

## Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Thursday, 10 November 2022

7.30 pm

### Present:

Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox (Chair)

Councillors: Helen Ashenden  
Derek Ashenden  
Ejaz Aslam  
Harold Craske  
Aaron Elliott  
Nirmal Khabra  
Lyn Milner  
Emma Morley  
Christina Rolles

Jamie Izzard Director (Communities)  
Simon Hookway Assistant Director (Communities)  
Anita Tysoe Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services)  
Sean Steer Community Safety Operations Manager  
Danielle Lock Leisure Manager  
Kirsty Gaunt Community Engagement Officer  
Chloe Taylor Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

### 10. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Gurjit Bains and Cllr Tony Rana. Cllr Derek Ashenden and Cllr Lyn Milner substituted respectively.

### 11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Community and Leisure Cabinet Committee held on Wednesday, 01 June 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

### 12. 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.

### **13. Council's Events Programme 2022 and future events in 2022/23**

The Leisure Manager presented Members of the Committee with a report detailing an overview of the council's events programme during 2022 and the planning for future events in 2022/23.

After presenting the committee with a short video that showcased the Riverside Festival that took place on 30 July 2022, the Leisure Manager outlined the following:

- Since the report was produced in September, some future events had since passed
- The Fireworks that took place on 03 November 2022, despite some pushback on the change to a Thursday, was positively received, with approximately 7,000 attendees.
- Members were provided with a hand-out that detailed the attendance for the summer fun programme, where numbers indicated levels higher than those pre pandemic.
- The outdoor cinema generated between 800 and 1,000 attendees.
- Officers had received very positive feedback from residents regarding the accessibility of free events, especially given the current economic climate, and how they benefitted members of the community.
- At the time the report was written, an application for funds had been submitted to Arts Council England for the Winter Lights Festival. Confirmation had since been received for match funding, meaning the event would be held for a second year, bigger and better than before. They aim to make the events as inclusive as possible, looking into options for live streaming the event, and encouraging residents to make lanterns at home, and working with local schools.

Members thanked officers for their efforts in getting community events back out for residents following the pandemic.

Overwhelming feedback was received following the Eid prayers held in Fort Gardens. Thanks was given to the Council for helping to facilitate the event.

The Committee noted the report.

### **14. Community Engagement Strategy Action Plan Update**

The Community Involvement Officer presented Members of the Committee with a report updating them on the progress against the Community Engagement Strategy, and explained the following:

- They were half way through the three-year cycle for the Strategy
- Since covid restrictions had been lifted, more community engagement has been done in person in partnership with other teams and departments across the council.
- They were working with Kent Partners in order to get the voice of Gravesham further and to access better resources for the community.

On Friday 02 December, the Gravesham Access Group was holding the first event in recognition of Disability Awareness Day 2022.

The Committee noted the report.

## 15. Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Update

The Community Safety Operations Manager presented Members of the Committee with an update on the progress with the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy since the last update in June 2021, and highlighted the following key points:

- They had increased their number of Street Champions, with 458 volunteers.
- They had also increased the number of adopted streets. To date, 311 have been adopted.
- Out of 603 reports made regarding abandoned vehicles, 30 were removed.
- Housing Services upgraded and expanded their CCTV cameras to cover key areas.
- Residents can report cases of homelessness through Streetlink, and a Homeless Team and Officer will attend.
- 8 premises issued closure notices due to the sale of illegal tobacco.
- They were on Phase One of a new Anti-Social Database, where information would be held.
- They were looking to build a similar style database for Graffiti offences.
- The introduction of a seasonal safety shop was a success, as was the Anti-Social Awareness Week. Another seasonal safety shop was due to take place 05 – 10 December 2022 in a unit at the western entrance to St George's Centre.

Following questions and comments from Members, the Community Safety Operations Manager explained that:

- In public spaces, the Waste Management Team were responsible for clearing graffiti. However, on private sites, clearance needs to be given from the site owner for Waste Management to go in and clear any graffiti.
- Members would be informed of the rules regarding private ownership and the rules and regulations around street art as part of planning permission.
- Broken lights can be reported on Kent County Council's (KCCs) website via a form. There was also a map which detailed what reports had already been filed and what action was being taken in relation to that report. Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) has an arrangement with KCC on the maintenance of street lights.
- There were plans to upgrade some of the current heritage lighting as part of the Safety Street Project.
- The Community Safety Team at GBC have a good working relationship with Kent Police.
- Officers could speak to KCC regarding putting stickers on lights to notify residents of who to contact if the light was not working.
- Following an incident in Riverview Park, Gravesend, the council plan to work with police in advance of Halloween 2023 to prevent such incidents from happening.

The Committee noted the report.

## 16. Tackling Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls

The Chair informed Members that this was the beginning stages of the strategic approach, and gave them the opportunity to raise topics and to influence the report.

The Community Safety Operations Manager presented Members of the Committee with a report that outlined the Council's priorities for discussion, and outlined the following:

- Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, more responsibility was placed on Local Authorities.
- Recorded offences of Domestic Abuse have increased by 9%, making it one of the highest in the County. However, this increase could be due to GBC taking a more proactive approach, with more people reporting incidences of Domestic Violence.
- GBC have done a considerable amount of campaigning, such as the White Ribbon event and 16 Days of Action.
- 40% of harassment and stalking incidents were online.
- Another 16 Days of Action was due to start on Friday 25 November 2022.

Following comments and questions from Members, the Community Safety Operations Manager explained that:

- Officers will feedback to Kent Police following an event that was held at Northfleet School for Girls, where some concerns were raised regarding location and accessibility.

Members raised that the domestic abuse issue was universal and acknowledged the importance in tackling it together. The importance of reaching out to different faith groups and charities was discussed, with Members highlighting the importance of tackling Domestic Violence without any cultural barriers.

Officers will feedback to the relevant persons regarding communications with faith groups to hold workshops and events. Members discussed the importance of tackling Domestic Abuse in its entirety. Where possible, Members were encouraged to sign up and become White Ribbon Ambassadors.

It was raised whether schools and nurseries could be involved in the campaign to incorporate a wider message.

The Committee noted the report.

## **17. Corporate Register of Partnership – July 2022**

The Assistant Director (Communities) and the Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) presented Members of the Committee with a report that informed Members of the Council's involvement in partnerships that were within the remit of the committee. The following points were highlighted:

- The council had a Corporate Register of Partnerships and Shared Working Arrangements which provided a central record of partnerships in which the council was involved.
- One of the partnerships came to an end in December 2021 and hence has been removed from the register.

The Committee noted the report.

## 18. Corporate Performance Report: Q1 2022-23

The Committee agreed to discuss items 10 and 11 alongside one another as the Quarter One Performance Update was deferred from the cancelled meeting on Tuesday 13 September 2022.

The Assistant Director (Communities) presented Members of the Committee with two reports detailing the Corporate Performance Update for Quarter One (April to June) and Quarter Two (July to September). The following was discussed:

- They had received funding around creating safer streets and community safety activities.
- Regarding PI 13, they had seen an increase in activity in both Q1 and Q2. However, it was worth noting that many protracted investigations take place for months, which in turn makes the figures appear higher in certain quarters.
- Figures for PI 37, in reference to the leisure offers, were lower than those pre pandemic, but swimming at Cascades did extremely well over the summer, outperforming 2019.
- PI 34 was an annual indicator and will be considered in Q4. Members were informed that Steve Wren has replaced Rob Swain (Managing Director of GCLL).
- The Gr@nd had moved locations and participant numbers were rising closer to pre-pandemic levels.
- PI 41 was annually reported, and figures would be presented in Q4.
- The figures shown in PI 42 had increased in terms of footfall.
- Members were informed that the Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) was looking at developing a way to present a 'What's On' at the Art Centre.
- The Arts Centre had received preliminary feedback which showed they had gotten over 10,000 visitors since the centre opened on Saturday 11 December 2021.
- Positive feedback was received from The Posh Club Tea Party, and residents had asked for this event to be repeated. The Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services) noted this feedback and advised they would see if they could get this re-programmed.
- The Service Manager agreed to look into the tuning of the piano in The Woodville. The lunchtime concerts were well received.
- Members asked what was being done to increase footfall in the Market. The Director (Communities) explained that a visit had taken place in the Market to share with the traders the council's aspirations. They had lost some traders, meaning one end of the market contained only empty units, which they intend to keep vacant for now. A good programme of Christmas events was scheduled to increase footfall. The council intend to keep the market under their ownership, but welcome partnership ideas to reinvent the culture of the current market.
- Opening times in the market had already been extended in conjunction with the traders to offer later trading on Fridays and Saturdays, but further extension would be considered in the new model.
- PI 44, regarding visitors attending heritage sites, was an annual indicator and would be considered in Q4.

The Committee noted the report.

**19. Corporate Performance Report: Q2 2022-23**

See minutes above relating to this item.

**20. Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.**

Cllr Ejaz Aslam, with permission from the Chair, requested to raise any other business in relation to Cascades Leisure Centre as he felt the Committee should have received an update on the progress of the project. The chair agreed to consider this item under any other business, however due to commercial information that needed to remain confidential at this stage, the Committee agreed for this item to be discussed in Part B.

**21. Exclusion**

**Resolved** that pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded during the following item of business because it was likely in view of the nature of business to be transacted that, if members of the public were present during the item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**22. Cascades Leisure Centre**

With agreement from the Chair, Cllr Aslam requested an update on the Cascades Leisure Centre Project, and raised the following topics:

- Maintenance and future plans for Cygnets
- Financial Implications for Cascades
- The impact inflation and material costs were having on the progress of the project

Members held a robust decision and had their questions answered by the Chair and the Director (Communities).

**Close of meeting**

The meeting ended at 21:28pm