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## **Cranbrook Place Partnership**

### **Report summary:**

Together with Exeter, the town of Cranbrook is part of the Sport England Place Partnership programme, running until 2028. East Devon's role in the programme and the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot as its predecessor has historically been fairly hands-off, with governance and administration led by Exeter City Council. Moving forward it is recommended that the council take a greater role in the Cranbrook programme and overarching governance.

Wellbeing Cranbrook ran from 2021 – 2025 focussing on community building and social prescribing. There is a desire amongst organisations working with the community to see the programme re-instigated but with changes made to make it more practical in its operation and delivery. There are options for the hosting of the programme that need to be considered and the re-establishment of the programme is dependent upon funding being secured for a minimum of 3 years.

### **Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget                      Yes ☐ No ☒

Policy Framework      Yes ☒ No ☐

### **Recommendation:**

That members of the Cranbrook Placemaking Group:

1. Endorse the re-establishment of the Wellbeing Cranbrook programme for a period of 3 years and the creation of 1 x Community Wellbeing and Activity Organiser for 4 days/wk and 1 x Community Connector for 4 days/wk, and following this that;
2. Discuss the options for the hosting and day-to-day management of proposed Wellbeing Cranbrook roles, together with associated funding implications and express their recommendation on these matters that will be reported to East Devon District Council's Cabinet.
3. Recognise the need to strengthen representation on the overarching Place Partnership governance and structure so that Cranbrook's interests are adequately represented.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

Wellbeing Cranbrook was an important programme for the residents of the town between 2021 and the end March 2025, providing asset-based community development through social prescribing and support and encouragement for the community to grow and be active. With the town continuing to grow and the importance of community and activity to wellbeing, the reinstatement of the programme, in an updated manner, is considered to be a necessary for community support and intervention.

The Placemaking Group is not a decision making body and so the views of the Group will be reported to East Devon District Council's Cabinet for a resolution to be made and recommended to full Council.

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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** Medium Impact

An equalities impact assessment will be completed to accompany any report to East Devon District Council's Cabinet where funding is being sought.

### **Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information** Budget for Community Builder and Connector posts for 2024/25 (as part of Agenda item 9); [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 27 March 2024, 5.00pm – East Devon](#); Cabinet endorsement of Place Partner bid: [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 5 June 2024, 6.00pm – East Devon](#); Update on Place Partnership: [Agenda for Cranbrook Placemaking Group on Monday, 20 January 2025, 9.30am – East Devon](#)

### **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
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## **Background**

### **Place Partnership governance**

1. The Place Partnership is hosted by Exeter City Council who hold the funding agreement with Sport England; East Devon District Council do not have any direct contractual obligations. This was also the case with the earlier Local Delivery Pilot.
2. At a system level, the Liveable Exeter Place Board provides the overarching governance, however that Board is solely interested in operations within the City Council boundaries and the interests of Cranbrook are not represented.

3. The bid for Place Partner status set out an intent to establish a new governance for the Cranbrook element of the Partnership, shifting to a local model, working alongside the Cranbrook Placemaking Group. This shift in governance is yet to be designed and formally implemented but it is important this is taken forward in order to better embed the programme at a local level.
4. Embedding at a local level will also help to cement corporate and political buy-in for the programme. The council's engagement in the governance of the former Local Delivery Pilot was not as active as would have been optimal, such that our status has not been as high as it is arguably deserving of. Going forward it is important to reset this position and for the council interests to be appropriately represented within the system governance. With appropriate representation at a system level, it will make local ownership and governance stronger and help to ensure that the Cranbrook strand of the Partnership acts in harmony with that in Exeter as there is learning and potential sharing of programme strands to be made the most of.
5. In order to move forward and put the council in a good position to take corporate ownership of the Cranbrook element of the Place Partnership, it is recommended that members endorse a review of the system governance both to reset council representation but also to review Cranbrook specific governance and facilitate the shift to a local model.

## **Wellbeing Cranbrook**

6. Wellbeing Cranbrook was established in 2021 and operated as part of the wider Wellbeing Exeter programme, to promote and improve the wellbeing of people individually and as part of their wider communities and for the most part had been funded by the Local Delivery Pilot and Devon County Council. For Cranbrook there were two posts employed, a Community Builder (18.5hrs/wk) and Community Connector (28hrs/wk). The key functions of these posts can be found at paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 of a report to East Devon's Cabinet in March 2024  
<https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk/documents/s23363/Delivering%20leisure%20and%20sports%20playing%20pitch%20requirements.pdf>
7. At the end of March 2025, the Wellbeing Cranbrook programme came to an end with the fixed term contracts for the Community Builder and Community Connector posts coming to an end and Exeter Community Initiatives also handing back the hosting of these two posts to Co-Lab, with whom Exeter City Council have a contract to host the wider Wellbeing Exeter programme. Wellbeing Exeter continues to run as a programme, financially sustained for 2025 onward from a combination of Place Partnership funding and following Devon County Council's withdrawal of funding from the end of the 2023 financial year, Neighbourhood CIL funding. As the city does not have parishes the Neighbourhood CIL is retained by the city council for spend; this is not the case in East Devon. Furthermore, Cranbrook is zero rated for CIL and so very limited CIL payments have been made within the parish.
8. With the ending of the Wellbeing Cranbrook programme it has become apparent to those working in community facing roles in the town that it's cessation has left a void and there is inadequate support for individuals and community groups alike. Members of the Cranbrook Steering Group are supportive of the principle of re-establishing the Wellbeing Cranbrook programme, recognising the positive impact that programme can have for the town's community. However, to re-establish the programme additional funding is required, together with appropriate programme hosting and governance. It should also be noted that Cranbrook Town Council is not supportive of the re-starting of the programme in its previous format, mainly due to them feeling that it lacked measurable outcomes and demonstration of value for money.
9. Of the indicative Cranbrook elements of the Place Partnership funding, £60,000 is budgeted across the three years for Wellbeing Cranbrook, split as £30,000 for 2025/26, £20,000 for

2026/27 and £10,000 for 2027/28. The premise of this tapered funding is to stimulate the establishment of a long-term financially sustainable model but it should be noted that the funding available in any given year is inadequate in itself to operate the programme on the terms of its previous existence. Therefore the Place Partnership funding is anticipated as a contribution to match funding from the host local authority (East Devon District Council) and/or other funding opportunities.

10. In March 2024 East Devon District Council agreed to a budget of £76,974 for the 2024/25 financial year to close the funding gap for Wellbeing Cranbrook and additionally for a Project Manager post for the East Devon element of the former Local Delivery Pilot programme. Of this money, £32,278 is nominally allocated as spent during that year (subject to final sign off), leaving £44,696 that has been carried over to the current financial year. It should be noted that no Project Manager post has been recruited to, which accounts for much of the underspend. Should Wellbeing Cranbrook be reestablished then the underspend could be allocated to staff funding costs.
11. The Wellbeing Exeter programme includes an additional job role called Community Physical Activity Coordinator. These roles are different to the Community Builder post in that they focus on working with people who aren't currently inactive to find opportunities to move more as part of their daily lives. This can include helping to set up and facilitate new activities and groups. The Steering Group advocates for the previous Community Builder post job description to be amended so that it includes elements of the Community Physical Activity Coordinator role. These changes will also better reflect the work that was being undertaken by the previous Community Builder post holder who was actively helping to facilitate community groups. Appendix 1 shows a draft job description for this recommended new post. The job description picks up the changes suggested by the Steering Group and changes the job title to Community Wellbeing and Activity Organiser.
12. The previous Community Builder post was for 18.5hrs/wk (2.5 days/wk) but having regard to the proposed wider job remit and the continued growth of the town in coming years, officers consider this to be sub-optimal going forward and recommend that a new post is for 4 days per week (up to 29.6hrs). As this is a new post, it will likely need to go through job evaluation of the host organisation to establish a salary. For benchmarking, in Exeter the Community Physical Activity Organiser and Community Builder posts have a salary of £26,265 FTE (excluding on-costs). It would be reasonable to assume that the proposed new Cranbrook post would have a similar salary.
13. The previous Community Connector post was employed for 28hrs/wk. As with the post to replace the Community Builder, any reestablished Community Connector post will likely need to go through job evaluation of the host organisation to establish a salary. For benchmarking, in Exeter the Community Connector posts have a salary of £27,053 (excluding on-costs).
14. Officers recommend that if the Wellbeing Cranbrook programme is reestablished that it is done so with a commitment to funding to allow it to operate for 3 years; this would be co-terminus with the end of the Place Partnership funding. However, funding decisions need to be made at Cabinet and Council level and so this paper seeks only the endorsement of the Placemaking Group to the principal of the programme, such endorsement if forthcoming will be reported onward to Cabinet.
15. For the purpose of estimating costs to the council the salaries mentioned above fall roughly at SCP9 and SCP10, both within grade 1 of its pay structure. The tables below set out three year costs at the top of grade 1, including NI and pension costs, both for full time and part-time hours. They are also based on council salaries and on-costs, which may differ from those of the final host organisation, should they directly employ the posts.

	Community Wellbeing & Activity Organiser (SCP13) Full-time (37hrs)	Community Connector (SCP13) Full-time (37hrs)	Total salary costs
Year 1	£38,550	£38,550	£77,100
Year 2	£39,707	£39,707	£79,413
Year 3	£40,898	£40,898	£81,795
			£238,308

	Community Wellbeing & Activity Organiser (SCP13) 29.6hrs/wks	Community Connector (SCP13) 29.6hrs/wk	Total salary costs
Year 1	£30,840	£30,840	£61,680
Year 2	£31,765	£31,765	£63,530
Year 3	£32,718	£32,718	£65,436
			£190,647

16. Nominally, £60,000 is available across the three years from the Place Partnership programme. £44,696 is also remaining from the previous council budget and could be available if not spent on a Programme Manager post. Therefore, across the three years, a budget of circa £133,600 would be required if both posts were full-time (37hrs/wk) or circa £86,000 if both posts were employed for 4 days per week (29.6hrs).

### Hosting of Wellbeing Cranbrook

17. There are deemed to be three options for the hosting of the programme: a) East Devon District Council direct host, b) Ted Wragg Trust host, c) Another organisation host

#### a. East Devon District Council host

The council employs staff in its housing service who undertake community engagement roles, aimed at supporting its own tenants rather than the wider community. However, the council has a minimal housing stock within Cranbrook Parish and therefore the housing service does not currently facilitate any community based activities. Historically there have been some community based events organised by the council at Cranbrook but these have been ad hoc and as part of wider programmes, such as those associated with the Clyst Valley Regional Park. If the council were to host Wellbeing Cranbrook then further discussion will be needed as to where in the organisational structure the roles would sit and more practically, where they would be based in locational terms and how they would integrate themselves into the existing community network.

#### b. Ted Wragg Trust host

Cranbrook Education Campus are part of the Ted Wragg Trust and play a vital role in fostering the community both from their work with pupils and their families but also in being the base of the EX5 Alive community hub. The hub now operates as part of a CIC (see c) below) but with integral links and synergies with the Education Campus. In addition, the council, together with Devon County Council, is currently funding an English as an Additional Language (EAL) Refugee Coordinator post that is hosted by the Ted Wragg Trust/Cranbrook Education Campus. This existing hosting arrangement is understood to be working successfully for all parties involved and the Executive Team at Ted Wragg Trust

are content with the principle of hosting Wellbeing Cranbrook posts also, subject to the agreement of detail and procurement mechanisms.

c. Cranbrook Town Council

The Town Council have requested that consideration be given to them line managing the posts and potentially hosting one or both. They previously employed a Community Builder which was part funded by s106 monies and part funded from the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot but this ended some years ago. The Town Council's request for consideration is subject to a number of considerations:

- i. A preference for a youth-related post;
- ii. Confirmation of line-management arrangements;
- iii. Agreement of job descriptions;
- iv. The Town Council will need to increase its spatial capacity for additional work stations;
- v. Funding for the role(s) as the original intention was for the host organisation to match-fund.

The Town Council play a vitally important role in the future of the town and are well placed with information about what is happening locally on the ground. There are practical issues

d. Other local host

Other options for hosting could include by charity or non-profit organisations operating in the locality. The EX5 Alive community hub is managed by a Community Interest Company called Inspiring Connections. They have expressed an interest in hosting Wellbeing Cranbrook, however the EX5 Alive community hub is not presently financially sustainable in its own right, being dependent upon securing further grant funding for its ongoing operations and at some point in the coming years, the space it is occupying will be required to be converted to part of the secondary school. This places the hub at risk in the short to medium term. Officers are not aware of any other similar organisations operating at Cranbrook who may be suitable for hosting the programme.

18. Each of the four options has its own benefits, however East Devon officers are of the strong belief that the Wellbeing Cranbrook programme is best hosted and based within the town itself, rather than at East Devon District Council; this discounts option a).
19. Options b) and d) are similar in that as long as EX5 Alive is based at Cranbrook Education Campus, the Wellbeing Cranbrook posts would most likely be physically based within it; the difference is in the organisation hosting the posts. The Ted Wragg Trust are a well-established educational trust who have the organisational stability needed to host the programme for the next three years as a minimum. Inspiring Connections are a relatively new CIC and only became involved in EX5 Alive within the past 12 months. The uncertainty over the future of EX5 Alive increases the risk of placing the hosting of Wellbeing Cranbrook with the CIC.
20. The Town Council are well established and have some history of hosting posts that have a community focus. However, they are lacking the physical space to host posts and it is unclear what opportunity for additional desks there is within their offices. Further discussion on this point is necessary. As long as EX5 Alive remains active, it is extremely likely that most of the work of the new posts would take place within that setting, rather than at one of the Town Council assets, although any outdoor exercise groups would potentially use the country park and facilities within.
21. Cranbrook Town Council have expressed a preference for a youth focussed post due to what is described as a well evidenced need. The town's age profile is extremely young and there is an increasing number of teenagers resident within it. This undoubtably brings about a demand for support for youths, particularly as there are limited evening establishments

open within Cranbrook where they can go to be safe; the recent provision of the stakepark and pump track provide physical activities but these are outside and have no shelter adjacent, making them less attractive in cold months or when it is wet. The desire of the Town Council to see dedicated youth support is endorsed but officers are concerned that this should be considered separately to the re-establishment of Wellbeing Cranbrook, which by its very nature is designed to support the community as a whole. That is not to say that the programme could not have a youth strand to its work.

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### **Financial implications:**

This is an ask for additional budget of £133k which Councillors need to consider carefully, the Council is facing a significant deficit in future budgets, and this would add to the savings the Council would have to find from other areas.

### **Legal implications:**

The full governance considerations arising from the options outlined in this report will need to be fully considered in the report to Cabinet.