

Date of Meeting 16 September 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Update on Cranbrook Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Campus

Report summary:

The Leisure Delivery Forum requested in April 2025 that regular updates are received on the progress with the Cranbrook Leisure Centre, part of Cranbrook Leisure, Health and Wellbeing project.

A project team is now in place and moving into the final stages of a feasibility study. This allows the Council to now progress to tender for a design team to advance with design. This will enable a Planning Application and the procurement of a Contractor. All of these activities place 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.

The project team are working to deliver the scope of the works in line with the Leisure Addendum which the Forum are asked to endorse.

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.

That the Forum recommends to Cabinet and then onto Council that they endorse the Addendum to the Leisure Strategy.

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.

Officer: Mike O'Mahony, Senior Leisure Officer mike.o'mahony@eastdevon.gov.uk; Thea Billeter, Cranbrook New Community Manager, tbilleter@eastdevon.gov.uk

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

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 currently no commitment to capital expenditure for the build, however, on receipt of tender returns there will be a requirement to award contracts and commit to costs associated therewith.

Links to background information

- Previous update to the Forum – July 2025
[Forum - CLC Update - Covering Report 02.06.25.pdf](#)
- Leisure Strategy Addendum 2025 -

[Addendum to East Devon Leisure Strategy.docx](#)

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

1.0 Current Status

- 1.1 The Project team have been progressing on a number of areas. The latest developments are:
- Feasibility Study / RIBA Stage 1 Design now nearing completion. This work involves design, site constraint mapping, cost estimating and a revenue model.
 - The RIBA Stage 1 design, cost and revenue modelling work was funded through One Public Estate funding outlined in the funding section of the report.
 - Topographic and Ground Penetrating Radar Survey undertaken.
 - Governance Strategy developed to set out approvals required and their timeframes.
 - Stakeholder mapping completed to ensure regular and timely engagement with all interested parties. A comms plan is now to be developed.
 - Market engagement with Consultants to support a procurement exercise has been undertaken and tender documentation is now being prepared to request tenders from architecturally led multi-disciplinary in the Autumn. This team will advance the design of the Leisure Centre through RIBA Stages 2 and 3, allowing the submission of a detailed Planning Application and a tender to be issued for a Contractor to build the Leisure Centre.
 - Funding for the next stage of work is proposed to be allocated from the Enterprise Zone.
- 1.2 It should be noted that NHS Devon are currently progressing work on a business case for the health facility, which is a key component of the Cranbrook Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Campus and Council Officers and Members are involved in that project.

- 1.3 In addition, Devon County Council are looking to commit to the integration of space within the Leisure Centre to operate library and youth services and a family hub. These discussions with the County Council have begun and the County Council are now seeking approval of this approach.
- 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, learner pool, health and fitness studio, 4 court sports hall and 2 studios as a minimum. This has now been updated with an addendum to reflect the latest population and leisure industry guidelines.

2.0 Next Steps

- 2.1 The Leisure Forum is asked to recommend the Leisure Addendum to Cabinet and onto Full Council to endorse the Leisure Addendum as stated in 1.4.
- 2.2 The most immediate steps include the procurement of a multi-disciplinary design team led by an architectural practice. This exercise is expected to be complete towards the end of 2025 at which point the design can progress into RIBA Stage 2.
- 2.3 In parallel with the Feasibility Study, the Team have been working to set out the approach to Governance and Stakeholder Management. This has been considered by Cabinet and a Comms Plan is now being prepared.
- 2.4 The programme as developed for Cranbrook Leisure Centre is highly accelerated, and as such it is very important that key decisions are made in a timely manner to allow the pace to be maintained.
- 2.5 In order to maintain the programme, the team will start to look to undertake Ecology Surveys in the Autumn to ensure that the window for such survey works is not missed.

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 £39,500.
- 3.3 The team are now advancing the procurement of a multi-disciplinary design team the funds for which are to be allocated from Enterprise Zone funding.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.

- 3.6 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. Officers are currently engaging with Sport England and will make a bid for funding when adequate information is available to allow this to be fully considered.

4.0 Leisure Delivery Review

- 4.1 On a parallel path, a Leisure Officer Working Group has also been established to inform the Leisure Management arrangements for the future.
- 4.2 The Cranbrook Leisure programme and the Programme for the Leisure Review are now shown together to allow interrelationships to be clearly identified.
-

Financial implications:

The recommendations in the report at this stage have no direct financial implications that have not already been considered by Cabinet, 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.