

Report to: **Strategic Planning Committee**

Date of Meeting: 20 February 2019

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None

Agenda item: 6

Subject: **Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document**

Purpose of report: The report relates to the publication of the proposed submission version of the Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document.

Recommendation: **That Members:**

- 1. Approve the Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document for consultation as detailed in this report and in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.**
- 2. Recommend the Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document to Full Council for submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public.**
- 3. Note the position in terms of the current planning applications for the expansion of the town.**
- 4. Grant delegated powers to the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management to make minor changes and address any typo's and other errors to the document prior to consultation.**

Reason for recommendation: To allow the production of a Development Plan Document to guide the expansion of Cranbrook to around 8,000 homes to be progressed.

Officer: Ed Freeman - Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management, 01395 517519

Financial implications: The financial implications detailed in this report are complex particularly around the viability assessment and links to the CIL review. External consultants have been engaged to examine the costs of delivery and the most appropriate means of funding these costs, the conclusions and implications are detailed in the report.

Legal implications: As a development plan document the Cranbrook Plan will sit alongside the East Devon Local Plan and will form part of the development plan for East Devon. At this stage there are no legal implications other than as set out in the report.

Equalities impact: High Impact

The Development Plan document will need to ensure that the needs of all groups and sections of society are considered and catered for, including Gypsies and Travellers.

Risk: Medium Risk

The expansion of Cranbrook to circa 7850 homes represents the single largest contribution to meeting the strategic housing requirement in the



District. It is vital that this comes forward on a comprehensive basis. The Cranbrook Development Plan document is identified in the Local Plan as being critical to securing the long term success of Cranbrook.

Links to background information:

- Cranbrook Plan Preferred Approach documentation
<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/cranbrook-plan/cranbrook-plan-preferred-approach-consultation-201718/#article-content>
- Issues and Options report
<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/cranbrook-plan/issues-and-options-consultation/#article-content>
- Cranbrook Plan evidence base
<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/cranbrook-plan/cranbrook-plan-evidence-base/#article-content>
- Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan
- <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2653631/Rockbeare-Neighbourhood-Plan-Referendum-Version-July18.pdf>

Link to Council Plan: Encouraging communities to be outstanding, developing an outstanding local economy, delivering and promoting our outstanding environment.

1 Background

Outline planning permission for the first 2,900 homes at Cranbrook was issued in October 2010 followed shortly by the reserved matters for the first 1100 homes in April 2011. Development commenced in June 2011 and progress since then has been rapid. Particular milestones have included:

- The first households moving in during July 2012
- The opening of the first primary school (St Martin's) in September 2012
- The start of the bus service in May 2013
- Elections to the newly formed Cranbrook Town Council in May 2015
- The opening of the new education campus (including the second primary school and first secondary school) and the first shop in September 2015
- The commencement of rail services from Cranbrook station in December 2015
- The opening of the Cranberry Farm pub in the town centre in May 2017

Today there are approximately 1,900 households living at Cranbrook, equivalent to a population of around 4,400 people. The town has been given Healthy New Town status (one of only ten such developments in England) as part of an NHS England programme and alongside Exeter has been selected as one of 12 demonstrator sites for a Sport England Local Delivery Pilot aimed at tackling inactivity. These demonstrate that Cranbrook has a national profile.

2 Local Plan

The Local Plan 2013-2031 anticipates Cranbrook comprising approximately 7,850 new homes by 2031. This equates to a population of around 18,500 people meaning that Cranbrook will have quickly expanded to become the second largest town in the District. Accommodating a further 4,270 homes at Cranbrook over and above what currently has the benefit of planning permission represents the single largest contribution to meeting the strategic housing requirement in the District.

2 Cranbrook Plan to date

In November 2014 the Council committed to a masterplanning exercise, known as the Cranbrook Plan, to review progress with the new town, refresh the vision and guide the expansion to 7,850 homes. Specifically this would address the 1,550 homes that are not currently allocated through Strategy 12 and will be the primary document that is turned to and used in determining future planning applications at Cranbrook. The Cranbrook Plan will form part of the suite of documents making up the Development Plan for East Devon.

In June and July 2016 an issues and options public consultation was held in relation to the Cranbrook Plan. The consultation responses highlighted that minimising impact upon surrounding communities, noise on proposed residents and returning the London Road to being a focus for commercial development are all important factors to the public. The two favoured development scenarios both involved some development south of the London Road (B3174), including development to the north east of Rockbeare.

In November 2017, Strategic Planning Committee approved an 8 week period of consultation on a preferred approach document for the Cranbrook Plan, which took forward the favoured development scenarios and produced a draft masterplan for development to show these. This consultation ran from 10 November 2017 to 8 January 2018 and although was not a statutory requirement, consultation at such a stage is considered good practice.

The preferred approach consultation documentation comprised the masterplan for Cranbrook, which set out the evidence behind the preferred approach as well as plans identifying land for differing types of development, and a separate list of policy requirements. In addition, the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment reports to accompany the plan were also consulted upon. The evidence base behind the plan was available for public viewing during the consultation period.

A total of 138 consultation responses were received during the consultation period. Of these, 6 were from Town and Parish Councils, 2 from County Councils (Devon and Somerset), 2 from District Councillors, 16 from other groups and consultation bodies, 12 from developers or agents and the remaining 100 from members of the public. The majority of the representations from members of the public were from residents of Cranbrook and the surrounding settlements of Broadclyst Station, Rockbeare and Whimble.

5. Cranbrook Plan Publication document

Officers have now finalised production of a proposed publication version of the Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document. This has been produced taking into account the feedback received during the previous Preferred Approach consultation in late 2017/early 2018 and that received from the meetings of Strategic Planning Committee on 20 March 2018 and 27 November 2018. In addition, Officers have had a dialogue with members regarding the production of the plan as well as officers from Devon County Council and members of Cranbrook Town Council in order to refine and evidence the Plan. Furthermore, other interested stakeholders such as interested land owners, agents and developers, the Cranbrook Healthy New Towns Executive and NEW Devon CCG have all been consulted on specific matters in order to ensure that the plan is based upon the most up-to-date evidence as possible. Discussion of headline matters of interest is given in the following paragraphs.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Since the closing of the Preferred Approach consultation, in July 2018 the Government published the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). For the purposes of plan making, transitional provisions embedded in the July 2018 publication have come to an end and The Cranbrook Plan DPD must be in compliance with the new document; Officers are confident of this

being the case and the plan now presented has been developed following the policy direction set out in the NPPF.

Housing numbers

The Cranbrook Plan DPD now presented allocates land for a total of 4,170 dwellings plus 15 permanent gypsy and traveller pitches. In respect of the dwelling allocations this is expressed in each expansion area as an approximate figure and therefore could result in a minor number of dwellings above or below these figures being achieved. Across the four expansion areas the accommodation is split as follows:

Bluehayes expansion area: 960 dwellings

Treabeare expansion area: 915 dwellings, 5 gypsy and traveller pitches

Cobdens expansion area: 1495 dwellings, 10 gypsy and traveller pitches

Grange expansion area: 800 dwellings

Development at Cranbrook has already consented a total of 3,580 dwellings which gives a resultant figure of 7,750 dwellings in the expanded town. This is 100 dwellings short of the target figure of 7,850 dwellings set out in Strategy 12 Development at Cranbrook of the adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031.

However, additional dwellings are expected to be delivered in Cranbrook Town Centre beyond those allocated in the four expansion areas and already consented as part of the original outline planning permission for the town (which apportions approximately 200 dwellings to the town centre). The addition of these properties will take housing delivery at Cranbrook to at least those set out in Strategy 12.

Health and Wellbeing

The built environment is being increasingly recognised as having an impact upon people's health and wellbeing. With the NHS recently announcing in their 10 year plan that the aim is to look to preventative measures for ill health rather than reactive measures to improve health outcomes, it is imperative that the planning system takes account of this. Over the last few years and particularly since Cranbrook became one of NHS England's 10 demonstrator sites for the Healthy New Town programme there has been increasing collaboration between the differing health bodies and the planning team at Cranbrook. This has led towards the production of the direction of strategy for health and wellbeing in the town.

The Plan puts the good health and wellbeing of residents of the town as a principal strategic policy (Policy CB1). This manifests itself throughout the Plan but in particular in terms of the delivery of infrastructure, including a health and wellbeing hub with satellite uses in neighbourhood centres, leisure centre and open space; through the promotion of activity and active travel on well designed and thought out routes; locating development so that it is within walking distance of local amenities and seeking new dwellings to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards.

Development in Green Wedge

At Preferred Approach stage of the DPD production it was proposed to include a limited amount of built development in the Green Wedge surrounding Rockbeare (Local Plan 2013-2031 Strategy 8 Development in Green Wedges) as part of both the Treasbeare and Grange expansion areas.

Since that time the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan has been made and now forms part of the East Devon Development Plan. The Plan includes policy Rock06 Green Wedge which builds upon Strategy 8 in the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 and states that development in the Green Wedge in the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan area will not be supported other than in limited cases (for agriculture, horticulture or forestry, to support the Clyst Valley Regional Park or where within existing curtilage and proportionate in scale and type). This policy is therefore more restrictive than the wording of Strategy 8.

At the meeting of SPC on 27 November 2018 members expressed concern at continuing to look to allocate land within this Green Wedge in the Grange expansion area in light of the now made Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan and the conflict with policy Rock06. The Cranbrook Plan does not have to comply with the neighbourhood plan under the legislation but it is acknowledged that weight should be given to the neighbourhood plan and the principles of localism that underpin it.

Officers have reviewed this situation once again, considering alternative land availability and the impacts of allocating differing land parcels. As part of the Preferred Approach consultation in late 2017/early 2018, additional land to the east of the then identified Grange expansion area was put forward for development. Officers have also enquired of the intervening land owner who has confirmed the availability of their land for development.

These additional land parcels have been appraised in further detail, including with respect to archaeological and drainage considerations and are considered suitable for development. The inclusion of this land and the exclusion of that within the Rockbeare Green Wedge as shown in policy Rock06 results in the same overall quantum of housing within the Cranbrook Plan and extends the town no further east than was previously indicated, having regard to the extent of the Cobdens expansion area to the north of London Road (B3174).

It must be noted that the spatial impacts of the removal of the land previously indicated for development does result in a slightly longer stretch of single sided development on London Road in a relatively central location in the town and this has a potential impact upon the character of the town and the accessibility of services. Nevertheless, Officers consider that the inclusion of this alternative land is sound when the plan is taken as a whole.

Viability

Viability appraisal of the Cranbrook Plan has taken place by external consultants alongside the review of the East Devon CIL charging schedule, which is presented separately on this meeting agenda.

The viability assessment has robustly examined the full costs of implementing the development, based upon the layout shown in the Masterplan accompanying the Cranbrook Plan. A list of infrastructure required to be delivered at Cranbrook in order to ensure the creation of a happy, healthy and sustainable town has been produced and contribution amounts refined in light of further discussion with stakeholders and Members to prioritise monies.

As part of the tandem CIL review and following the announcement by the Government to change the CIL Regulations to lift the current pooling restrictions for S106 obligations, the proposal is to have a nil (£0) CIL charge for residential development at Cranbrook and instead to secure infrastructure funding and delivery through S106 agreements. The viability assessment for the Cranbrook Plan has been based on this mechanism.

The utilisation of S106 agreements in lieu of CIL payments at the town will ensure that development at Cranbrook delivers the necessary on and off-site infrastructure to support the expanding community and that this is done in a timely fashion. This timely delivery is of particular pertinence given the strategic scale of development at Cranbrook and the detrimental impacts that would arise if crucial facilities are not delivered or are delayed in delivery, given the relative infancy of the town and its currently available facilities and services.

In order to deliver a viable Plan, it is proposed that the affordable housing rate for Cranbrook is set at 15%. This is lower than the 25% currently applicable to the two already allocated expansion areas for the town and would be the lowest affordable housing rate in the District. However, the cost of infrastructure delivery is high and the viability exercise had demonstrated that the Plan would be unviable if a rate of 25% were sought.

In addition to 15% affordable housing, the Plan sets out that not less than 4% of housing delivery should be provided as plots for custom and self-build housing. Whilst not falling under the definition of affordable housing set out in the NPPF, such a route is traditionally more cost effective for occupiers than buying a home on the open market. The plan also seeks a wider range of housing types than have previously been provided at Cranbrook to better meet the needs of the community.

Town Centre and Neighbourhood Centres

Cranbrook Town Centre was granted planning permission as part of the original outline planning permission for the first 2900 homes back in October 2010. Since then only The Cranberry Farm pub has been constructed on the land and residential development of the town has now taken place both east and west of the Town Centre, leaving it as a void.

It is imperative that the Town Centre is developed in such a way that recognises the shift away from a traditional retail led centre and instead seeks to generate activity from a wider range of uses and those which encourage the growth of a community. The viability work in support of the plan helps to give clarity over the funding available from the development to support delivery and while other funding sources will still be needed the clarity provided will help work to progress on delivery of facilities in the town centre. Policy CB22 sets out the building blocks for this to occur and proposes that activity is focussed around a town square which would become a focus of activity. The Cranbrook Plan proposes to identify a formal Town Centre boundary which will allow for consideration of the impact of out-of-town proposals at Cranbrook and elsewhere (e.g. proposals on the eastern side of Exeter) upon it.

Policy CB23 of the Plan relates to the delivery of residential accommodation in both the Town Centre and the Neighbourhood Centres. This is encouraged overall as it is recognised that the presence of people living in these areas is needed to secure footfall and both day time and night time activity.

Research carried out as part of the NHS Healthy New Towns programme assessed the accessibility of routes through the Town Centre and has made suggestions over the best routes for sustaining footfall dependent uses in the long term. Crucially, this has identified the London Road (B3174) as being the best route due to its level of accessibility and connectivity with other places. As a result, the Cranbrook Plan includes a policy (CB24) which supports the principle of development of retail and footfall dependent uses along a stretch of the London Road running east from the existing junction of the London Road with the Town Centre. This is envisaged to act as a benefit to the main Town Centre, drawing people into it and will not detract from activities within.

Habitat Mitigation

Cranbrook is located within the 10km zone of influence of both the Pebblebed Heaths and the Exe Estuary and accordingly new development must ensure that it adequately mitigates for the impacts it would otherwise have on these European protected sites.

Crucially for development allocated at Cranbrook this involves the delivery of approximately 78 hectares of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS). The Plan identifies 100 hectares of land for this use in each of the four different expansion areas, providing scope for land to come forward in different areas to meet the needs of differing land owners and developments and allowing for any discounts which may be necessary in areas where for example, the land is at risk of flood. In addition the Plan and associated viability testing allows for financial contributions towards off-site mitigation measures in line with the South East Devon Mitigation Strategy.

The Plan also requires the production of Landscape, biodiversity and drainage strategies for the expansion areas. These documents will ensure that at a strategic level these matters are

considered and a strategy developed to minimise impacts and where possible lead to net gains in biodiversity and on-site surface water infiltration.

6 Next steps

Consultation

Following endorsement of the submission of the Cranbrook Plan to the Planning Inspectorate by both Strategic Planning Committee and Full Council there is a legal requirement for a consultation period of not less than 6 weeks. Any representations received during this period will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate for their assessment as part of the submission of the Plan; no action is taken by the Council on these representations.

It is proposed that this final round of consultation runs from Monday 11th March – Wednesday 23rd April inclusive. The additional days beyond the 6 week period are to allow for the Bank Holidays on Good Friday and Easter Monday. During this period of consultation, copies of the Plan submission documents will be made available on the East Devon District Council website, at the Council's offices in Honiton and Exmouth and at the Younghayes Centre in Cranbrook, which is in excess of our legal obligations and the level of consultation committed to for this stage of Plan production in the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

The purdah pre-election period begins on Friday 22nd March, meaning that the majority of the consultation period will occur during purdah. This is acceptable and meets with the rules and guidance governing such a period.

It is proposed that an informative display of the Plan proposals will be on permanent display at the Younghayes Centre in Cranbrook during this period of consultation and that public exhibitions will be held in Cranbrook, Rockbeare and Clyst Honiton in order to give the public the chance to ask any questions. It is not proposed to hold an exhibition in Broadclyst during this time as properties directly affected by the proposals which are in Broadclyst Parish are closer to Cranbrook than the village of Broadclyst. During the Preferred Approach consultation an exhibition was held in Broadclyst Victory Hall (in the centre of the village) which attracted only one visitor during the 3hr event, despite other activities being held at the hall during that period. An offer for Officers to attend a meeting of Cranbrook Town Council, Rockbeare Parish Council, Clyst Honiton Parish Council, Broadclyst Parish Council and Whimble Parish Council in order to answer questions arising will be made.

Submission of the Cranbrook Plan DPD

Following this final period of consultation the Cranbrook Plan and associated documents and supporting evidence, including comments received during the consultation, will be submitted for examination. A government appointed Planning Inspector will assess the plan and come to final conclusions on whether it is sound and can be formally approved and adopted under plan making processes and regulations. The Inspector may recommend a number of changes to the plan and it may also be that further consultation, on these, is required. On final adoption by the Council the plan will, however, carry its full statutory weight in decision making processes.

The current Local Development Scheme (LDS) for East Devon, which sets out the work programme and timescales for plan production has out-of-date timescales for the production of the Cranbrook Plan as a result of delays unknown at the time the LDS was drafted. The timetable below is an up-to-date estimate of the dates of key events leading up to the adoption of the Cranbrook Plan.

March/April 2019 – Publication stage consultation

June 2019 – Submission to Planning Inspectorate

September 2019 – Inspector's Hearings

March 2020 – Adoption of the Cranbrook Plan DPD

Applications

In 2014 an outline planning application was made by Cranbrook LVA Llp for up to 250 homes on land known as Farlands, north of London Road, but outside the allocated land for the expansion of the town. Discussions continue with the applicant in respect of this application and in particular regarding infrastructure requests to support the delivery of housing on this land, which the Preferred Approach consultation documentation identified for development.

In 2015 outline planning applications were submitted for the three expansion areas (Bluehayes, Cobdens and Treasbeare) in the control of members of the New Community Partners. Two of the three areas (bar Treasbeare) is allocated for development in the East Devon Local Plan 2013- 2031. Each of the applications contained insufficient information in support of the submitted Environmental Statements and were subject of Regulation 22 (now Regulation 25) notices under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, seeking additional information. The information requested has never been submitted in respect of any of the three applications and they continue to be held in abeyance.

In 2017 a revised outline planning application was submitted by Hallam Land Management and Taylor Wimpey for the Treasbeare expansion land. The application sought to address a number of concerns previously raised in relation to the earlier 2015 application and to more closely align with the anticipated masterplan. Discussions on this specific application have not progressed in recent months although discussions more generally on masterplan issues have been the subject of regular meetings in order to resolve conflict and share knowledge and expertise in order to reach a positive outcome for all.

Each of these applications is divergent to a greater or lesser degree with the Cranbrook Plan DPD and so it is envisaged that these applications would need to go through a process of trying to align them with the DPD before we would be in a position to determine these applications. In the event that alignment with the DPD is achieved in advance of the examination of the plan the Members views on determining the application at that stage will be sought. There is pressure from the developers to grant consent for these applications to maintain delivery rates at Cranbrook or at least to gain a resolution to approve in order to progress drafting of Section 106 agreements and enable delivery post resolution of the new CIL Charging schedule. It is likely that an early resolution to grant would be more acceptable on the allocated east and west expansion areas where these proposals are in accordance with the local plan. The other expansion areas do not benefit from local plan allocations and so are more reliant on the adoption of the DPD for policy support.