



Cranbrook Town Council

Business Plan 2018-2023

Issue Number	Date Completed	Details of Amendments
1		First Draft - Finance and Personnel Committee 5 March 2018
2		Second Draft – Approved by Town Council 23 April 2018
3		Version 1. – published 4 May 2018

Version Number 1.

Contents	Page
Foreword by Town Council Chairman	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Cranbrook	4
3. Overview of the Town Council	5
4. Management Structure	6
5. Corporate Vision	6
6. Financial Information	7
7. Council's functions	8
8. Reviewing this plan	10
9. Consultation	10
Forward budgets	Appendix A

Foreword by Town Council Chairman

Cranbrook is now five years old but remains a work in progress with development in the town continuing until far beyond the scope of this plan. The Town Councillors and staff are working hard to ensure that the public facilities that you have asked for are provided in the town.

As a completely new development we know that these much-needed facilities will come from funding raised by the sale of new homes. With that in mind we are working very closely with the developers and planning authority to ensure that development comes forward at both the right pace and at the right quality and that infrastructure and facilities are delivered at the appropriate time and place. There are many things that we would all like to see in the Town but we all need to accept that not everything will happen immediately.

The Town Council is working within a number of uncertainties not least the outcome of the Cranbrook Masterplan preferred options document and the limitations of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in providing sufficient funds from house building to deliver everything that the town desires. On top of that we know that Cranbrook, as it expands, will encroach into the current land areas of surrounding Parishes. We have an expectation that East Devon District Council will carry out a governance review of the Parish boundaries to ensure that the totality of Cranbrook is within the governance of the Town Council. We need to ensure that Council Tax receipts that are needed for the Town Council to manage the town facilities are available to the Town Council.

Your Town Councillors have produced this Five-Year Plan so as to inform you what you might expect from the Town Council during that period. It also provides you with some up-to-date facts and figures about how the Town Council operates, and a list of achievements from the past year, which you might find informative.

We hope that the contents of this Business Plan will give you the confidence to believe that your town is being managed in an efficient, forward-thinking, and effective way.

Kevin Blakey
Chairman
Cranbrook Town Council.

1.Introduction

What is the purpose of the Plan?

This Plan is our blueprint for how Cranbrook Town Council will work in a co-ordinated way in the best interests of all who live and work in our town. It sets out our vision, objectives and priorities.

It is our ‘action plan’ for the next five years.

This Plan will drive and determine the direction and content of our strategies and our resources, particularly through the budget process. The detailed content of the Plan will be strongly influenced by other work and will need to be regularly reviewed and updated accordingly. Internal pressure will largely arise from plans to improve service quality and the availability of resources. External pressure will arise particularly from our partnership work with developers, the Exeter and East Devon Growth Point Team, The Local Planning Authority (East Devon District Council), The County Council and changes in legislation.

Later in the Plan we have identified:

- The key priorities associated with each of Cranbrook Town Council’s vision and long-term outcomes
- The priorities and actions of the Council over the next five years

Why do we need a Plan?

The Plan helps ensure that the Council can take a planned and consistent approach to the design and delivery of services, how we prioritise and allocate resources and how we achieve value for money.

How do we ensure Community Involvement?

The Council has to recognise both national and local priorities especially those within the East Devon Local Plan and the Cranbrook Masterplan in addition to the rules set out within local government legislation. The meetings of the Council are open to members of the public and we encourage attendance and provide the opportunity for the public to speak at our meetings. We have both a website and social media presence which recognises that the favoured method of communication within Cranbrook is social media. We also make use of more traditional channels of communication including noticeboards and we work closely with the local press.

This new Plan sets out for Members, staff, and the community we serve, our mission, purpose and priorities for the next five years.

2. Cranbrook

Cranbrook lies to the north-east of Exeter, approximately 2km to the east of the M5 motorway and north of the A30. The northern extent of Cranbrook is formed by the West of England Railway Line which serves Cranbrook railway station providing direct services to Exeter St Davids and London Waterloo. Exeter Airport lies to the immediate south-west.

Development is on former agricultural land and around an existing flood plain. The locality has a small number of existing rural dwellings and one small hamlet which will be within the town once it is complete.

Cranbrook commenced development in 2011 with first home occupations in 2012. Since its commencement three phases of development have been completed with the fourth in the process of reserved matters planning. Once complete this will take the town to 3500 homes. Further expansion areas are planned, taking the town to between 7000 and 8000 homes by the end of the East Devon District Council Local Plan period (2031).

To the west, between Cranbrook and the M5, further employment development is taking place at Skypark (warehouse, distribution and office space), Science Park (High Tech industry and Met Office) and Hayes Farm (the existing Lidl distribution centre and other large warehouse and distribution facilities). These will provide extensive local employment opportunities to supplement those within the town.

Education is provided by two existing schools with primary education for up to 420 pupils at St. Martin's Primary School and all through facilities at Cranbrook Education Campus.

The Younghayes Centre, a multi-purpose building (MPB) in phase 1 currently houses The Growth Point Team, Town Council, Action East Devon, Library, a small medical practice, a small meeting room and a sports hall that is predominantly used for meetings and social space. The MBP is adjacent to a small parade of neighbourhood shops.

The Town Centre remains to be developed and this is a particular focus for the Town Council.

3. Overview of the Town Council

The Council was created by a Governance Review in 2015 and is made up of 12 Councillors who are elected every four years. The first Town Council was elected through planned elections in May 2015 and are scheduled to be held again in May 2019.

The Chair and Deputy Chair are elected by the Councillors at the annual meeting of the Town Council in May each year.

There are three committees: Amenities, Planning and Finance & Personnel.

A Local Action Group (LAG) has been formed where Town Council and partners meet to respond to issues affecting the community. The LAG reports to and co-ordinates with the East and Mid-Devon Community Safety Partnership and is primarily concerned with community safety and crime reduction.

There are three standing working groups - Asset Delivery; Younghayes Centre Business Planning, and Safety. Other working groups are formed to deal with specific issues as they emerge.

The Full Council meets monthly. The Amenities Committee and the Finance and Personnel Committee meet approximately every 6 weeks. The Planning Committee is called as required to meet the 21day timescale for commenting on planning applications and other planning matters.

Full Council meetings and committee meetings are held in the Younghayes Centre and are open to the public. Agendas for full Council and all committee meetings make provision for members of the public to speak, make representations, ask questions or give evidence in respect of the business on the agenda.

As at 1st January 2018 the town had an electorate of approximately 2500 and around 1700 households. The current growth rate is between 150 and 200 new homes per annum but this is expected to rise over the next five years.

The Town Clerk and other staff members work from the Town Council Office located in the Younghayes Centre.

The Council has adopted the 'General Power of Competence', a legal power which enables the Council to undertake a wider range of activities to serve the community.

The Town Council is non-political and non-religious in nature, and serves all members of the community, regardless of their age, race, sex, national origin, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

4. Management Structure

The administration of the Town Council is carried out by a qualified Town Clerk who has been appointed by the Council and employed on a full-time basis. The Town Clerk is required to carry out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

A part time Executive Assistant provides administrative support to the Town Clerk and the Council and has responsibility for specific activities including website and social media updating, asset registers and risk assessments, and is often the first point of contact when contacting the Council.

A part time Administrative Assistant is in charge of the management of the Younghayes Centre, including the bookings for the main hall and the meeting room.

As the town grows and, with it the Town Council's adoption, ownership and responsibilities of additional assets, additional staff resources will be required including the appointment of a Deputy Town Clerk. This appointment is essential and needs to be addressed within the financial year 2018/19 in order that the town is able to manage its affairs and responsibilities from April 2019 onwards.

Town Centre development will require the engagement of a town centre manager but for the purposes of this plan it is assumed that this will be in partnership with EDDC and that any costs will be met from town centre income. These anticipated costs do not, therefore, figure in the financial plan set out at the end of this document as appendix A.

5. Corporate Vision

We see Cranbrook Town Council as a modern organisation which strives to be open to all, transparent and responsive. We pride ourselves in working with and for people in order to help create a place where everyone feels part of a strong, prosperous and vibrant community. We want Cranbrook to be a safe, clean and green environment where everyone is proud to live and bring up their families.

The Council aspires to be a leader in the development in the town and is working hard together with partner organisations to drive future development, including an inviting and attractive town centre, to propose suggestions for improvement to existing and future infrastructure, and to resolve outstanding issues affecting the town.

Furthermore, it is looking to start adopting and managing assets from 1st April 2018 including:

- Multi-purpose Town Hall (see below);
- Spaces for the arts and sculptures;
- the Country Park and other public open space;
- Skate park(s);
- Play Parks;
- Sports provision: and
- Allotments.

The Council is also looking to provide many services, including the maintenance of community areas and open spaces, hosting community events, community competitions and opportunities for young people.

The Council is working together with partner organisations in the delivery of

- excellent public transport;
- 21st century telecommunications;
- top class sport and leisure facilities, including a swimming pool;
- road policing and speed control;
- Cranbrook as a destination, e.g. the shopping location outside Exeter;
- cycle routes and facilities;
- hire bikes;
- car sharing;
- enterprise, business development and support; and
- improvements to the Country Park.

In taking this work forward, the Town Council is conscious of the financial pressures and limitations that it faces and is prepared to campaign for the facilities that a town the eventual size and scale of Cranbrook requires. But there will be some difficult choices to make along the way.

Delivery of the town centre is crucial to the economic and social well-being of the town and the Town Council will work with the developers and Local Planning Authority to bring forward a vibrant and modern space. The key question in the 21st century is what does a modern town centre look like? With Exeter just 9 minutes away by train and with good local connections, Cranbrook Town Centre needs to have that unique selling point to attract both townsfolk and neighbours.

The Town Council is looking to commission a multi-purpose Town Hall in the centre of Cranbrook in partnership with other agencies. The vision is that this building will incorporate the Town Council offices and Council Chamber, a library, a café, a catering kitchen, toilets, small offices for business hire, flexible meetings spaces, exhibition space and bar. It is anticipated that the Town Hall will be designed and built within the next five years. The Council hopes that the Town Hall will be at the heart of the community of Cranbrook as the hub for community and social activities, and will benefit residents, tradespeople and visitors alike.

The Council has formulated its risk appetite and stated that it strives to be entrepreneurial and therefore content to take measured risks, considering each case on its merits.

6. Financial Information

The annual expenditure for the Council for 2018/19 is estimated at £449,100.00. This is funded from the Council's activities and the Cranbrook element of the council tax known as the precept, which for 2018/19 is £388,398.00.

The precept is collected through the council tax system on our behalf by East Devon District Council as the rating authority.

The Town Council's five-year business plan will set out projected details of its future spending in order that residents can receive an indication of what the precept will be in the future.

Council Tax Band D for 2018/19 is £1996.29 of which £256.03 (12.8%) is contributed directly to the Town Council

The Council will adopt a balanced approach to capital expenditure in respect of the procurement of new assets and the maintenance of its existing assets. The first priority should, however, be on developing and maintaining existing assets.

The Council will seek to maximise capital receipts from the sale of any assets that are deemed surplus to requirements in the future. No targets for capital receipts have been set at this point. Additional income may also be generated, where appropriate, through renting, leasing etc. of the Town Council's assets.

The Council will adopt a risk-based approach to its levels of reserves which will be reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary. Currently, the minimum level of general reserves will be set at approximately six months gross general operating costs (excluding open space maintenance). Reserves will only be held above the minimum level for specific, earmarked purposes.

Councillors have taken the decision not to claim an allowance for their duties.

7. Council's functions

There are three key drivers which will influence the functions of the Town Council over the short and medium term:

The first key driver is the decision taken towards the end of the 2017/18 administrative year to work with the Developer Consortium to remove the Estate Rent Charge (ERC) and subsume the responsibilities of the ERC into council tax. This is effective from 1st April 2018.

The second key driver is the decision taken by Council in December 2017 to work with East Devon District Council to adopt responsibility for ownership and management of the Younghayes Centre as soon as possible.

The third key driver is the current attitude of higher tier councils (mainly driven by constraints on their funding and the reduction and the expected eventual cessation of the central government grant) to be reluctant to adopt anything other than their statutory responsibilities.

As the town grows we can therefore expect Devon County Council to gradually adopt the highways and street lighting and East Devon District Council to continue to collect kerbside waste and recycling and to street clean and empty litter bins on the main local routes once they are adopted by the County Council.

Beyond these statutory responsibilities any discretionary functions that fall to a local authority will ultimately fall to the Town Council.

From April 2018 the Town Council will adopt ownership and responsibility for managing those parts of the Country Park (including drainage) that have been laid out together with the two play parks that have been delivered and a number of additional areas of public open space.

As the town grows and other areas of open space and recreation come forward, these will pass to the town council once they have been completed satisfactorily and undergone a 12 months maintenance period - effectively a guarantee period during which they remain within the responsibility of the Developer Consortium. This process provides the Town Council with comfort

that assets are properly delivered and within a timescale that allows the Council to budget accordingly.

Over the next five years the Council expects to adopt further facilities including additional areas of Country Park, an Ecology Park, five more play parks (including a trim trail and multi-use games area or MUGA), a skate park, sports facilities and associated drainage facilities. This is an ambitious programme linked to an ambitious housing delivery timescale that could see between 350 and 500 homes delivered in Cranbrook per year.

The decision to adopt the Younghayes Centre (YHC) was driven by two important factors - the need to ensure that it remains available as a community resource within the town and the opportunity to develop its use both as a community asset and a source of income to support the delivery of local services.

The development and management of key assets such as open space, play parks and YHC will form a large part of the Town Council's functions over the short and medium term but in addition the town is a key partner in the delivery of housing and other development as well as a statutory consultee on the many planning applications that will come forward over the next few years.

The nature of the development of Cranbrook - essentially a private development funded from house sales - dictates that the future delivery of infrastructure and assets stem from the various legal agreements associated with planning applications (S.106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy or CIL). To this end the Town Council will work closely with the Developer Consortium and other key partners to ensure that facilities are provided in accordance within the framework of those legal agreements.

In addition, the Town Council through its Amenities Committee will work with developers and partners to monitor delivery and ensure that any identified defects are corrected.

The Town Council will continue to work with its partners Youth Genesis to deliver youth services and outreach and these arrangements will need to be extended as the town grows. The Town Council will also support the wider community by providing grant funding support for local groups with the longer term aim of supporting their individual sustainability.

The town benefits from District Heating which will bring forward considerable savings in carbon emissions and the Town Council will continue to work closely with E.on to ensure that this service is delivered appropriately.

The town has access to high speed fibre broadband delivered through a range of providers. The Town Council will continue to work closely with all providers to ensure that this service is delivered to the community.

The Town Council recognises how approachable all utilities have been in working closely and effectively with the Town Council - more so than might have been expected. The Town Council will build on this and continue to work with all utility companies and providers.

As one of the ten Healthy New Towns (HNT) in the UK, Cranbrook Town Council will work with the Director of the HNT project and other key partners to deliver the HNT action plan. Health is a key factor in the development of the town and the announcement, in December 2017, that the joint Exeter and Cranbrook Sport England bid was successful heralds an exciting period in the future development of the town.

8. Reviewing this plan

This plan will be an annual item on the agenda of the Town Council to ensure that it remains relevant and focused on the key areas of responsibility and objectives. Any changes will be rolled forward through the budget cycle for the forthcoming financial year.

9. Consultation

Our Plan will continue to be a main way of telling you what we are doing to meet the needs of the community.

Please tell us what you think about our Plan. We welcome your comments and would particularly appreciate your views on its content and format. If you require any further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know

We can also provide additional information on the issues raised in the Plan or put you in touch with the relevant person within the Town Council for more detailed information.

More information about the Town Council, including an electronic version of this Plan, is available on our website www.cranbrooktowncouncil.gov.uk

Copies of this Plan are available at our Town Council offices.

How to contact us:

Cranbrook Town Council

Younghayes Centre, 169 Younghayes Road, Cranbrook, Devon, EX5 7DR

Tel: 01404 514552

Mob: 07746 909933

Appendix A - Forward Budgets

There are two major contributing factors that directly influence and inform the budgeting process. These are the rate of delivery of house building which determines the council tax base (the number of homes each year used in the calculation of the council tax) and the timing and process of delivery of open space assets.

The Town Council has put in place arrangements with the Developer Consortium for a programme of open space delivery and a structure that provides the Town Council with sufficient notice to ensure that delivery and adoption follows the budget setting process. This arrangement includes notification that a section of open space is to be laid out, its completion and the start of a one-year maintenance (guarantee) period at the end of which the land is adopted by the Town Council. This structure and timescale provides that the Town Council is aware that a section of open space is to be delivered ahead of the autumn budget setting process and that actual delivery will not be before the commencement of the subsequent financial year.

The table below sets out the key elements of the budget over the next five years, but this information will need to be refined as the build rate and infrastructure delivery emerges. Full budget details are on the Council's website.

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Assets	YHC Country Park phase 1 and 2 Associated drainage St Martins NEAP Hayes Sq. LEAP	Country Park phase 3 Ecology Park Associated drainage Skatepark Allotments Northwood Acres LEAP	Sports pitches in phase 4 Phase 3 LEAP MUGA		
House Numbers	1700	2000	2400	2850	3300
Tax Base	1517	1800	2160	2565	2970
Precept £	388398	525950	584540	587040	592540
Band D	256.03	292.19	270.62	228.86	199.50
Receipts					
	£	£	£	£	£
Precept	388398	525950	584540	587040	592540
Support grant	262	100	0	0	0
Interest	40	50	60	60	60
Younghayes	50000	65000	65000	70000	70000
YHC Management	9000	0	0	0	0
Solar	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400
Fees	0	1000	1000	1500	1500
Total	449100	593500	652000	660000	665500

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Payments	£	£	£	£	£
Staffing	94000	130000	135000	140000	145000
Premises and administration	30000	30000	30000	30000	30000
Younghayes	55000	60000	65000	65000	65000
Grants	7000	5000	5000	5000	5000
Youth Service	10000	10000	11000	11000	12000
Open Space	200000	300000	350000	350000	350000
Litter	30000	35000	35000	37500	37500
Gritting	5000	5000	2000	2000	1000
Contingency	15000	15000	15000	15000	15000
Other costs	3100	3500	4000	4500	5000
Total	449100	593500	652000	660000	665500