

Cranbrook Plan – Publication and Submission Draft

Equality Statement

Screening Report

Prepared by Officers of East Devon District Council

February 2019

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to assess the content of the Cranbrook Plan Submission Draft document (hereafter referred to as the Cranbrook Plan), and the process of its production, to determine whether the District Council has complied with their duty under the Equality Act 2010 or whether further information and/or actions are required.
- 1.2 Public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty when making decisions and setting policies. To do this it is necessary for the organisation to understand the potential impact of its decision-making on different people. This can help them to identify practical steps to tackle any negative impacts or discrimination, and to advance equality to ensure that their policy making is more effective.
- 1.3 Assessing the impact on equality of their policies and practices is an important part of complying with the general equality duty. The duty does not set out a particular process that public authorities are expected to follow though it should be carried out as part and parcel of their decision-making to ensure that there is no significant effect on a group with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The following characteristics are protected characteristics:
- age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;
 - marriage and civil partnership;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race;
 - religion or belief;
 - sex; and
 - sexual orientation.
- 1.4 The conclusion of this report is that the Cranbrook Plan is unlikely to have a significant negative effect under the Equality legislation so should not be subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA). If amendments are made to the Plan it may be necessary to undertake further screenings on it and potentially, supporting documents, which may

conclude that a full EqIA and/or action is required to ensure that the Public Sector Equality Duty is met.

- 1.5 This report will be available along with the Cranbrook Plan Consultation: Submission Draft document.

Equality Impact Assessment Screening for the Submission Draft of the Cranbrook Plan

In order to ensure that all relevant issues are considered at this stage, the approach taken has been based on the form which is used by what was the Department of Housing Communities and Local Government to initially screen their planning policies, strategies, procedures, projects and/or services.

2.0 Name of the current or proposed new or changed, policy, strategy, procedure, project or service being assessed:

- 2.1 Cranbrook Plan (Development Plan Document) Submission Draft.

3.0 Team responsible for completing the Equality Impact Assessment:

- 3.1 The Planning Policy Team at East Devon District Council.

4.0 What is the main aim or purpose of the current or proposed new or changed, policy, strategy, procedure, project or service and what are the intended outcomes?

- 4.1 The Cranbrook Plan will form part of the overall Development Plan for East Devon. There is already an adopted East Devon Local Plan that covers the whole of the District and this sets out broad policies which are applicable to Cranbrook, however the Cranbrook Plan will add extra detail to the Local Plan for that specific area. Part of the area covered by the Cranbrook Plan area is also covered by the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan, made on 11th October 2018, which forms part of the Development Plan, as do Devon County Council waste and mineral plans.
- 4.2 The Cranbrook Plan will establish the pattern of growth in the new town, allocate land for specific uses and provide policies to guide development proposals. It will give certainty to everyone with an interest in the area, particularly developers, residents and those wishing to invest, for example infrastructure providers, and the plan will ensure that a high quality environment is achieved.
- 4.3 Work on the Cranbrook Plan, specifically the production of and consultation on documents, has included the following stages:

- In 2015 - a fact-finding consultation was undertaken to establish key areas of interest.
- In 2016 - an Issues and Options consultation document was produced to explain and explore some of the potential areas for future development and use of land.
- In 2017/2018 - a Preferred Approach report consultation was consulted on that set out draft proposals for future development

4.4 The stage now reached is the Publication stage of plan production, this Publication stage involves consulting on the plan and thereafter submitting the plan, alongside comments made and supporting evidence, to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. The publication consultation stage of plan making is scheduled to run during March and April 2019 and Submission of the plan for examination is scheduled to occur in June 2019.

4.5 It should be noted that the above is a succinct non-technical overview of the plan making process and in parallel with this there has also been work on production of masterplan for Cranbrook. Masterplan production, which included consultation, ran alongside the above stages and has informed the Cranbrook Plan.

5.0 What existing sources of evidence will you use to help you identify the likely impacts on different groups of people?

5.1 Through the past consultation exercises views and comments have been sought and analysed on the emerging proposals. There has also been council survey work at Cranbrook, and other information and evidence collection. The work undertaken shows that existing residents of Cranbrook are generally younger than the wider population of East Devon (and indeed the UK), with a high proportion of young children and families. There is a higher proportion of affordable housing at Cranbrook than in the District as a whole and generally family income is lower despite a higher proportion of working age adults than elsewhere in East Devon.

5.2 More specific information regarding the proportion of residents at Cranbrook with a 'protected characteristic' under the Equalities Act is, however, limited, particularly as the community is still growing and over time the demographic make-up may change. The first new homes were only occupied in 2012 which is after the 2011 census was taken.

5.3 However, on a district wide basis, in respect of the 'race' characteristic, a needs assessment has demonstrated that there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller pitches in East Devon and there are established travelling routes close to where Cranbrook is now being built and more generally a history of gypsies living in the area. Policy of the East Devon Local Plan requires up to 30 gypsy and traveller pitches to be provided as part of the expansion of Cranbrook. The Cranbrook Plan, at Publication stage of plan making, makes specific provision for gypsies and travellers through allocation of sites.

Overview of Past Cranbrook Plan Consultation

5.4 In order to understand the views of interested parties at and around Cranbrook the Council has undertaken extensive consultation to inform the preparation of the Cranbrook Plan.

5.5 Previous, very extensive consultation has included public exhibitions and workshops, use of social media and webpages and many opportunities for face-to-face contact with Officers working on the Plan (see the Consultation Statement for further detail). Venues were accessible to disabled people, documents produced were available in different formats and young people were used in the advertising campaign as well as having consultations specifically aimed at them. The results of the consultation have enabled Officers to identify the potential impacts of future development on different groups of people, utilise evidence to consider and address impacts and inform any future consultation to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to engage meaningfully with the plan making process.

Policies in the Cranbrook Plan and potential impacts on protected groups

5.6 In the Cranbrook publication plan there are 29 policies (CB1 to CB29 inclusive). These set out land allocations and standards, levels and requirements for development. Whilst policies are clearly informed by the needs of people (as well as such matters as conserving the environment) they are predominantly orientated around the use and development of land and they do not, for the most part explicitly refer to or obviously relate to different or targeted sectors of the population. As such they do not, for the most part, make distinctions between those with a protected characteristics and those without, nor would these policies have identifiable impacts that would have differing impacts on those with protected characteristics and those without. On a broad level the policies of the Cranbrook Plan actively seek to positively and actively embrace all sectors of society. This is exemplified by Policy CB1 of the plan that addresses Health and Wellbeing at Cranbrook and which, by explicit intent, is designed as an inclusive policy promoting well-being for all.

5.7 Looking at the protected groups in order the following observations are tabled below with commentary on specific Cranbrook Plan policy provision.

Protected Characteristic Group	Commentary
Age	Cranbrook has a younger age profile than other towns. A number of policies in the Cranbrook Plan have potential for positive impacts in respect of younger people, these specifically include CB2, CB3, CB4 and CB13 which make provision for school/education provision. Policies in the plan make provision for play spaces, community facilities and other uses of land and developments and services that could be of particular use or benefit to the young. There are currently low numbers of elderly people at Cranbrook though Policy CB22 makes provision for care home development and health and wellbeing hub and more generally the policies of the plan seek provision of services and facilities that would meet the need of the elderly (and all sectors of society).
Disability	Policies of the plan seek to create an accessible town for all.
Gender reassignment	There are no policies in the Cranbrook Plan or issues identified that refer to or would be seen to impact on issues of gender reassignment.

Protected Characteristic Group	Commentary
Marriage and civil partnership	There are no policies in the Cranbrook Plan or issues identified that refer to or would be seen to impact on issues of marriage and civil partnership.
Pregnancy and maternity	With a young population the available evidence indicates high birth rate levels amongst the Cranbrook population. Policies in the plan provide for health care provision, particularly CB22 and more generally the plan promotes an environment that is accessible to mothers/parents and toddlers/children.
Race	There are no policies in the Cranbrook Plan or issues identified that refer to or would be seen to impact on issues of race, however specific mention is made in the plan to provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites, see policies CB3 and CB4.
Religion or belief	There are no policies in the Cranbrook Plan or issues identified that refer to or would be seen to impact on issues of religion or belief. However, Policy CB4 does refer to need for provision of a place of worship. There is anticipated to be a continuation of the current presence in the town of a Christian minister. Anecdotal evidence indicates that there are few residents of other religions within the town.
Sex	There are no policies in the Cranbrook Plan or issues identified that refer to or would be seen to impact on issues of sex.
Sexual orientation	There are no policies in the Cranbrook Plan or issues identified that refer to or would be seen to impact on issues of sexual orientation.

6.0 Are there gaps in evidence which make it difficult or impossible to form an opinion on how the existing or proposed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service does or might affect different groups of people? If so, how and when do you intend to collect the additional information?

- 6.1 The previous consultations gathered opinions on what the Cranbrook Plan should address and how this should be achieved. The policies in the Publication Plan are intended to create a balanced, high quality development which meets the needs of all sectors of society without prejudicing any minority or protected group. It is intended that all residents will have access to community facilities, such as public open space, play space and community buildings and that shops, education, employment and public transport will be readily accessible regardless of disability, age or for any other group or element of society that could be identified under a protected characteristic. Everybody was encouraged and able to respond to the consultation.
- 6.2 In past consultation work on the Cranbrook Plan there was a deliberate approach and intent to seek to be inclusive of all and seek the views of all in order to inform plan policy. Accompanying written policy documents, that were made available in electronic and printed format, the Council organised exhibitions, had drop-in sessions and had stands at

Christmas markets and other events. Furthermore, Officers attended Town and Parish Council meetings during which the Plan was discussed. People were invited to send in written comments as well as fill in questionnaires and comment forms. There was also engagement on social media. The consultation undertaken therefore was very broad ranging and will have ensured that all groups (though note specific references to gypsies and travellers in paragraphs below) that fall into or could be identified as being part of the Protected Characteristics Groups have been involved in or actively been able to be involved in policy formulation.

- 6.3 The gypsy and traveller community, whilst they were able to respond through the mechanisms summarised above, were identified as a specific group for whom a tailored consultation exercise was appropriate. This specific work occurred at the Preferred Approach stage of plan making. A special case was made for the gypsy and traveller community on account of poor literacy levels and some aversion to form filling and submission to official public bodies plus also a reluctance to attend public meetings.
- 6.4 In order to ensure effective engagement, at the Preferred Approach stage of plan making, the gypsy and traveller community in and around East Devon was consulted directly by officers of East Devon District Council with the support of the Devon County Council Gypsy Liaison Officer. This work involved visiting gypsies and travellers within and around East Devon, at their homes, and through conversations and informal interviews, gathering their views on the appropriate form, nature and character of site provision at Cranbrook. This consultation was undertaken in parallel with the main Preferred Approach consultation. A feedback report was produced following this consultation, it can be viewed at: <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning-libraries/cranbrook-plan-pa-2017-18/eddcsummarygypsyandtravellerresponses.pdf>
- 6.5 The feedback report showed the appropriateness of provision of at least two sites, with one to the east and one to the west of the town, at Cranbrook. Optimum site size was identified as being between six and ten pitches with some potential and desire for also accommodating new travellers and livestock. Consultation feedback indicated that on-site facilities should be provided with site management by a specialist body. Transit site provision, as part of the site allocations, was not seen as appropriate.
- 6.6 Those responding to the Preferred Approach consultation (and early stages of consultation) raised a number of issues of potential relevance to Protected Characteristic Groups, though of specific relevance is the response from **Devon Senior Voice** – see: <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning-libraries/cranbrook-plan-pa-2017-18/devonseniorvoice.pdf> - who covered a broad range of planning matters in representation. They were broadly supportive of emerging plan policy stressing the role and benefits that an ageing population can make and the need to explicitly plan for an ageing population, specifically through and including residential and social care provision.

7.0 Having analysed the initial any additional sources of information including feedback from any consultation, is there any evidence that the policy, strategy, procedure, project or service has or is likely to have an adverse equality impact on, and/or that there are known or anticipated different needs or requirements, for any of these different groups of people?

7.1 Existing feedback from previous consultations, and the policies in the plan and the way the policies have been formulated, does not suggest that there is likely to be any adverse equality impacts. Whilst policies specifically seek facilities and developments that will be beneficial to specific groups of people (and the community at large) there are no outstanding identified needs for any of these different groups of people.

8.0 Is a full EqIA required and/or should the Plan be amended to ensure that the Public Sector Equality Duty is met?

8.1 A full EqIA is not required, and the Duty is met, because:

- **The elements of the consultation are not likely to result in negative equality impacts that would require justification or mitigation.** The Submission Plan does not contain any policies or proposals which would negatively impact upon, or discriminate against, specific equality groups.
- **There is unlikely to be negative public opinion or media coverage about the proposed changes.** It is expected that the Plan will be widely reported in the local press, however the Publication Plan incorporates many of the suggestions made through consultation and this should generate support for the proposals. It has not been possible to overcome all objections (particularly where representations are directly opposed to aspects of the plan), however concerns have been taken into account, even if in some cases the outcome is not what the representor hoped for. The Plan does conflict with some of the Policies in the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 particularly with regard to the extent of land allocations in neighbouring Neighbourhood Plan Areas and in the Green Wedge, and this is likely to lead to opposition, however the Cranbrook Plan is a strategic document and, as such, can supersede the Local Plan and is not required to be in conformity with it. This is not considered to be an equalities issue. There can also be expected to be some opposition to provision of sites for gypsies and travellers when the publication plan is made available for comment. Objections have been raised at previous stages of plan making and the Council has worked through the issues raised and sought to take them into account in planning for provision in the Publication draft of the plan.
- **An opportunity has not been missed to promote equality of opportunity and further details do not need to be provided of action that can be taken to remedy this.** Consultation has been undertaken in an inclusive manner which provides an equal opportunity for all sectors of the community to understand the consultation documents, be involved in the process and make their views known, therefore remedial action is not required. The policies of the plan itself have been informed by the consultation and have gone as far as is relevant and reasonable to address specific considerations relevant to those with protected characteristics.