



**Cranbrook Plan  
Development Plan Document**

**Burial Space needs assessment**

**(November 2018)**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Cranbrook is a new settlement under construction in East Devon, to the east of Exeter. It has planning permission for approximately 3,500 dwellings, around half of which have been completed. East Devon District Council is preparing the Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document (DPD) to guide the provision of around 4,000 further dwellings (alongside associated non-residential uses and infrastructure provision) over the period to the year 2031. This is to be achieved through expansion broadly to the east and west of the current development.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide evidence on the requirement for burial space to inform the DPD; including need, scale, and issues to consider in meeting the need.

## **2. Legal and Policy Context**

### **Legislation**

- 2.1 There is no statutory duty for local authorities to provide burial space for residents, although there is a requirement for them to maintain existing cemeteries. As 'burial authorities', local authorities and town/parish councils are allowed to provide cemeteries. Cremation facilities may be provided by burial authorities, or any company which has established a crematorium.
- 2.2 The Environment Agency have a major role to play in regulating cemeteries and new cemetery development through consideration of water pollution, as well as emissions from crematoria.
- 2.3 Under common law, anyone who is resident in a parish or who dies in a parish has the right of burial in the churchyard or other consecrated burial ground in the parish in which they reside (unless closed). Anyone living in a local authority area has the right to be buried in the authority's cemeteries; whilst people living outside the area may be allowed but usually on payment of a higher burial fee.

### **National and Local policy**

- 2.4 There is limited reference to burial provision in national and local planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) only mentions cemeteries in relation to being appropriate within the Green Belt, which is not present in East Devon. Burial provision is not mentioned in the national Planning Practice Guidance. Similarly, burial provision is not covered in the East Devon Local Plan 2013 to 2031.
- 2.5 Nevertheless, a range of national and local policies would apply to ensure a proposal for burial space constitutes "sustainable development", such as policies relating to promoting sustainable transport, requiring good design, and conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment.
- 2.6 Evidence on infrastructure requirements indicates that a cemetery at Cranbrook is generally desirable in order to build a sustainable community, although it is noted that the size and location are to be determined.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> East Devon Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Review (November 2017): [http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2270747/idp-review-2017\\_report.pdf](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2270747/idp-review-2017_report.pdf)

### 3. Need for Burial Space

3.1 There is currently no provision for burial space within Cranbrook parish. In order to consider the need for burial space in Cranbrook, it is necessary to assess population trends and mortality rates. Other issues such as the proportion of cremations and religious make-up are also important considerations.

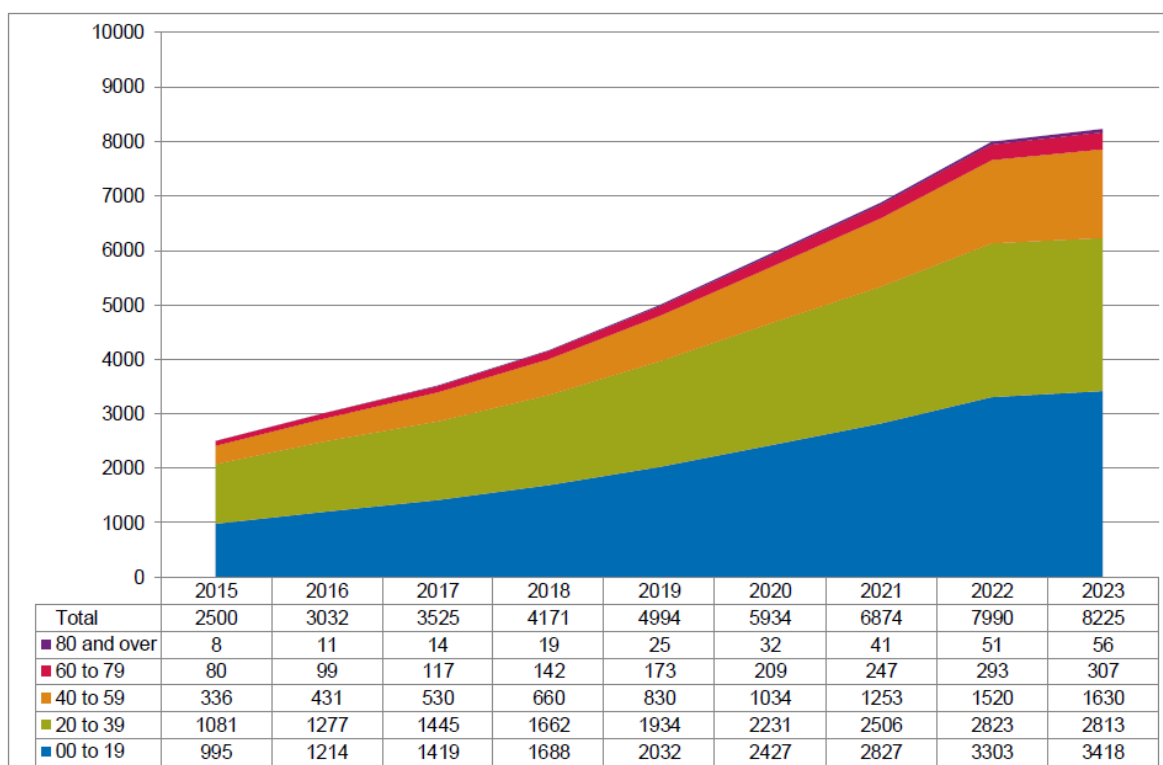
#### Population

3.2 Development at Cranbrook commenced in June 2011 and the first households moved in during July 2012. By early 2018, there were approximately 1,700 households, with around 4,000 people. This rapidly growing population, alongside limited historical data, means that some assumptions need to be made when considering future need for burial space at the town.

3.3 Cranbrook currently has a particularly young population, with the proportion of older people over 65 far lower than other towns in East Devon – in 2015 it is estimated that 2% of people in Cranbrook were aged 65 or over; compared to an East Devon district average of 29.8%.<sup>2</sup>

3.4 Population projections for Cranbrook up to the year 2023 are shown in figure 1 below. As well as rapid population growth overall, this diagram highlights the young age profile projected for Cranbrook, with only a small proportion of people aged 60 or above.

**Figure 1: Cranbrook population projections 2015 to 2023<sup>3</sup>**



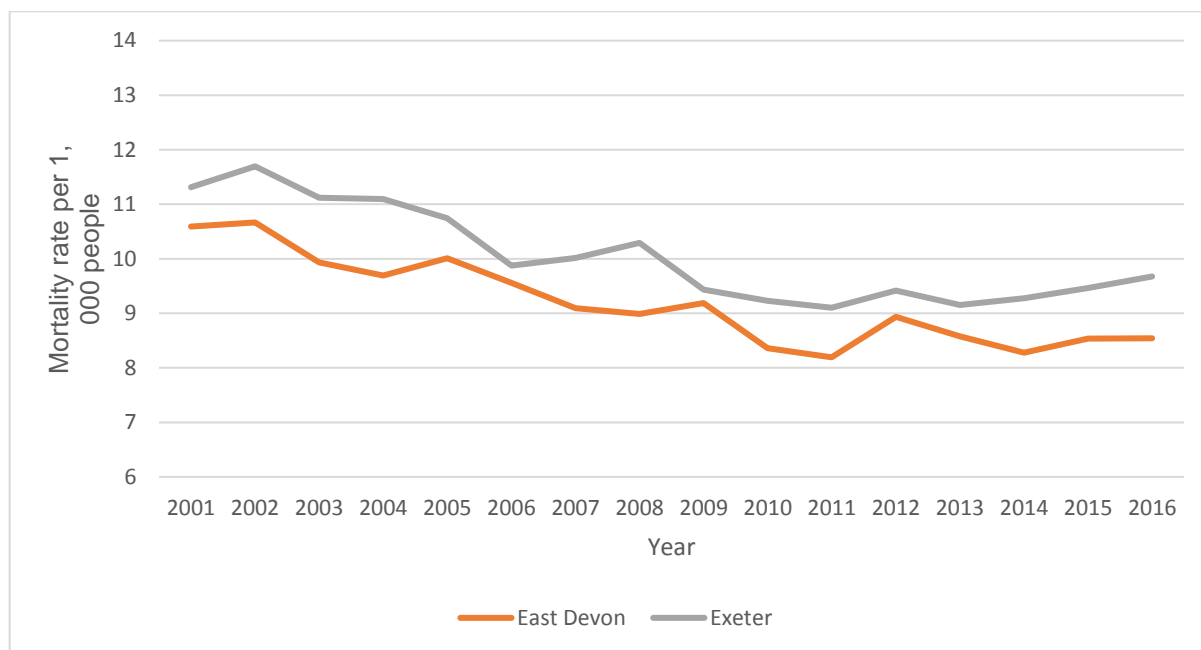
<sup>2</sup> Figure 3.2, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Devon Overview, 2017: <http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna/overview/> ; ONS mid-year population estimates, East Devon district, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Cranbrook Healthy New Town Executive Group, consultation response to Cranbrook Plan 'preferred approach': <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning-libraries/cranbrook-plan-pa-2017-18/cranbrookhealthynewtownexecgroup.pdf>

## Mortality

3.5 Nationally, mortality rates have generally been decreasing over the years, due to improved lifestyles and medical advances in the treatment and diagnosis of many illnesses and diseases.<sup>4</sup> Mortality rates in East Devon and Exeter (given its close proximity to Cranbrook) since 2001 are shown in the figure below, and reflect this national trend.

**Figure 2: Mortality rate in East Devon and Exeter from 2001 to 2016<sup>5</sup>**



- 3.6 Whilst the long term trend for reducing mortality rates may well continue, for the purposes of this study the latest figure (2016) has been projected forwards to the year 2031 (end date of Cranbrook Plan). This reflects the levelling out of mortality rates since 2013, and is line with some opinions that the law of diminishing returns may lessen improvements in mortality.<sup>6</sup> The young population may also mean lower mortality rates at Cranbrook.
- 3.7 These two factors (reducing mortality rate, and young population) may mean that the forecast number of deaths and therefore need for burial space is over-estimated. Therefore, a sensitivity test has been applied to the forecast number of deaths at Cranbrook (figure 3), showing the outcome of a 10% reduction in deaths.
- 3.8 Although located in East Devon, given the close proximity of Cranbrook to Exeter, an average of mortality rates between the two local authorities (shown in figure 2) has been applied, rounded to 9 per 1,000 people.

<sup>4</sup> Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2016, ONS: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregistrationsummarytables/2016>

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>6</sup> Mortality, 2014-based national population projects reference volume, chapter 3, ONS, March 2016: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/compendium/nationalpopulationprojections/2014basedreferencevolumeseriespp2/chapter4mortality2014basednationalpopulationprojectionsreferencevolume#methodology-and-derivation-of-uk-base-mortality-rates>

- 3.9 An average of 2.35 persons per household at Cranbrook has been applied, reflecting the characteristics of the town.<sup>7</sup> The average household size in East Devon district as a whole is slightly lower at 2.21 persons per household, projected to fall to 2.17 persons per household in 2031.<sup>8</sup> The effect of a falling household size at Cranbrook would mean a lower population, and therefore fewer deaths. However, the effect of this upon the number of deaths is relatively small – if the Cranbrook household size falls by 0.04 by 2031 in line with the district average, the total population at the town will be 17,762 rather than 18,069, meaning only 3 fewer deaths per year.
- 3.10 The application of the mortality rate (9 per 1,000 people), alongside projected housing and associated population growth, has been used to forecast the number of deaths at Cranbrook over the plan period up to the year 2031, shown in figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: Forecast number of deaths at Cranbrook, 2018 to 2031**

Year	Dwellings	Population	Mortality (per 1,000 pop)	No. of deaths (cumulative)	No. of deaths minus 10%
2018	1775	4171	9	38	34
2019	1925	4524	9	41	37
2020	2225	5229	9	47	42
2021	2645	6216	9	56	50
2022	3149	7400	9	67	60
2023	3829	8998	9	81	73
2024	4408	10359	9	93	84
2025	4993	11734	9	106	95
2026	5578	13108	9	118	106
2027	6163	14483	9	130	117
2028	6748	15858	9	143	128
2029	7186	16887	9	152	137
2030	7523	17679	9	159	143
2031	7689	18069	9	163	146
<b>Total</b>				<b>1392</b>	<b>1253</b>

- 3.11 The figures above align with the period of the Cranbrook Plan (up to 2031) but there will obviously be an ongoing need for burial provision beyond this time, long after development has been completed. Therefore, it is prudent to identify a land take beyond the need identified in the plan period. There is no set timeframe on how long to plan for burial provision, so a figure for 30 years after the plan period (i.e. 2061) has been assessed as a reasonable, long-term timeframe.
- 3.12 Applying the same mortality rates every year to the total population of 18,069 people from the year 2032 to 2061, equates to 4,878 deaths. The means a total of 6,270 deaths at Cranbrook over the period 2018 to 2061.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Cranbrook Healthy New Town Executive Group, consultation response to Cranbrook Plan 'preferred approach': <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning-libraries/cranbrook-plan-pa-2017-18/cranbrookhealthynewtownexecgroup.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Household Projections in England: 2016-based, ONS: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/2016basedhouseholdprojectionsinengland/2016basedhouseholdprojectionsinengland>

## Burial requirements

- 3.13 In order to calculate demand for burial space, cremations must be deducted from the overall figure for deaths. The cremation rate in England and Wales has increased steadily since the 1930s, and now 80% of people are cremated.<sup>9</sup> This cremation rate has been applied to the number of deaths from 2018 to 2031, to inform the residual number of people who require burial space at Cranbrook, shown below:
- Total number of deaths 2018 to 2031 (from figure 3) = 1,392
  - 1,392 minus 1,114 (80% cremation) = 278 burial spaces<sup>10</sup> required over the period 2018 to 2031.
- 3.14 Applying this calculation from the years 2032 to 2061 results in a need for 976 burial spaces. This would mean a total of 1,254 burial spaces at Cranbrook over the period 2018 to 2061. It is acknowledged that there is uncertainty regarding the specific figures over such a long time horizon, but this provides an indication of long term need at the town.
- 3.15 The land area required to meet the forecast number of burial spaces can be calculated by multiplying the dimension of each burial space size by the total number of burial spaces, as shown below:
- Burial space dimension: 1.2m wide by 3m long (including 0.3m thickness headstone) –
    - multiplied by 278 spaces = 1,001 sq m (2018 to 2031 need)
    - multiplied by 1,254 spaces = 4,514 sq m (2018 to 2061 need)
- 3.16 This equates to 0.45 hectares of land required for burial spaces alone. However, there are other land requirements for cemeteries, namely car parking (spaces and circulation), ancillary buildings (e.g. for storage of machinery), ashes plots, footpaths, and general landscaping.
- 3.17 There are no car parking standards for cemeteries in the Local Plan, so a specific figure should be justified through a planning application. Similarly, the detailed design of footpaths and general landscaping should be addressed through a planning application. New ashes plots should have a flat concrete slab of 0.45m by 0.45m flush with the surrounding grass.
- 3.18 For benchmarking purposes on land requirements, burial space studies produced by other authorities have been reviewed. Leicester Burial Space Strategy states 1 hectare would provide 1,235 plots<sup>11</sup>; whilst Wokingham suggest 1 hectare could provide 1,730 plots.<sup>12</sup>
- 3.19 The extension to Sidbury cemetery in 2009 can also be used for comparison to inform the total land take. This provided 300 burial plots, an area for ashes plots, and five car

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<sup>9</sup> England and Wales provisional cremation figure for 2017 is 79.75%, The Cremation Society of Great Britain: <http://www.cremation.org.uk/progress-of-cremation-united-kingdom>

<sup>10</sup> Applying a sensitivity test of minus 10% would equal 251 burial spaces.

<sup>11</sup> Leicester City Council Burial Space Strategy – consultation draft: [https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/city-development-and-neighbourhoods/bss/supporting\\_documents/Draft%20Burial%20Space%20Strategy.Final.pdf](https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/city-development-and-neighbourhoods/bss/supporting_documents/Draft%20Burial%20Space%20Strategy.Final.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Wokingham Requirements for new burial space as a result of development 2006-2026: [www.wokingham.gov.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/210624.pdf](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/210624.pdf)



parking spaces on 1,900 sq m of land. This would equate to around 1,500 plots for 1 hectare of land.

- 3.20 In light of the above, it is recommended that 1 hectare of land is allocated for use as a cemetery in the Cranbrook Plan DPD, to meet the long term needs of the town over the period 2018 to 2061. The design and land take should be further refined through more detailed work in support of the planning application.

### **Cremation requirements**

- 3.21 There are two crematoriums located within close proximity of Cranbrook: East Devon Crematorium is located just a couple of miles to the east, and Exeter and Devon Crematorium 6 miles away. Both are operated by companies without local authority involvement. It can be reasonably assumed that most cremations would take place at one of these two facilities. When Cranbrook is complete, it is estimated that 130 people per year from the town will be cremated. It is considered that the existing crematoriums will cater for this additional demand, which only equates to 2-3 additional cremations per week.
- 3.22 The interment of ashes is becoming increasingly popular, and space for this is also an issue to consider. Both crematoriums have large open space surrounding the main buildings that could provide for the interment of ashes, and some space could also be set aside at the Cranbrook cemetery for this purpose – as stated, new ashes plots measure 0.45m by 0.45m.

### **Religious requirements**

- 3.23 Some religions have specific requirements following death, but the religious make-up of East Devon means this would not change the overall need for burial space to a significant degree. However, this could change in the future, and some flexibility may be necessary.
- 3.24 Designating sections of a new cemetery as consecrated (by the Church of England) and unconsecrated (for all other faiths including Roman Catholics) should be considered in the detailed planning for the cemetery.

#### **4. Options for meeting need for burial space**

- 4.1 Unsurprisingly, given that the area was countryside until recently, there is currently no burial space within the parish of Cranbrook. Therefore, the common law right for residents to be buried within the parish is not possible.
- 4.2 Given this, there are three options to meet the identified need for burial space from Cranbrook:
  - A. Use existing EDDC cemeteries
  - B. Use churchyards in surrounding parishes
  - C. Allocate land for a cemetery in the Cranbrook Plan DPD
- 4.3 With regards to option A, East Devon District Council run three cemeteries, but these are some distance away at Sidmouth, Sidbury and Seaton. There is no council provision for burials within the locality of Cranbrook. This could cause accessibility issues for relatives/friends in Cranbrook who wish to visit the cemetery.
- 4.4 In addition, the capacity of these three cemeteries is not sufficient to meet additional demand from Cranbrook – although there is total capacity for around 670 burials at these three cemeteries, this only caters for around 10 years of need without considering Cranbrook.
- 4.5 There are churchyards within the surrounding parishes (option B) but they are not likely to contain space to meet the identified needs of Cranbrook, particularly over the long term.
- 4.6 Overall, it is considered that option C is the preferred option. In order to meet the needs at the town, the Cranbrook Plan DPD should allocate land for a cemetery, which would incorporate burial plots along with associated car parking, ancillary buildings ashes plots, footpaths, and general landscaping. To do this, and provide flexibility to meet long terms needs, the Cranbrook Plan should identify sufficient land to meet the need at the town over the period 2018 to 2061, requiring around 1 hectare of land to be identified as a cemetery.
- 4.7 There are several factors to consider in identifying the location of land for a cemetery:
  - Accessibility and highways access – the cemetery should be in an accessible location, which facilitates travel by sustainable modes (walking, cycling, public transport), as well as suitable highways access;
  - Noise – the location should be relatively quiet, allowing mourners peaceful reflection;
  - Flood risk and drainage – the cemetery should be located in an area of low flood risk (flood zone 1), and water pollution issues should be adequately addressed;
  - Future expansion – the potential for future expansion of the cemetery should be taken into account, so consider locating the cemetery in an open space setting that is not tightly surrounded by proposed buildings. If this is not possible, it may be that burial plots can be intensified through burying two coffins in a plot.
- 4.8 In terms of delivering the cemetery, only EDDC or Cranbrook Town Council, as ‘burial authorities’, would be able to provide the cemetery and be responsible for its ongoing management. EDDC already manages three cemeteries, so has experience, systems

and staffing in place that could be applied to a new cemetery at Cranbrook. Conversely, managing a cemetery could be significant task for a relatively new town council. However, if EDDC were to be the burial authority, it would mean that any resident of East Devon could be buried at Cranbrook cemetery, potentially taking plots away from Cranbrook residents. If Cranbrook Town Council were the burial authority, then only those within the parish have the right to be buried there, so better meeting demand within the town, rather than elsewhere. The town council would need to consider issues such as staffing, training, and introducing a burial database.

- 4.9 It is worth noting that the outline planning application that is currently pending a decision for the western expansion area does indicate a cemetery and associated buildings and car parking.<sup>13</sup> Around 1.5 hectares of land is shown on the indicative masterplan to the south of Blue Hayes House. However, there is no justification for this within the Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement that accompany the planning application.

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<sup>13</sup> Planning application 15/0045/MOUT.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 Cranbrook is a developing new settlement, for which a DPD is being prepared to manage its future expansion. The Cranbrook Plan DPD proposes around 4,000 dwellings, plus employment land, community facilities and associated uses. This report has assessed the need for burial space at the town. As a new settlement with a rapidly growing, young population, it is challenging to assess the need for burial space, particularly over the long term. Therefore, some assumptions have to be made.
- 5.2 Common law allows anyone who is resident in a parish or who dies in a parish the right of burial in the churchyard or other consecrated burial ground in the parish in which they reside. This is not possible for Cranbrook residents, as there is no burial provision in Cranbrook parish.
- 5.3 Based upon estimates for housing delivery, population projections, mortality rates, and the proportion of cremations, around 278 burial spaces will be required over the period of the Cranbrook Plan from 2018 to 2031. There will obviously be an ongoing need for burial provision beyond this time, long after development has been completed. Looking over the longer period of 2018 to 2061 would mean 1,254 burial spaces.
- 5.4 There is limited provision to meet this need elsewhere, so it is recommended that 1 hectare of land is allocated for a cemetery in the Cranbrook Plan, so that the long terms needs of the town (2018 to 2061) can be met. This land take includes burial and ashes plots, car parking, ancillary buildings, footpaths, and general landscaping. The design of the cemetery should be further refined through more detailed work to accompany the planning application.
- 5.5 There are several key issues to consider in identifying a location for the cemetery, including being accessible for sustainable travel modes, suitable highways access, existing and potential noise pollution, flood risk and drainage (water pollution).
- 5.6 The cemetery can only be legally provided by EDDC or Cranbrook Town Council, so one of these two organisations would be responsible for its ongoing management as the burial authority. This study has assessed the need for Cranbrook residents – if EDDC were to run the cemetery, any resident of East Devon would have the right to be buried there; whilst only those within the parish have this right if Cranbrook Town Council were to operate the facility. The burial authority (i.e. EDDC or Cranbrook Town Council) will be subject to further discussion and confirmed in due course.