring comment