

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cranbrook Placemaking Group held at Conference Room, Younghayes Centre, Cranbrook on 4 August 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 11.09 am

12 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 June 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 June 2025 were agreed as a true record.

In response to two questions raised about whether there was a procedure in place to follow up on actions agreed at previous meetings and about the timely publication of the minutes, the Director of Place explained that there were current capacity constraints that were limiting the ability to complete all actions in a timely manner. The Director of Place gave assurance that an update on the Community Connector position would be provided at the next meeting in October.

13 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

14 Public speaking

There were no members of the public present.

15 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

16 Confidential/exempt items

There were no confidential or exempt items.

17 Education provision

The Chair welcomed Simon Niles, DCC Service Lead – School, Organisation, Planning and Admissions to the meeting who gave an update on the current position in Cranbrook for primary, secondary and special school provision outlining:

- Challenges to existing early years and childcare provision due to families buying their first homes which will inevitably lead to pressure for primary school places. There is now a need to deliver the next phase of an additional primary school at the Cobdens expansion area in September 2027
- It is anticipated that 2026 will be a difficult year for school admissions.
- Phased expansion of the Cranbrook Education Campus will increase capacity to 1,300 students. Further work will be needed to improve the kitchen facilities
- The Cranbrook Special School is very problematical as the free school programme is currently under review by the national government. DCC have requested regular updates from the Department of Education.
- A feasibility study is in progress for expanding Rockbeare C of E Primary School to create another class of 20 children

Responses to questions from members of the group included:

- It was noted that there was a betterment for the existing facilities at Rockbeare C of E School.
- In response to whether there was a plan for secondary school capacity due to the bulge of young people at primary school, the Group was reassured that the Campus had sufficient capacity to maintain inclusive communities.
- In response to whether it would be better to have smaller schools, Simon Niles questioned their financial sustainability and the significantly increased costings of building smaller schools.
- It was noted that the catchment area for Stone Barton, which was split in half, had been resolved and would be moved so it fell within Cranbrook Education Campus catchment.
- A concern was raised about the phasing of smaller developments and when trigger points for education contributions/provision would be reached.
- It was queried whether DCC's pupil ratios aligned with those new published by the Department of Education and whether they risked under-estimating the likely number of pupils over the short, medium and long term.
- It was noted that the capacity for the secondary school was for a maximum of 1,300 places.
- It was questioned whether the opening date of September 2027 for the Cobden's primary school was realistic.
- It was noted that DCC received regular data drops from the NHS in terms of place planning and there were no concerns for the cohorts coming forward.

RESOLVED:

That the education briefing paper be noted.

18

London Road upgrades

Devon County Council's Principal Planning Officer gave a brief summary of the current London Road footway/cycleway improvements which was in line with the Cranbrook Plan requirements to deliver sections of the London Road that were not covered by the developer's proposals.

Responses to questions from members of the group included:

- It was queried whether Rockbeare Parish Council had been included in communications about the improvements.
- In response to a question about whether shared footpaths/cycleways should be reconsidered as they are dangerous for pedestrians which also resulted in them being used for car parks, the Group were advised that improvements were in line with revised guidance of the LTN120.
- It was noted that land at Ingrams should not be referred to as Cranbrook United Football Club.
- Group Members were supportive of viewing the improvement plans so as to have an input into the design.

The Group agreed to invite Chris Burridge-Barney, DCC Transportation Planning Officer to give a presentation setting out the details for the proposed footpath/cycleway.

RESOLVED:

1. To invite Chris BurrIDGE-Barney, DCC Transportation Planning Officer to attend a future meeting to give a presentation on the detail of the proposed improvements and to consider inviting Rockbeare Parish Council as the adjoining parish council.
2. Devon County Council's Principal Planning Officer to liaise with the New Community Manager about the CIL funding agreement.

19 **Update on leisure and health and wellbeing projects**

The Group received a brief verbal update from the Director for Place on the leisure and health and wellbeing projects outlining the pressure for primary care space and the business case to secure funds for a combined health and wellbeing campus and centre. He advised that a workshop took place last week to help bring all parties with an interest in the town centre together and that a further workshop would take place to progress the proposals.

The Chair advised that EDDC's Cabinet were due to have a briefing this week to discuss the working plans for the leisure centre project.

RESOLVED:

A written report would be brought to the next meeting in October.

20 **Community Governance Review**

The Group noted that the Community Governance Review was now live.

RESOLVED:

The Director for Place to confirm the potential impact to the timescales if the consultation runs for 3 months.

21 **Implementation Plan**

Group Members received the Implementation Plan and updates were provided on the following:

- Cranbox – the risk around the timing of the transfer of the land was currently being considered if the project went forward during the preconstruction stage.
- Extra Care Housing – land transfer not yet completed.
- Town Centre planning applications – Taylor Wimpey Sales Office has temporary planning permission until 22 August 2025.

RESOLVED:

Director of Place to follow up on enforcement.

- Phase 2 retail acquisition – land being marketed but no interest. The Group agreed to consider a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to acquire the units.

RESOLVED:

Director for Place to explore a CPO to acquire the units.

- Town Centre highway uplift works – discussions over timetable of works.

RESOLVED:

The New Community Manager to update at the next meeting.

Non-Group Member, Councillor Peter Faithfull requested that adjoining parish councils for expansion areas 1-4 be consulted and invited to take part in discussions

RESOLVED:

That the Implementation Plan be noted.

22 **Forward Plan**

The Group received the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:

The Group noted the Forward Plan subject to the discussions on the London Road upgrades and the amendment to the Management of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace – preferred approach being moved forward to 6 October 2025.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

Kevin Blakey (EDDC)
Kim Bloxham (EDDC)
Todd Olive (EDDC)
Leslie Bayliss (CTC)
Henry Gent (DCC)

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Simon Niles, DCC Service Lead – School, Organisation, Planning and Admissions

Officers in attendance:

Andrew Wood, Director of Place
Alexandra Robinson, Deputy Clerk, Cranbrook Town Council
Nicola Wilson, Principal Planning Officer (DCC)
Janine Gardner, Clerk to Cranbrook Town Council
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies

S Hawkins
S Ratnage
N Harnett
T Billeter
E Freeman

Chair

Date: