

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cranbrook Placemaking Group held at Conference Room, Younghayes Centre, Cranbrook on 20 January 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 9.35 am and ended at 11.57 am

32 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 November 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Cranbrook Placemaking Group held on 18 November 2024 were agreed.

33 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

34 Public speaking

There were two members of the public present. Sarah Thorne from Inspiring Connections South West CIC and Vicky Harris from Wellbeing Exeter & Cranbrook wished to speak at Minute 38 – Move More Cranbrook and Sports England Placemaking Partnership.

35 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

36 Confidential/exempt items

There was one matter dealt with in this way recorded at Minute 43.

37 Discussion with Cranbrook New Community Partners

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Fran Walker, Associate Director at Brookbanks (Project Managers for the Cranbrook New Community Partners) to address the following issues that had been raised by the Group.

Landscaping for the Ingram Sports Pitches

The Consortium have now appointed a contractor to undertake the planting which will include planting at the south west boundary of the road up to the pitches and also the centre of the car park island. Cranbrook Town Council will be advised when the date has been confirmed which is hoped to be in March 2025.

The Town Council Clerk sought clarification on the outstanding legal costs for the sports pitches. The Associate Director advised that communications were still ongoing with Groundfix about seeking the retention payments.

Playparks

All the locations that needed connections for water and electricity have now been located with several connections needing road crossings. Water drawings were still being chased from South West Water.

Councillor Bloxham raised concerns about the location plans that did not identify the specific locations and made a request for a more precise zoomed out map that clearly identified each location. The Associate Director confirmed this would be provided tomorrow.

Councillor Bloxham also raised concerns about the continued lack of communication at the monthly partners meetings held by the Town Council and emphasised the need for the right level of people to attend to actually get things done. The Associate Director confirmed that she would be attending the next partners meeting and would also ensure that a Director or equivalent from each of the Consortium developers would attend as well.

Skatepark

Conversations were still ongoing with South West Water over the confusion to where their water main is located in the footpath. A survey has been completed which did show a water main and a further meeting has been arranged to discuss its connection.

The electricity plan has been received from GTC which would be shared with the group after the meeting. The rights to enter the footpath will be confirmed after the payment has been received.

Basin 2c

The contractor tenders have now been received and a preferred contractor has been suggested to the Consortium. The works should commence the second week of April but this will be dependant on the water levels. If they are too high the work will not be able to start. The work programme and the appointment of the contractor would be provided after the meeting.

Councillor Bloxham raised concerns about disruption to the parcel of land in Stone Barton as well as the school traffic. The Associate Director advised that the works access to Basin 2c would go over the town centre parcel to avoid construction traffic going past the school.

Damage to Country Park

The Associate Director apologised for the damage caused by Terra Firma when they entered onto the land. A site visit had taken place last Friday to rectify this damage. The Group noted that further damage to the same area had been caused by LiveWest who had ignored an email advising not to enter the site. The Associate Director at Brookbanks confirmed that the damage would be sorted before the transfer of TC1.

Land Transfers

It was confirmed that Clark Willmott was progressing four transfers of public open spaces. These were Littlemead, Rush Meadow Road junction, Yonder Acre Way and the Tillhouse Farm location boundary.

The Town Council Clerk raised concerns that there were still large areas of land that still needed to be transferred. In response the Associate Director at Brookbanks advised that meetings were taking place but it was difficult to obtain the information. To help understand what has been transferred it was agreed that both Fran and the Town Council would compile a spreadsheet of what has been done so far to see if information matched.

Build return data

The New Community Manager acknowledged receipt of the completion data but highlighted the lack of starts data. A request was made for the starts of the outstanding Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon plots.

MLR uplift works

The Consortium have advised that a start date cannot be given until planning permissions have been granted for the town centre housing as money is required beforehand to do these works.

In response the New Community Manager advised that the reason previously given for the delay in commencement was due to the uncertainty of the technology for the supply of heating and hot water to the additional town centre housing meaning that electrical capacity has now been confirmed so the inference is that this different reason means they do not want to spend the money. These works were consented in 2022/23 and the programme of works showed that it would start in Summer 2023 and completed in September 2024. It still has not happened.

The Associate Director advised that about changes to TC1 and TC2 and the need for drop services and waiting for technical approval from Highways which were also the reason the delays.

The New Community Manager expressed her disappointment and concerns with the delay as there were still no safe crossing for school children. She also raised concerns about the pavement that did not go to the edge of the boundary of TC2 which was not acceptable especially as the Council was about to take transfer of TC2 and the impending delivery of Cranbox and highlighted the pavement does not go to the edge of the boundary which was not acceptable.

Although the Chair sympathised that it was the Associate Director first meeting with the group he expressed disappointment with her colleagues that this had not been done even though they have known about this since 2021 and urged the Associate Director to speak to her colleagues for a commitment.

The Associate Director advised she would speak to the Consortium at their meeting on Wednesday.

The Group noted the summary of delays with Cranbrook Town Centre S106 obligations and the Principal Planning Officer (DCC) emphasised the need to transfer the Extra Care Land to Devon County Council as soon as possible. The Associate Director acknowledged this and explained about the issues with the transfer plan. The Associate Director confirmed she would follow up with their solicitor after the meeting.

38 **Move More Cranbrook and Sport England Place Partnership**

The Partnership Programme Manager gave a brief overview of the report explaining about a national programme run by Sport England to provide funding to help tackle physical inactivity across Exeter and Cranbrook which brought together strategy organisations to form the Move More Cranbrook Group.

Representation of the Move More Cranbrook includes:

- Live & Move (Place Partnership Team for Exeter & Cranbrook)
- East Devon District Council
- Cranbrook Town Council

- LED Leisure
- Cranbrook Education Campus
- Livewest
- Wellbeing Cranbrook
- Public Health Devon
- Active Devon

The latest Sport England bid to extend the funding to 2028 and become a Place Partner had been successful which secures £2.3m over the next three years with Cranbrook expecting to receive circa £200k up to March 2028 to help continue to tackle physical inactivity and improve active lifestyles in Cranbrook.

The Group were advised from 1 April 2025 there was a need to look for a new local delivery partner to continue the delivery of the Move More Cranbrook and it was suggested that in order to strengthen the governance East Devon District Council should take the lead to maintain the long-term sustainability of the steering group.

The Group noted that although there was funding available there was a need for additional funding to help sustain two part-time Cranbrook posts. These posts were previously hosted by Exeter Community Initiatives.

Public speaker, Sharon Thorne from Inspiring Connections South West CIC and Vicky Harris, Wellbeing Exeter & Cranbrook explained to the Group the reason for their attendance was to flag the urgency for the need to consider funding for the part-time funded Wellbeing Cranbrook post and the funded part-time Cranbrook Community Builder post that were ending at the end of March 2025 which were both essential for the wellbeing of Cranbrook residents.

The Director of Place highlighted that a workshop was needed to agree how these roles would be hosted and to understand the funding for this year and next year.

Questions raised by the Group included:

- How much out of the £6m - £7m funding received from the original Local Delivery Pilot programme was directly spent on Cranbrook. The Partnership Programme Manager advised circa £300k was spent.
- What qualifications did the Wellbeing Cranbrook host require? The advice received included key elements such as being local, have its own governance, connection with the charity commission or body and have experience in community development and health and wellbeing.
- There was a need for a tendering exercise as local groups may be interested and should be explored.
- It was noted that Broadclyst Parish Council had taken on a Community Connector
- It was confirmed that the financial contribution that the future host was expected to fund was to be £200k with an expectation for local resources to support the Sport England funding.

The Chair proposed that Officers should arrange a meeting at the earliest opportunity with core members of the steering group.

RESOLVED:

Officers to set up a meeting at the earliest opportunity with core members of the steering group to:

- set out the position of the funding shortfall for this financial year and for the next three years;
- consider the options on how the roles should be hosted and,
- accelerate any procurement requirements.

39 **Public Transport and London Road**

The Group received a report on the present position to Cranbrook's public transport which was served primarily by Stagecoach Service 4 operating 7 days a week providing a direct link from Cranbrook to Honiton Road, Heavitree, Exeter City Centre, Exeter St Davids Station and Exeter University. The report also included the Railway Service operating on an hourly service with aspirations to increase this to half hourly services but this would be dependent on significant national Government investment to deliver a passing loop between Honiton and Exeter.

As part of Devon County Council's plans for future development of public transport the Group noted that they would be installing intelligent traffic control through Heavitree and an extended peak bus lane operation system to improve bus journey time reliability. Cranbrook would also benefit from the introduction of electric buses later this year.

The Group noted that as development grows in Cranbrook DCC's present vision would see the bus service frequency increase to every 10 minutes which would allow alternate journeys to operate via Bluehayes and operate a loop around Cobdens and the Grange developments.

Questions included:

- Clarification was sought about public transport connectivity and it was questioned why the bus service did not go to the railway station even when there is a bus stop there. In response the Deputy Director - Planning advised it would require an additional bus as the rail service is hourly.
- Concerns raised about train delays and having a bus stop would allow an alternative mode of travel to avoid being stranded. In response it was suggested that the proposed plan was to split the bus service when Bluehayes is developed which would allow the bus route to the railway station.
- A suggestion was made to have a less frequent bus route that will also service the station.

RESOLVED:

DCC to consider the impact of the bus service to allow it to deviate to the railway station and to update at the next meeting.

Further questions included:

- Clarification was sought on the timescale for the 30 minutes rail service. The Group discussed the two options that SWR & GWR were considering:
 - Whimple Rail Loop which would be extremely costly, or
 - a single loop offering a shuttle option between Cranbrook and Whimple which would be the cheaper option.
- The existing bus service does not give encouragement to people to use public transport as there is no direct route to Sidmouth, Exmouth and other areas. People prefer to use their cars for these journeys.
- Clarification was sought on whether there was enough demand in Cranbrook to provide a direct bus route to Marsh Barton. Although a direct answer could not be given the advice received pointed to the demand not being adequate at present.

40 **Implementation Plan**

The Group received the Implementation Plan which set out the progress and noted the updates taking into account the out-of-date town council items.

Councillor Kim Bloxham, Cranbrook Ward Member suggested there was a requirement to commence discussions on the delivery of the town council offices as the current offices were now at full capacity. The Principal Planning Officer (DCC) acknowledged the request and advised contact would be made with the Cranbrook Town Clerk to discuss further.

The Town Clerk requested an update on the Community Governance Review. The Chair advised he would write to the Chief Executive on behalf of the Cranbrook Ward Members and Cranbrook Town Council to express its urgency.

RESOLVED:

1. The Community Governance Review to become a standard item on the agenda.
2. The Chair to write to the Chief Executive on behalf of Cranbrook Town Council about the urgency of the Community Governance Review.

41 **Forward Plan**

The Group received the Forward Plan that set out covering the period up to September 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan was noted and to include the Community Governance Review and serving the railway station as additional items.

42 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing this item in private session (Part B).

43 **Cranbox**

The Group received a report on the Cranbox project which had been developed by East Devon District Council in partnership with Cranbrook Town Council to deliver new commercial floorspace within Cranbrook Town Centre by using grant funding from the Devon & Torbay Net Zero Capital Programme.

The Corporate Lead – Major Projects and Programmes updated the Group on the issues that had arisen and asked the Group to consider the proposed approach to enable the scheme to move forward.

RESOLVED:

That the issues with the Cranbox project was noted and the proposed approach to move forward with the scheme be supported.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

K Blakey (EDDC)
K Bloxham (EDDC)
T Olive (EDDC)
H Gent (DCC)
L Bayliss (CTC)

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Fran Walker, Associate Director at Brookbanks (Project Managers for the East Devon New Community Partners)
James Bogue, Partnership Programme Manager, Exeter City Council

Officers in attendance:

Thea Billeter, Cranbrook New Community Manager (EDDC)
Naomi Harnett, Corporate Lead (Interim) – Major Projects & Programmes (EDDC)
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer (EDDC)
Andrew Wood, Director of Place (EDDC)
Nicola Wilson Principal Planning Officer (DCC)
Jamie Hulland, Deputy Director – Planning (DCC)

Councillor apologies:

S Hawkins
E Freeman
S Ratnage

Chair

Date: