

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 3 December 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Leisure Strategy - Addendum

Report summary:

The Council's Leisure Strategy (2021 - 2031) was approved in October 2022 and also contains within it, a recommendation for the facility mix for the leisure centre in Cranbrook. Given the scale of the project at Cranbrook, this has now been updated with an addendum to reflect the latest population and leisure industry guidelines.

The Leisure Delivery Forum on 16th September 2025 received this Leisure Addendum and asks Cabinet to approve this document for onward submission to Full Council with a recommendation to endorse it as an update to the Leisure Strategy (2021 - 2031).

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That Cabinet recommends to Council that they endorse the Addendum to the Leisure Strategy.

Reason for recommendation:

The Leisure Strategy's purpose is to help the Council make informed strategic decisions on its leisure facilities. This addendum ensures that the Leisure Strategy reflects the latest population and leisure industry guidelines and inform the Cranbrook and Malcombe projects.

Officer: Mike O'Mahony, Leisure Manager mike.o'mahony@eastdevon.gov.uk ; Tim Child

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 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

- [Endorsement by Cabinet - Printed minutes 13th-Jul-2022 18.00 Cabinet.pdf](#)
- [Endorsement by Full Council - Printed minutes 19th-Oct-2022 18.00 Council.pdf](#)
- [Endorsement by Cabinet - Printed minutes 13th-Jul-2022 18.00 Cabinet.pdf](#)
- [Endorsement by Leisure Delivery Forum - 070622 Leisure Strategy report_LED Forum.pdf](#)
- [Update to the Forum – 16 September 2025](#)
- [Leisure Strategy Addendum 2025](#)
- [Cranbrook Demographics April 2025](#)
- [Cranbrook Sports Facility Calculator](#)
- [Second Community Sports Facility Calculator](#)

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 Background

- 1.1 The East Devon Leisure Strategy, produced in June 2022, is supported by a Supply and Demand Audit which identifies the current and future facility needs to support an increase in population in the District through to 2040. This coincides with the end date of the Council's new Local Plan.
- 1.2 The Leisure Strategy highlights significant population growth to the western side of East Devon with the development of the new town of Cranbrook. Construction of the new town started in 2011 and will eventually deliver approximately 8,000 new homes for approximately 22,000 people. The East Devon District Council (EDDC) Local Plan, Cranbrook Plan and Cranbrook Town Centre Masterplan all refer to the infrastructure requirements to support the growing population. This includes a new leisure centre and health hub in the town centre.
- 1.3 At the time of writing the Leisure Strategy in 2021/22, EDDC had identified an indicative facility mix for a new leisure centre in Cranbrook, however no progress had been made in negotiating with developers and securing a preferred site for the facility in the town centre.

2.0 Current Status

- 2.1 Since then, EDDC has negotiated a total public sector holding of 4.1 hectares in Cranbrook to facilitate the delivery of essential infrastructure, business and employment opportunities within the town centre.

- 2.2 The new EDDC Local Plan has also allocated land to the east of Exeter, within the 'West End' of the District for second new community of up to 10,000 homes. This new town will be approximately 4 miles from Cranbrook.
- 2.3 In response to the above existing and proposed housing development, this Addendum seeks to re-assess the facilities mix for the proposed Cranbrook Leisure Centre to ensure that current and future facility needs are met to support the increase in population .
- 2.4 The Addendum covers strategic context, future facility needs and makes recommendations for the next steps to be taken taking into consideration the town's key demographics and the potential development of a second housing development (Marlcombe) of 10,000 dwellings in close proximity to Cranbrook.
- 2.5 The information contained in this Addendum will support the work currently being undertaken by a Project Team established to
- identify and explore all options for a new leisure centre in Cranbrook;
 - develop a business plan, operating model and funding strategy;
 - provide a clear approach for delivery of the scheme for each stage of the project;
 - Funding strategy and
 - consider management arrangements to operate and maintain the facility.
- 2.6 The Leisure Delivery Forum considered and endorsed this Addendum on 16th September 2025. The only clarification sought related to the latest amounts of S106 contributions currently allocated to the Cranbrook Leisure Centre project and when the inflationary increases apply.
- 2.7 The expansion of Cranbrook is expected to provide a capital contribution toward the delivery of a leisure centre, currently at a total of around £4.5m in today's money. The Addendum originally referred to around £5 million by the time construction commences as this figure is subject to inflationary increases. This has been adjusted to £4.5m for consistency. A more informed funding strategy will form part of the Project team's brief.
- 2.8 There was a lot of consultation during the development of the Leisure Strategy and the Cranbrook Masterplan. Since then, there has been regular updates to the Leisure Delivery Forum. The Addendum itself applies a technical supply and demand analysis to address latest changes to Cranbrook and Marlcombe since the Strategy was developed.
- 2.9 The most pressing need was to consolidate the core facility mix for the new Cranbrook Leisure Centre. The Addendum has essentially re-enforced the recommendations set out in the original Leisure Strategy and clarified how the proposals for Marlcombe complement what is being recommended for Cranbrook.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to approve and forward the Leisure Addendum to Full Council with a recommendation to endorse the Leisure Addendum as an update to the Leisure Strategy 2021 - 2031.

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