

## **Cranbrook Town Centre**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. What will happen if the Consortium proposals are rejected and EDDC can not deliver their alternative proposal?**

Around ten years ago a legal agreement was drawn up between EDDC and the Consortium. This agreement sets out obligations which fall to the Consortium to deliver. These obligations attract certain trigger points for delivery – usually the occupation of a number of homes.

If the scenario set out in the question happens, the Consortium need only deliver their legal obligations of 500 square metres of retail space (in effect, the shells of five small shop premises), a skate park, land for the blue light building (Fire Police and Ambulance services) and a children's centre. EDDC will have to decide where these four elements are located bearing in mind they will not necessarily know what the remainder of the town centre will look like and how it fits together.

#### **2. In the scenario set out in Q1, why does the consortium only deliver some of their obligations and not all of the facilities they are offering in their proposal?**

The 500 square metres of retail space, skate park, blue light land and children's centre are due to be delivered between 2,250 and 2,500 homes being occupied. We are approaching that soon. The remainder of the obligations including the town council building, youth centre and library are due at 3,450 homes being occupied which we anticipate will take another 7 years or more to reach.

The town centre proposal by the Consortium includes additional retail space (1,000 square metres instead of 500) and also brings forward the 3,450 trigger point to making available land now to facilitate the delivery of the community facilities by the Councils. To be able to do this and ensure the delivery of public realm facilities like a town square, the Consortium needs to be able to establish and deliver the whole package including town centre housing to be able to have the confidence to enter into agreements to do so.

#### **3. Looking at the plans for the Consortium proposal why is TC2 without detail?**

Parcel TC2 – the area to the north of Tillhouse Road – is being handed over by the Consortium to EDDC. The proposal is for this area to include a Town Hall (which will have a small terrace opposite to the town square, a café, toilets and a number of rentable office business units), a 55 bed extra care facility and land for a health and wellbeing centre. The Consortium will honour their legal obligation for the town council building by transferring the land and value which will allow the town council to commission the building to its specification. Both EDDC and the Town Council want to deliver more active retail and commercial space along the north side of Tillhouse Road to match the Consortium proposal for the south side.

At the present time the detail of how parcel TC2 will look is still subject to design and funding streams and that is why there is no detail for this parcel at this time.

#### **4. Why does the Town Council not just accept the town council building which the Consortium are legally obliged to deliver?**

The legal obligation is based on the first 3450 homes in the town. The funds available reflect that and deliver a Town Council facility which will be both too small and underfunded for a town which will eventually reach 8,000 homes. The town council wants to deliver a town hall which is suitable for the needs of a town of 25,000 residents and is also a building which is as self-funding as possible to reduce pressure on council tax. The aim is for the rentable business units and café to provide an income which supports the running costs of the building.

**5. The Consortium's proposal does not include a leisure centre. Is this not a fundamental need for the town?**

It is true that the Consortium's proposal does not include a leisure centre. However, it does include land (parcel TC4d) which is available to purchase by EDDC for the delivery of a leisure centre or any other town centre facility which may be required in addition to what the Consortium are proposing or required to deliver. The Town Council is of the opinion that with the facilities which exist in the Cranbrook Education Campus and their availability to the community outside school hours, there is a view that a leisure centre in the traditional sense, with a sports hall etc. is not necessary but that access to a gym and soft play may be a good alternative.

**6. Are we able to choose which shops come into Cranbrook?**

Whether or not any particular business or retailer comes to Cranbrook is a commercial decision by that business / retailer to invest in the town.

**7. Which supermarket is included in the Consortium's proposal?**

The Consortium have made no secret of the fact that they are in discussion with Morrisons. However no contract has been signed and will not be until the direction of how the town centre will be delivered is clear. The planning process, if it proceeds, will be for a supermarket and will not relate to any particular provider. The proposals which have been discussed are to deliver a retail facility which will have a range of products to allow most weekly shopping trips.

**8. Which option does the Town Council support?**

The Town Council is unanimous that delivery of town centre facilities is required now and not years into the future. The Town Council believes that the offer by the Consortium delivers sufficient retail, commercial and leisure opportunities which, together with additional development on parcel TC2, meet the needs of the town going forward.

The Town Council is aware that we are delivering a town centre for the modern times and we know that the expansion of on-line business and the fact that communities see town centres as spaces for leisure and social activity as much as shopping and business lends us to believe that this proposal is acceptable.

The level of retail proposed will deliver a medium sized supermarket together with sufficient retail and business opportunities to serve the needs of the town and surrounding villages. We are conscious too that Exeter is just nine minutes away by train and that there is a proposed major retail park even closer planned for a site adjacent to the Met Office. Cranbrook town centre can not compete with these and needs to develop its own town centre offer and identity which is unique.

EDDC feel that workshop and light industrial units are needed. The Town Council feels that there are sufficient employment opportunities at Sky Park, Hayes Farm and Science Park all within walking and cycling distance of the town. We also believe that Sky Park, as an employment site, is under-developed and could provide opportunities for further small workshop and light industrial units as could land closer to the airport which is part of the southern Treasbeare expansion area and less suitable for other uses due to airport noise.

Finally we believe that the alternatives are very uncertain, unfunded and are most likely (at best) to take many years to deliver. This would be unacceptable in the view of the Town Council.