

Date of Meeting 11th June 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Cranbrook Leisure Centre

Report summary:

The Leisure Delivery Forum requested in April 2025 that regular updates are received progress with the Cranbrook Leisure Centre project.

A project team is now in place to put the Council in the best possible position to progress with delivery of a leisure centre in Cranbrook. The latest developments are set out in the report.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That the Forum notes the progress being made by the Cranbrook Leisure Centre Project Team and highlight any areas that warrant further discussion.

Reason for recommendation:

To enable progress to be made on the delivery of a leisure centre for Cranbrook in order to provide the services and facilities necessary to support the growing town and its community.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☒ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Any new Leisure Centre needs to be designed to be accessible for all people and groups. Careful consideration of accessibility and the scope and range of services and facilities

provided will need to be made. A full equalities impact assessment will be completed as part of the Leisure Centre project initiation

Climate change Medium Impact

Risk: Low Risk; At this stage the overall risk is considered to be low as there is no commitment to capital expenditure.

Links to background information

- Previous update to the Forum –

[Cranbrook Leisure Centre Update - Forum Report.pdf](#)

- Leisure Strategy - Delivery Forum on Tuesday, 9th April 2024, [Delivering EDDCs leisure programme_090424.pdf](#)
- Cranbrook Town Centre Masterplan - East Devon

[4. Cranbrook Town Centre Masterplan.pdf](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ A supported and engaged community
- ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
- ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

1.0 Current Status

1.1 The Project team have been progressing on a number of areas. The latest developments are:

- Consultant Team appointed to undertake a Feasibility Study / RIBA Stage 1 Design.
- RIBA Stage 1 design to be completed in September 2025, supported by an Outline Business Case. This was funded through One Public Estate funding outlined in the funding section of the report.
- Governance Strategy developed to set out approvals required and their timeframes.
- Stakeholder mapping underway to ensure regular and timely engagement with all interested parties.

1.2 It should be noted that NHS Devon are currently progressing work on a business case for the health facility and Council Officers and Members are involved in that project.

1.3 In addition, Devon County Council wish to explore opportunities with both the Council and the NHS regarding the integration of space within one or both of the buildings to operate library and youth services and a family hub. These discussions with the County Council have begun.

1.4 In addition to the Cranbrook Plan DPD identifying a leisure centre as being a key facility in Cranbrook, the Council's Leisure and Built Facilities Strategy was approved in October 2022 and also contains within it, a recommendation for a leisure centre in the town, to include a 6 lane, 25m swimming pool, health and fitness studio, 4 court sports hall and 2 studios as a minimum. This is now being updated with an addendum to reflect the latest population and leisure industry guidelines.

- 1.5 The same addendum will also reflect on the proposed allocation of land in the new Local Plan for a second new community of up to 10,000 homes as it will be appropriate to ascertain if the facilities requirements change. It should also be noted that the final facilities mix is not expected to include a 4-court sports hall.

2.0 Next Steps

- 2.1 The most immediate steps within multiple work streams include further work to develop an accommodation schedule as part of an RIBA Stage 1 Feasibility Study to include consideration of the impact of the proposed second new community, high level cost estimates from a Quantity Surveyor, business planning and funding strategy and initial campus design work. These steps will contribute towards the longer term objectives set out above.
- 2.2 In parallel with the Feasibility Study, the Team have been working to set out the approach to Governance and Stakeholder Management. This is currently under development and will be issued imminently.
- 2.3 The programme as developed for Cranbrook Leisure Centre is highly accelerated, and in order to maintain momentum, it is necessary to consider the next stages of design through to Planning and the appointment of a Building Contractor. Clearly these stages can only be progressed in the context of a wider investment decision being taken. A report for Cabinet will be issued which summarises:
- The Governance and approvals process
 - Approach to Consultant Procurement for RIBA Stages 2 and 3
 - Budget requirements to progress Designs through RIBA Stages 2 and 3 and into Planning and Contractor procurement
- 2.4 In order to maintain the programme, the team have sought quotations for a Topographic and Ground Penetrating Radar survey, which will be commissioned shortly from the same OPE funding stream.

3.0 Funding

- 3.1 To complete the workstreams set out in paragraph 1.1 within the timescale will necessitate the support of external consultants and expertise. The council has a One Public Estate approved programme aimed at bringing together public sector services as part of health and leisure facilities at Cranbrook.
- 3.2 Approximately £81,000 remained in that programme in April 2025, which is intended as a revenue contribution towards reaching RIBA stage 3 for each project (planning application submission). Up to £39,500 (including £5,500 contingency) of this money has been committed toward the current NHS-led health facility project. The appointment of the Consultant Team for the RIBA Stage 1 Feasibility Study for Cranbrook Leisure has incurred costs of £35,400.
- 3.3 The team are currently also looking to appoint a company to undertake a Topographic and Ground Penetrating Radar survey which it is proposed can be funded from the monies available. In addition to these monies, there are existing funds available from the council's Enterprise Zone programme and that have been allocated to projects within Cranbrook Town Centre.
- 3.3 As set out in previous reports to the Forum, the expansion of Cranbrook is expected to provide a capital contribution toward the delivery of a leisure centre, although at a total of around £4.75m in today's money there will be a substantial funding gap. These monies will

also be paid in phases unless the council is able to work with the developers to secure forward funding.

- 3.4 The first two outline planning applications for the expansion of Cranbrook have been approved and both secure some funding for the pooled category 4 contributions (the infrastructure category that both the leisure centre and health and wellbeing project fall under). There are resolutions to approve a further three outline planning applications and live applications for approximately 550 homes at the Grange expansion area. Together, these applications make up the vast majority of the allocated expansion area land.
- 3.5 In addition to the s106 monies, together with Exeter City Council, the council has Sport England Place Partnership status. Being part of this programme provides the opportunity for capital funding bids that are exclusive to Place Partners. Bids for external grant funding are often most likely to be successful if a project is 'shovel ready'; this further enhances the imperative nature of progressing the leisure centre project.

4.0 Leisure Delivery Review

- 4.1 On a parallel path, a Leisure Officer Working Group has also been established to help inform the Leisure Management options appraisal being carried out and explore the best possible arrangements for the future.
- 4.2 Once a decision has been made regarding the outcomes of the Leisure Review, the Cranbrook Leisure Centre programme can be adjusted to reflect the critical paths involved.

Financial implications:

The recommendations in the report at this stage have no direct financial implications although the report highlights a future funding gap that needs to be addressed if a leisure centre is to be provided in Cranbrook.

Legal implications:

As this is an update report only, there are no substantive legal issues directly arising.