

Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Monday, 14 March 2022

7.30 pm

Present:

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

Councillors: Derek Ashenden
 Helen Ashenden
 Ejaz Aslam
 Emma Morley
 Christina Rolles
 Peter Scollard
 Frank Wardle

Simon Hookway Assistant Director (Communities)
Anita Tysoe Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services)
Adrian Hickmott Leisure & Resilience Manager
Rob Swain Managing Director, Gravesham Community Leisure Ltd (GCLL)
Carlie Simmonds Committee Services Manager (Minutes)

30. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Gurjit Bains and Aaron Elliott. Cllrs Derek Ashenden and Frank Wardle attended as their respective substitutes.

An apology for absence was also received from Cllr Harold Craske.

31. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 1 February 2022 were signed by the Chair.

32. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox declared an interest in the items listed on the agenda as he is a Council appointee on Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL) and The Gr@nd CIC.

Cllr Peter Scollard declared an interest in the items listed on the agenda as he is a Council appointee on Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL).

33. Draft Strategy - Youth & Community, Health & Wellbeing Strategy

The Committee was presented with the draft Youth & Community, Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

The Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) advised that the Council had a duty to take such steps, as it considered appropriate, to improve the health of the people in its area, including the provision of information, services or facilities to promote healthy living. Whilst responsibility under the Health & Social Care Act 2021 sat predominantly with County,

as upper tier authority, Gravesham was best placed to understand the needs of its communities and how best to work with partners and delivery bodies to ensure those needs were met.

The Council recognises the impact of health inequalities and that ensuring a healthy community and healthy lifestyle remains a priority.

The draft strategy sets out a vision to ensure the health, wellbeing and youth offer for Gravesham's community is fit for 2022 and beyond and focusses on three strategic objectives:-

- A Health & Wellbeing Offer to be Proud of – enabling Gravesham to be a healthy and safe place;
- A Youth and Community Offer to be Proud of – supporting, involving and engaging the young people of Gravesham in their Borough; and
- A partnership led offer - working with community organisations and sector specialists to deliver a relevant and responsive offer.

The strategy document sets out a working action plan which will inform the direction of work across the life of the strategy.

The Committee considered the draft strategy and highlighted the following:-

- the Council to work closely with schools, local GP surgeries and minority ethnic groups in particular the Muslim Community;
- encourage bespoke exercise classes for women;
- consideration be given to an 'over 65s/senior' campaign – this will not only improve health but also tackle loneliness etc;
- consideration be given to pop up shops in order to connect with local communities in all wards;
- promote the activities/provisions available to those who may have constraints on their finances;
- promote that people do not need to be members of a gym in order to have a healthy lifestyle; and
- the activities/provisions available form part of the local services directory. The directory to be more prominent on the Council's website. Digital Boards within the Borough could also be explored as a way of promoting services etc.

Resolved that, taking into account the comments fed back by the Committee Members, that the strategy be agreed and formally adopted.

34. Gravesham Community Leisure - oral update from Rob Swain, Managing Director, Gravesham Community Leisure Ltd (GCLL)

The Committee received a presentation from Rob Swain, Managing Director of Gravesham Community Leisure Ltd (GCLL) on the recovery of Cascades and Cygnets Leisure Centres from the pandemic.

Both centres reopened in stages from April 2021. The Committee was presented with the pre and post-pandemic usage and income levels for the various facilities offered at both centres such as the gym, studio, sports hall, squash courts, swimming pool and health suite.

The Managing Director of GCLL advised that the sector as a whole was facing a challenge to recover however the levels were encouraging and that there had been a rise in membership applications.

Members were informed that the leisure centres had now been operating on behalf of the Council by GCLL for the last 22 years. The Managing Director of GCLL thanked the Council for its financial support through the long periods of closure during 2020 and 2021.

The Committee thanked the Managing Director of GCLL for his informative presentation and highlighted the following:-

- some members of the public may still be worried about COVID-19 and hesitant to attend indoor classes therefore could outdoor classes be considered/offered; and
- the Leisure Centres to be promoted via Council strategies.

The Committee thanked the Managing Director of GCLL and his team for their hard work and commitment throughout the pandemic.

35. The development of a Sport, Leisure and Active Gravesham Strategy

The Committee was presented with the draft Sport, Leisure & Active Recreation Strategy.

The Leisure & Resilience Manager advised that the Communities Directorate had in recent times implemented two key strategies; Arts & Cultural Strategy and a Tourism & Heritage Strategy. The third related strategy that was currently being developed was a Sport, Leisure & Active Recreation Strategy. The portfolio of strategies will help to provide a sound and coherent framework for improving and enhancing leisure, culture and tourism, in its widest sense for the foreseeable future.

It was widely recognised that taking part in physical activity through sport and active recreation has the ability to improve the quality of life for individuals and communities and deliver a range of social, health, economic and environmental benefits. Gravesham had large scale health inequalities and, whilst improvements had been made in recent years, the difference experiences across the Borough varies widely. The updated Sport, Leisure & Active Recreation Strategy included a number of key priorities and actions which will provide a framework for tackling inactivity, as well as linking in to the wider developments such as future facility provision within the Borough.

The Leisure & Resilience Manager advised a section on the proposed redevelopment of Cascades Leisure Centre had been included within the strategy.

In relation to the redevelopment of Cascades Leisure Centre, the Committee highlighted the following:-

- consideration be given to the inclusion of a spa and health suite facility as it helps build both mental and physical health. The Leisure & Resilience Manager advised that the Council will be working with GCLL and experts to assess what provisions/facilities should be offered. There will also be a public consultation and the feedback received will be considered;

- will the Regan's Bar be required to close, if so, when. It was confirmed that the Regan's Bar will close and that the Council's Property Services Team was currently liaising with the leaseholders; and
- consideration be given to holding a Member's Briefing during the public consultation period in order for Members to share their views on the proposals/design.

The Chair confirmed that there was no intention to close Cygnets Leisure Centre and that the strategy included reference to there always being two leisure centres that would be physically located to meet the needs of our residents.

The Leisure & Resilience Manager informed the Committee that the strategy will go out to external consultation and an accompanying action plan will be developed.

The Committee welcomed the strategy and agreed that, taking into account the comments fed back by the Committee Members, that the strategy be formally adopted under delegated powers following external consultation and development of an accompanying action plan.

The Leisure & Resilience Manager advised that he would also provide the Committee with an update on the strategy following external consultation.

36. Corporate Performance Update: Quarter Three 2021-22

The Committee was presented with an update against the Performance Management Framework, as introduced within the Council's Corporate Plan, for Quarter Three 2021-22 (October to December 2021).

The Committee highlighted the following:-

- the launch of St George's Arts Centre was successful and thanked Mandy Hare, Cultural Manager for her hard work. The Arts Centre had been widely applauded for the new opportunities that it gives to the cultural and artistic life of Gravesham;
- the figures for the average weekly Borough Market footfall (PI 43) be looked into in more detail as it was felt that those figures were not being reflected within the High Street and surrounding shops. The Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) advised that she would investigate this further.
- there should continue to be a programme of pop up markets and themed activities within the Borough Market as it significantly increases footfall;
- thanks be passed on to Tim Harris, Environmental Enforcement Manager and his team for the enforcement action/work that had been undertaken to date.
- all Members be encouraged to sign up/support the White Ribbon campaign – the campaign helps to develop initiatives to tackle male violence against women and girls.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9.28 pm