

Report to: Leisure Strategy Delivery Forum



Date of Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026

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Review date for release N/A

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## Cranbrook Leisure Centre

### 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 multi-disciplinary design team has now been appointed and the RIBA stage 2 design has commenced. This design stage takes the project through Concept Design, allowing the design to be tested, coordinated and more detailed costing undertaken. The multi-disciplinary design team have been appointed to secure Planning Consent. It is currently anticipated that the Planning Application will be submitted in Summer 2026.

In parallel with the design, engagement has commenced with the Contracting market to place the Council in the best possible position to ensure the successful delivery of the project. 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.

### 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

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### **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, a commitment has been made to fund fees for the advancement of design.

### **Links to background information**

- Leisure Delivery Forum September 2025 - [CLC Update - Covering Report.pdf](#)

### **Link to [Council Plan](#)**

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#### 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:

- RIBA Stage 2 design now underway.
- Planning for first Public Consultation event commenced.
- Market Engagement underway with Contractors to ensure that the scheme can be delivered to the market for tender at the optimal time.
- Ecology and Arboricultural surveys underway.
- Comms plan developed and implemented.
- Risk management ongoing.
- Engagement with DCC in regard to their facility and its inclusion within the Leisure facility.

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. This work is not progressing at the same pace as the Leisure project.

- 1.3 In addition to the development of designs, 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 most immediate steps include the progression of the project through RIBA Stage 2, allowing design development, public consultation and more detailed cost planning.
- 2.2 In addition, the team are working to develop a Contractor procurement strategy to ensure the longer term success of the project.
- 2.3 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 Additional surveys will be commissioned over the coming period.

## **3.0 Funding**

- 3.1 The team are currently working to deliver to the budget agreed by Council on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025.
- 3.2 A funding strategy and Business Case is being developed in regard to the capital required to allow the construction of the facility.
- 3.3 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. 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.

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## **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.