
Cranbrook Plan 2013-2031 Examination

Stage 2 Questions AQ14 - AQ15

Devon County Council Position Statement

Statement Prepared 29th September 2020

Devon County Council
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD



1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this statement

- 1.1.1 This statement has been prepared to answer additional questions posed by the Planning Inspector in relation to Stage 2 of the Independent Examination of the Cranbrook Plan 2013-2031.
- 1.1.2 The comments set out in this further statement focus upon those issues in which Devon County Council (DCC) has a specific interest in order to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in terms of planning and infrastructure (in particular relating to Adult Social Care).

1.2. Summary of DCC approach and position

- 1.2.1. The County Council has worked closely with East Devon District Council throughout the preparation of the Cranbrook Plan including providing advice to inform the development of policies and proposals. This has included the attendance of numerous meetings, the preparation of evidence reports and the submission of representations at formal stages in the plan making process. This approach has drawn on the expertise of a number of county officers from various service areas including education, transportation, flood risk, waste management, adult, children's, youth and library.

2. **AQ15: What is the delivery plan/timescale for the extra care provision to which the £3.5 million contribution relates and where in the housing trajectory figures is this provision accounted for? [Council]**

- 2.1.1. The delivery process for delivering an Extra Care Housing (ECH) scheme generally takes between 3.5 and 5 years and commences once there is an agreed site and developer funding is secured. DCC would ideally want to work with the developers to agree a suitable Registered Provider (RP) partner for the ECH to speed the process up. Once an agreed RP partner is in place, they can undertake a feasibility study for delivery including a financial viability appraisal. Any s106 financial contributions secured would form part of that appraisal. They may then also apply to Homes England for a capital funding grant under the Affordable Housing Programme in order to be confident the scheme was viable. This could take approximately 3 months for an initial high-level appraisal. Once confident a viable scheme could be developed, full plans would be drawn up, planning permission sought, and a construction partner secured for the build. Construction typically takes 18 - 24 months.
- 2.1.2. The delivery timescale at Cranbrook would depend on when the £3.5m s106 contribution is paid to DCC. It is anticipated that the contribution may be secured in more than one s106 agreement attached to different expansion area planning permissions. There has not been discussion yet with EDDC about the details of how many s106 agreements may be involved, the amount of contribution within an individual agreement or the trigger point(s) for payment. It may be possible to start the delivery process before all the s106 contribution is paid to DCC. This would be subject to DCC being certain that the s106 contribution(s) will be paid and the Council being able to forward fund the scheme.

- 2.1.3. As indicated in DCC 's previous statements (Examination Matter 14 Statement s.3.1.24. and Additional information on Cranbrook Infrastructure Delivery Plan page 12), the cost of delivering a 55 unit extra care housing scheme is £10,340,000, at a cost of £188,000 per unit. The 'Updated CEA costs' for ECH identified in the Cranbrook IDP July 2020 is £3,500,000 (Item 29 of PSD24, pdf page 42). Due to East Devon District Council's concerns about the viability of the Cranbrook Plan, DCC has reduced its s106 contribution request to this from £5,170,000 – as explained in s.3.1.25 of DCC's Examination Matter 14 Statement. It is noted that the Cranbrook IDP July 2020 incorrectly identifies the Residual Funding gap as £8,840,000, when it should be £6,840,000.
- 2.1.4. DCC reiterates the need for s106 contributions of £3.5m to be provided to fund an ECH scheme at Cranbrook. DCC's Extra Care Housing Strategy (August 2015 Refresh)¹ specifies the need for a 55 unit facility to cater for 6,000 dwellings at Cranbrook. DCC has secured ECH land under the existing s106 agreement and requested s106 contributions from the expansion area development. This is required to enable DCC to meet its statutory requirements to provide care for people with eligible needs (assessed under the Care Act 2014) who are also eligible for funding assistance under DCC's 'strength based approach'. In order to meet its statutory obligations, DCC needs to place eligible people in below market value affordable accommodation. Private sector housing for older people developed on a commercial basis would not meet the need for DCC funded clients as it would not be affordable.

¹ Devon County Council. **Extra Care Housing: Refresh of the Commissioning Strategy for Extra Care Housing (2009). August 2015.** Available at https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/images/ECHschemes/Quayside/150827_ECH-policy-refresh-FINAL.pdf