

Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Thursday, 30 May 2024

19.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Lauren Sullivan (Chair)

Councillor: Derek Ashenden
 Helen Ashenden
 Ejaz Aslam
 Jo Hart
 Alan Metcalf
 Christina Rolles
 Gurdip Ram Bungar
 Peter Scollard

Adrian Hickmott	Leisure & Resilience Manager
Danielle Lock	Leisure Manager
Liz Read	Health & Wellbeing Manager
Kirsty Gaunt	Community Involvement Officer
Mandy Hare	Cultural Manager
Stephen Wren	Managing Director – GCLL
Wayne Pedrick	Head of Operations – GCLL
Ben Clarke	Committee Services Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Deborah Croxton (Vice-Chair) and Cllr Ben Sizer; Cllr Jo Hart and Cllr Derek Ashenden substituted respectively.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 11 March 2024 were signed by the chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Hart declared a non-pecuniary interest as she was a Council appointee to the GCLL Board.

Cllr Sullivan declared an interest as she had a GCLL membership

4. New Arts & Culture Strategy

The Committee was provided with a presentation on the new Arts & Culture Strategy.

The presentation is available through the below link:

- <https://democracy.gravesham.gov.uk/documents/b21015/Supplementary%20-%20New%20Arts%20Culture%20Strategy%20Presentation%20Thursday%2030-May-2024%2019.30%20Community%20L.pdf?T=9>

Following the presentation, the Cultural Manager fielded questions from the Committee and explained that:

- The footfall figures for the Arts Centre in the St Georges Centre was recorded by the receptionist whenever someone entered the building; the figures were then logged at the end of every week. Footfall figures had steadily increased over the last five years; in 2020, during its first year of opening, footfall was slow and the pandemic impacted visitor numbers. In the last year, fifteen thousand people had visited the centre and footfall was affected by what artists were showcasing their work
- Match funding matched other written bids to a certain amount; during the funding process the Council would be approached with a proposal and if it matched the aims of the Strategy then it could be progressed to the next stage

The Chair applauded the intent to make Gravesham the arts & cultural hub of Kent and highlighted the importance of Gravesham's heritage as well as developing local creative artists. Partnerships with local people and businesses needed to be explored further to unlock more funding opportunities and allow additional ideas to be discussed to expand the art and culture offering within Gravesham.

The Chair asked that any additional comments to be fed into the Strategy be circulated to the Cultural Manager outside of the meeting. All feedback received so far would be used to shape the Arts & Culture Strategy over the next five years.

5. GCLL Annual Update

The Committee were provided with an annual update presentation from GCLL. A short video detailing the performance of a nationally selected volleyball player in Gravesham was shown to Members.

The presentation and video are available through the below link:

- [Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee meeting - 2024 - Copy.pptx](#)

Following the presentation, the Managing Director and Head of Operations from GCLL fielded questions from Members and explained that:

- GCLL gym membership rates were affected during the pandemic as many users cancelled their membership and it was challenge in the immediate years following to increase the membership rates again. However, during 2023 things changed and membership grew with the footfall singlet increasing to the leisure centres due to a number of reasons. Many members of the public wanted to increase their fitness, improve their mental health and be more social
- Members of the public that were fifty plus were a key demographic that GCLL wanted to target them more; GCLL were working with several different companies and running campaigns to attract fifty plus member from different communities within the borough
- Cygnet ran 'mother & tots' sessions during the week; increased advertising of those sessions could be investigated
- Google reviews were difficult to improve upon and could be affected by a number of things; Cygnets rating was lower than the other two sites, but customers were

individual and had different feelings about what was good and bad to them. A bad review for Cygnets was received last week from a customer that felt the leisure centre was too busy for them, but it may not have been too busy for the other customers; a response to that review was given and the reviewer was told it would be raised with the site manager

- The Managing Director advised that reviews were important as they informed GCLL how well they were doing and where they could improve; two team members had been assigned to manage the reviews and provide responses. Cleanliness was also an important factor when giving reviews and it was top of GCLL's agenda but many areas by the pools were wet areas and hard to maintain 24/7. The mystery visits that GCLL subscribed too helped to bring up the standard of the leisure centres and ensure that issues were resolved as soon as possible as well as put things in place to stop them being issues again in the future. Customers were also encouraged to leave reviews when they had had a positive experience but many customers only left reviews when they perceived that they had had a bad experience
- Members that had a membership but rarely or never used the leisure centres were called 'sleeping members'; many of the members that cancelled their membership during the pandemic were classed as 'sleeping members'. Prior to the pandemic, the leisure industry relied heavily on those people but nowadays members would cancel if they didn't meet their goals, so communication was key. GCLL were reviewing different ways of contacting their membership via various platforms including all forms of popular social media (such as TikTok which had generated thousands of views from one video)
- There was an app called 'Pulse Trakk' which worked alongside the GCLL app and told members to get to the gym, how far they were away from their goals and what they needed to do etc
- The leisure centres managed by GCLL offered more than just gyms; they also offered pools, sauna, health facilities, sports and a community focus. The leisure centres were community assets, part funded by the community and the communities support was needed

A suggestion was made by a Member that an event day be held outside the Civic Centre promoting GCLL; a sports/gym class could be held on Community Square that was open to the public and all would be encouraged to join in. If the event was communicated early enough, it could attract quite a large crowd of people in suitable clothing.

The Head of Operations explained that event days started last year and formed part of the active now programme; discussions had already been held with the Leisure Manager and event days had been well attended at various places around the borough. The last event day, called 'active in the community' was a series of exercise classes held at Ebbsfleet train station which members of the public were encouraged to take part in.

The Chair thanked the GCLL officers for their detailed presentation.

6. Health & Wellbeing

The Committee were presented with a report that updated them on Public Health work delivered by the Health and Wellbeing Team in 2023-24 to tackle inequalities and enable healthier life choices and the work planned for 24-25.

The Health & Wellbeing Manager took Members through the report and highlighted key points from each section:

- Health Inequalities in Gravesham
- One You Programmes and Initiatives
- Overview of Delivery planned for 24-25
- Working with DGS Health and Care Partnership (HaCP) and Integrated Care Board Inequalities Funding
- ICB Inequalities Delivery 24-25
- Mental Health work with the Sikh Community

The Health & Wellbeing Manager fielded questions from the Committee and explained that:

- The Health & Wellbeing Manager attended regular meetings with the Council and was a member of the Health & Wellbeing Board; information was shared readily between teams
- Members of the public who filled out the membership forms for the various programmes offered would have been asked the question about what ethnicity they define themselves as; the table on page 11 of the report showed a breakdown of those ethnicities
- All of the programmes outlined in the report had been funded for one year; funding beyond the one year mark couldn't be secured as the money received from KCC was given to them by the Government and it was ringfenced on an annual basis. The same rule applied with funding received from the Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Regarding the delivery of progress and health sessions, most people preferred they be in person, especially young people. There were sessions aimed at assisting people with navigating digital systems and services and an IT programme (Digital Tech) was also offered that taught older members of the community how to use technology
- The Sikh community had experienced a large number of suicides and were being provided support from the Health & Wellbeing Team through various events and support sessions. Several members of the team were from the Sikh community, and they brought it to the attention of the Health & Wellbeing Team

A question was raised by the Committee asking if it would be beneficial for the Health & Wellbeing Manager to sit on an EDC board in order to help get health & wellbeing funding for various parts of Northfleet. The Chair added that the EDC had numerous pots of funding to distribute and some of that funding should be shared with those in the greatest need in Northfleet. The Health & Wellbeing Manager advised that she would raise the question with her line manager.

Members noted the report.

7. Volunteering Report

The Committee was provided with an update on council plans to develop staff volunteering and wider plans to celebrate and promote The Year of the Volunteer.

The Community Involvement Officer advised that 2024 marked the 50th anniversary of the formation of Gravesham Borough Council and the Council had updated its Staff Volunteering Policy to encourage and support all staff to volunteer for up to one day per year as part of their working hours.

The Community Involvement Officer advised that, to date, fifty staff had expressed an interest in taking part in the volunteer scheme.

The Council were running out of volunteering opportunities that officers could complete in one day without training; officers had been steered to suitable areas such as food banks and assisting the Methodist Church Day Centre.

The Community Involvement Officer asked that Members contact her if they knew of any charities where officers could volunteer.

The Chair applauded the scheme and noted it tied in well with social value and giving back to the community.

Members noted the report.

8. Corporate Performance Report: Q4 2023-24

The Committee was provided with an update against the Performance Management Framework, as introduced within the council's Corporate Plan, for Quarter Four 2023-24 (January to March 2024).

Appendix 1 to the report provided Members of the Community and Leisure Cabinet Committee with an overview of the council's performance against the Corporate Plan for Quarter Four 2023-24, covering the period January to March 2024.

The Committee noted and commented on the progress of the performance indicators.

In response to a Member's question concerning the amount of flag raising events, low attendance at the events and the lack of promotion; the Leisure & Resilience Manager advised that there were a lot of flag raising events, of which some are council led and some are organised by community organisations. For the community led flag raising events, these are facilitated by the Council but it was ultimately left up to that community to manage/promote their event. The Leisure & Resilience Manager noted that the flag raising events had become victims of their own success, due to the number throughout the year, but agreed to take it back to the office for further discussion.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 21:04pm.