

Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Thursday, 12 November 2020

7:30pm

Present:

Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox (Chair)
Cllr Tony Rana (Vice-Chair)

Cllrs: Helen Ashenden
Ejaz Aslam
Harold Craske
Aaron Elliott
Jordan Meade
Emma Morley
Christina Rolles
Peter Scollard

Simon Hookway	Assistant Director (Communities)
Anita Tysoe	Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services)
Kath Donald	Strategic Manager (Community Safety)
Sean Steer	Operations Manager (Community Safety)
Nick May	Parking & Environmental Enforcement Services Manager
Tim Harris	Environmental Enforcement Manager
Kirsty Gaunt	Community Involvement Officer
Ben Clarke	Committee & Scrutiny Assistant (Minutes)

56. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Gary Harding; Cllr Aaron Elliott substituted.

57. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on Wednesday, 03 June 2020 were signed by the Chair.

58. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox and Cllr Peter Scollard declared interests as they were appointed representatives to the Gr@nd.

59. Environmental Enforcement

The Chair introduced the new Environmental Enforcement Manager Tim Harris to Members and asked him to give a brief introduction to the Committee.

Following introductions the Committee received an oral presentation from the Environmental Enforcement Manager on the work of the Environment Enforcement Team, their achievements to date, where he hoped the team would be in twelve months, examples of prosecutions and the current challenges that Gravesham faced.

Following the presentation, the Environmental Enforcement Manager fielded questions from Members and explained that:

- All businesses within Gravesham would have a duty of care in relation to getting rid of their trade waste safely; they had to have a trade waste agreement in place which would prevent their rubbish being placed in household waste bins. When the team received a report of a business dumping their rubbish in household bins, an officer would visit the business and deal with them under the fly-tipping legislation; the officer would also ensure a trade waste agreement was sought out for the offending business following disciplinary procedures
- There was a revised reporting system in place; all reports from the public/Members needed to be reported through the contact centre or the online system on the website. The reason being that going through the proper reporting channels ensured that every single fly tipping case would be logged and evaluated for investigation as well as making the case load auditable and more manageable

Members thanked the Environmental Enforcement Manager for his team's work and noted his successes in successfully fining people who had fly-tipped within Gravesham.

The Chair informed the Committee that the Assistant Director (Communities) and the Environmental Enforcement Manager would be scheduling a Member training session in the future on Environmental Enforcement and reporting instances of fly-tipping.

The Chair thanked the Environmental Enforcement Manager for his comprehensive presentation.

60. Draft Community & Engagement Strategy

The Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) presented the Committee with the draft Community Engagement Strategy. Officers had been working on the Strategy for a couple of months and the draft prepared took into account the aspirations of the Council and what the local Community were looking for with regards to engagement with the Council.

The Community Involvement Officer advised that the Strategy complimented other Strategies within the Council and outlined the four core objectives that the framework set out for developing community engagement:

- Being a Listening Council
- Empowering Residents and Communities
- Supporting Community Organisations
- Building Cohesive Communities

Following questions from Members, the Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) explained that:

- It was recognised that in order to ensure resilience, capacity building was required and training the volunteers in the Community was a key part of that. Throughout the pandemic, Community organisations came together to network and seek advice on different experiences in order to help those in need within Gravesham. The Council felt that the networking between groups could be widened out across the Community

even further with formal training opportunities that would be available to all Community organisations that were helping local residents

- The team were keen to involve Member's in order to better understand how the Strategy could be developed to suit individual wards requirements; Member's will be consulted in the future to determine how the Strategy will engage with residents in their wards
- The intention was to ensure that Communities of all sizes were engaged with not just the Communities that had previously engaged with the Council; the Strategy would make sure that opportunities were available for everyone. All local community groups will be worked with the aim of building participation and raising awareness of the opportunities that the Council were offering

Concern was raised by a Member over the wording on page 24 of the report concerning 'Review current links with BAME Community representatives and **communities of interest** and identify any gaps that need focus' as he felt it could be construed as misleading residents. The Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) agreed to review the terminology within the report.

Members noted the information contained within the report.

61. Gravesham Community Safety Partnership

The Strategic Manager (CSU) informed the Committee of a proposal put forward by Gravesham Borough Council for the de-merger of the joint Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and which has subsequently been agreed, in pursuance of Gravesham's wish to establish a dedicated District-level CSP.

A delegated decision taken by the Cabinet Lead Member, Councillor Shane Mochrie-Cox, countersigned by the Leader of the Council, for the withdrawal of Gravesham from the joint CSP was taken and published in October in order that the new Partnership could be established without delay. The report had also previously been provided to the Council's Cabinet on 9 November 2020 for information purposes.

The Strategic Manager (CSU) further went through the report explaining the background of the partnership and the new direction the Gravesham CSP would follow; many of the local partners were supportive of the proposal and the team determined that there were very few disadvantages compared to the host of advantages having a Gravesham CSP would create. Following the completion of the Strategic Assessment and a public consultation exercise, it was the intention that a new Gravesham Community Safety Strategy would be created and go live from 01 April 2021; the progress of the CSP would be monitored and reported through the Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee as well as the Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Manager (CSU) for her work on the Partnership and reiterated the point that Gravesham partners were supportive of the approach that was being pursued.

Following questions from Members, the Strategic Manager (CSU) explained that:

- The new CSP would only concentrate on Gravesham; there were no plans now or in the future to create a joint CSP with Medway

- Alongside Gravesham, the new CSP would consist of the statutory partners who had voting rights: Kent Police, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, the Probation Service/Community Rehabilitation Company, the NHS/CCG and KCC. Other groups would also be invited such as the Neighbourhood Watch, Victim Support and British Transport Police etc. however they would not have any voting rights. One advantage of the new CSP would be the ability for Gravesham to invite whomever they wanted to attend the CSP meetings who could contribute to what the CSP was trying to achieve.

Members noted the information contained within the report.

62. Youth Democracy Scheme

The Committee were provided with an evaluation of the Local Councillor Shadowing Award 2020.

The Committee & Scrutiny Assistant guided Members through the report and explained the effectiveness of the Scheme in its current form; Members were informed that even though the Scheme was a success, due to Covid-19 it would not be run again in 2021; depending on the situation at the time, the Council would look to resume the Scheme in 2022.

Following questions, the Committee & Scrutiny Assistant explained that:

- All of the main secondary schools within Gravesham were contacted well in advance about the Local Councillor Shadowing Award and they were all given the opportunity to have Jackie Simmonds give an assembly at the schools to inform the 6th form of the award and what it entailed
- Unfortunately, prior to the Scheme it was deemed not possible for the Council to provide transport to and from meetings for all of the participants however the Council supported all of the participants and would provide as much support as necessary in future running's of the Scheme
- It would be very helpful if Councillors became more involved during the recruitment stages of the Scheme in 2022; the Councillors could visit the schools within their own wards to talk to the local 6th forms about the award and the benefits of completing it. Hopefully by hearing about it from Councillors it would drum up further interest for the Scheme and more participants would take part

The Chair agreed that Ward Councillors should visit the local schools with Jackie Coupar the next time the Scheme was run and asked the Committee & Scrutiny Assistant to extend the period of advertisement and deadline for submissions so that it gave further time for young people to sign up to the Scheme in 2022.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Committee & Scrutiny Assistant for the commitment that he made to ensuring that this Scheme was a success.

Members noted the information contained within the report.

63. Christmas Programme of Events

The Committee were provided with an overview of the Christmas programme planned for Gravesend Town Centre for 2020 and the winter lights festival in January 2021, given Covid-19 restrictions.

The Assistant Director (Communities) advised that the programme had been designed completely adhering to Government restrictions and all social distancing measures had been taken into consideration. Following the recent lockdown 2 the beginning of the programme had to be cancelled however if lockdown is lifted from 2 December, then the events planned in December 2020 would move ahead. The Christmas Lights Switch On Parade had to be cancelled however the Christmas Lights had been put up and the Mayor would release a video promoting the Christmas Light Switch On virtually. The Christmas Tree would be delivered next week and it would be fully decorated by the end of next week; the lights trail around the Town would form part of the Lights Festival in January 2021. The Market Days and Workshops prior to 2 December have been cancelled, but others are planned to go ahead. The drive in Cinema event is still planned to go ahead.

The Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) further expanded on the Christmas Events Programme, the first ever Gravesham Lights Festival and the current position with the Pantomime (pages 54-55) to Members.

Cllr Craske gave his thanks to the company 8Point3 LED, who had assisted in the creation of the Lights Festival, as they were also the company that offered to repair the vandalised Clocktower lights which showed great community spirit.

Cllr Aslam and Cllr Elliott also gave their thanks to the Assistant Director (Communities) and the Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) for the creation of a Christmas Programme and putting on a pantomime show for the children during a difficult period

Following questions, the Assistant Director (Communities) and the Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) explained that:

- The Drive In Cinema event would be held in Milton Place Car Park.
- There was a connection between St Andrew's Arts Centre and Charles Dickens; the building of St Andrew's, by the daughter of Francis Beaufort, was helped with funding donated by Charles Dickens. It was not a very well-known link to Charles Dickens, but one to be recognised.
- The pantomime would usually have a total capacity of 650 people but to ensure Covid compliancy that number had been reduced to a max of 240. The Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) agreed to speak to Cllr Scollard outside of the meeting to determine if any special arrangements could be arranged for the large groups of children he usually brought every year
- The local schools were liaised with as in previous years however many of them were unsure of taking a large amount of school children across Town to the theatre due to Covid-19 and social distancing issues. The prospect of taking the pantomime into the local schools was discussed but there were issues with that approach; the Council and pantomime producer had been looking to see if the run time of the pantomime could be extended into January to accommodate additional performances

Members noted the information contained within the report.

64. Corporate Performance Report: Q2 2020-21

The Committee were provided with an update against the Performance Management Framework, as introduced within the Council's Corporate Plan, for Quarter Two 2020-21 (July to September 2020).

The Assistant Director (Communities) guided Members through the report and gave a brief overview of each Policy Commitment.

Following questions for each Policy Commitment, the Assistant Director (Communities) advised that:

- The dotted line seen on the graphs within the report was the trend line which showed the overall trend against actual performance
- Further discussions will be held on how to assist residents in using the open spaces safely and in a COVID-19 compliant way

With regards to PI 2 – Total number of reported incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour, the Chair advised that he had requested that the Police separate the ASB cases which related to Covid-19 from other ASB cases as Covid-19 had caused the spike in reported figures.

With regards to PI 13 – Total number of environmental enforcement actions taken, the Chair advised the zero reported in Q1 2020/21 was an anomaly as the Safer Place Officers had been reassigned to assist the vulnerable during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As seen in quarter two the Safer Place Officers had returned to their regular duties and the figures had risen.

With regards to PI 37 – Total number of leisure centre attendees, the Chair assured the Committee that GCLL were receiving all of the necessary support they required from the Council.

Members noted the information contained within the report.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 21:10pm.