

Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Thursday, 06 February 2020

7:30pm

Present:

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

Cllrs:	Ejaz Aslam	LCSA 2020:	William Smith	Leah Dodds
	Harold Craske		Kieran Everson	
	Aaron Elliott		Molly Hepburn	
	Baljit Hayre		Rachel Thornton	
	Christina Rolles		Harriet Howes	
	Peter Scollard		Grace Etherington	
	Frank Wardle		Husam El-Henawy	

Simon Hookway	Assistant Director (Communities)
Anita Tysoe	Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services)
Adrian Hickmott	Leisure & Resilience Manager
Rob Swain	Managing Director (GCLL)
Ben Clarke	Committee & Scrutiny Assistant (Minutes)

23. Apologies

Apology for absence was received from Cllr Helen Ashenden and Cllr Jordan Meade. Cllr Frank Wardle and Cllr Les Hoskins substituted respectively.

Robert Hooker (LCSA 2020) also gave his apology for absence.

24. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on Monday, 25 November 2019 were signed by the Chair.

25. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mochrie-Cox and Cllr Peter Scollard declared an interest as they were the Council's appointed representatives to the GCLL Board. Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox declared another interest as he was on the board of the Gr@nd.

26. Gravesham Community Leisure Ltd

The Chair welcomed the Managing Director (GCLL) and the participants from the Local Councillor Shadowing Award 2020 to the Committee. He asked the participants to raise their hand if they wanted to participate in the discussion throughout the course of the meeting.

The Managing Director (GCLL) gave a presentation to Members on the Leisure Centres in Gravesham (please see supplementary).

Following the presentation, the Managing Director (GCLL) fielded questions from the Committee:

- The GCLL group would be more than happy to attend any sessions with the minority ethnic groups within Gravesham to inform them of the services available and accommodate their needs as best as possible. Working with Councillors would allow groups to be reached that may normally have barriers in place for GCLL
- The issue of reaching maximum capacity resurfaces annually and both Cygnet and Cascades have almost reached their maximum capacity; the car parks at both sites are always full and many cars have had to park on pavements and grass verges to gain access. The two buildings were built in the late eighties and weren't fit for the amount of footfall that they see today. The centres attract 20-23% of the population which is much higher than the national average 14% of members from local communities and any new investment into the Leisure Centres would have to take capacity and parking into consideration
- The average length of gym membership in the UK is approximately seven months and GCLL are bucking that trend as Cascades average membership is thirteen months and Cygnets average membership is closer to sixteen months. However there was always room for improvement and GCLL would continue to improve their services to entice people to keep their memberships
- With regards to recognised eating disorders such as anorexia, the GCLL had worked with two members previously suffering with that disorder and helped them to get healthier, gain more confidence and employment. The GCLLs ambition was to target eating disorders under the mental health agenda as part of the long term vision for the future of the partnership
- The medical gym membership at both leisure centres was offered at a reduced rate of £31.00 a month
- Determining the opening times for different age groups has been a challenge to the GCLL and the current 18:00pm kick out time for under 16s has been implemented to as there have been incidences with some under 16s putting adult members off due to their lack of seriousness and not using the equipment properly etc. However, the Managing Director (GCLL) would take that comment back to his group and ask for the opening times to be reviewed
- The chair fit session for older users has been supplemented by NHS funding resulting in it only costing £3 per session; users of the class do not need to be gym members however if anyone still cannot afford the fee then they should get in contact with GCLL to see if there is scope to discuss further funding from the NHS or other sources.
- The pool at Cygnet was built in 1973 and the pipework was encapsulated in concrete so determining the conditions of the steel pipes was not possible; the condition was likely not very good. However, the building is technically owned by the Council and the Council would have to consider any major refurbishments as part of the partnership.

Cllr Hayre praised the work of the GCLL with the Sikh Community explaining that the women only sessions were very popular and often had big queues to use the Jacuzzi during those times.

Cllr Aslam requested that the Chair, in partnership with the GCLL, investigate ways of working with the Muslim community in Gravesham in order to make them better aware of the facilities and sessions available.

In reference to refurbishment of the leisure facilities, the Chair advised that a report will be submitted to Cabinet at the appropriate time to indicate what the Council's intentions were with refurbishment or the possible building of a new leisure complex.

The Committee thanked the Managing Director (GCLL) for an informative presentation and applauded all of his hard work encouraging Gravesham's residents, especially people suffering from type 2 diabetes, to visit the Leisure Centres more often to improve their lives through exercise and nutrition.

27. Corporate Performance Update – Quarter Three 2019-20 (October - December)

Members were presented with an update against the Performance Management Framework, as introduced within the Council's Corporate Plan, for Quarter Three 2019-20 (October to December 2019).

The Assistant Director (Communities) explained that a report will be submitted to the Committee at the end of each quarter showcasing the performance figures for each policy commitment that relates to the Community & Leisure portfolio. The new reporting style was adopted as part of the new Corporate Plan and included a lot more contextual information against each policy commitment.

The officers went through the report page by page in order for Members to be able to comment on each policy commitments performance:

1. Create stronger neighbourhoods:

The Assistant Director (Communities) advised that the figures in the report related to the reporting of crime offences and incidents of anti-social behaviour; a fuller report with greater detail will be reported to the next Crime & Disorder Committee on Tuesday, 17 March 2020.

The January Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee received an update from the Kent Police Chief Inspector in respect of the positive impact that the additional Police resources deployed in Gravesend are having during the day and his desire to have an additional police presence in the Town during the evening. The day time Town Centre 'beat' officers had made a great impact in the Town by tackling criminal behaviour and the level of incidents had decreased.

2. Actively enforce environmental standards:

The Assistant Director (Communities) explained that the policy commitment related to a narrow definition of environmental enforcement and the fixed penalty notices issued for littering and fly-tipping, etc. Two additional Safer Place Officers have now been employed enabling the team to expand the areas covered in Gravesham; they issued FPNs for environmental issues but they also covered a breadth of other duties such as homelessness and anti-social behaviour.

In response to several of the LCSA participant's questions regarding footfall and events in the Town, the Assistant Director (Communities) explained that:

- Incidents do tend to take place in some parts of the Town Centre, and more needs to be done to address the perception of crime, especially in the evening. The team

that undertook the evening and night time economy audit in November 2019, were surprised to see how quiet the Town was on a Friday night. Increasing footfall and promoting the range of restaurants and entertainment that the town has to offer would make the town feel more safer in the evening

- In total there are 55 CCTV cameras in public spaces in and around the Town Centre which are monitored from the main control room
- In order to increase footfall, further events needed to be held within the Town Centre. The summer cinema evenings on Community Square demonstrated what can be achieved and were very well received. Events, such as the annual fireworks bring people out into the Town Centre and additional footfall
- The bars and restaurants that were most popular were scattered around the Town and more needs to be done to promote what the Town has to offer. The Western Quarter in the Town Centre is being redeveloped and will include a cinema, numerous restaurants, together with the Panic Room which already attracts people into the Town for leisure; having those sorts of establishments will increase footfall within the Town during the evening as well as the day providing an alternative to other destinations.

The Assistant Director (Communities) fielded questions from Members, explaining that:

- The Kent Police Chief Inspector is keen for more officers to be deployed during the evening and night time economy in Gravesend.
- Currently, the two Town Centre officers have built up many relationships allowing effective intelligence to be gathered and, through their daily presence, make the Town feel a lot safer for members of the public

The Chair advised that many Districts within Kent had requested additional CCTV cameras from the Kent Police Crime Commissioner and within a recent report to the *Kent* and Medway Police and Crime Panel he stated that he wasn't willing to fund them as the responsibility lay with the Distinct Councils. The Chair stated that hopefully he would change his mind one day and release funding for cameras based on need.

1. Design a quality and affordable leisure offer:

The Leisure & Resilience Manager updated the Committee on the success of the organised parkrun's held in the borough, including the new run at Cyclopark which is managed by local volunteers on a weekly basis. This particular parkrun received Council seed funding earlier this year. There are now three parkrun's in the area including Shorne Woods Country Park and a junior parkrun held at the Gravesend Riverside Leisure Area.

The Leisure & Resilience Manager advised that the Fleet Leisure site (a multi-faceted football facility) had escalated to the planning stage and would be determined hopefully in the next few months.

In response to a question regarding the location of the site, the Committee were advised it was situated off Nelson Road in the Coldharbour Ward.

2. Manage a programme of proactive healthy living interventions:

The Leisure & Resilience Manager updated the Committee on key programmes that focused on health issues such as weight loss, mental health wellbeing, mobility issues and support for the elderly.

The Gifted Young Gravesham (GYG) group were very busy during quarter three hosting several events focused on youth work including the Showcase in the Woodville's and Aloud 2 Laugh which took place at Blake's Nightclub.

Molly Hepburn questioned how the Youth Council could be promoted further to increase membership.

The Leisure & Resilience Manager responded; Diljit Nota was based at the Gr@nd and she has been working closely with Danielle Lock to advertise membership of the Youth Council to schools in the Borough. Hopefully, the Youth Council should see increased interest in the near future.

The Assistant Director (Communities) further explained that the Youth Council always experienced a change in representation when members went to University. With regards to the Blake's youth night (Aloud 2 Laugh), representatives from the Community Policing Team and the Safer Place Officers attended the event to have discussions with young people in a positive environment.

In response to further questions, the Assistant Director (Communities) and the Leisure Resilience Manager explained that:

- The dark line on the graph on page 17 represented the Actual figures for quarter performance and the dotted line represented the Trend. Once a full year has been carried out and reported back, the figures will be much clearer
- The seasonality during quarter two attributed to the lower target outcome from the Gr@nd healthy living services

The Committee agreed that the charts in the report needed to be made bolder so that they were clearer and more attention was drawn to them.

3. Develop a cohesive and resilient community:

The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) advised that the Council had been successful in driving forward community spirit with several events celebrating different faiths and ethnics groups with some being hosted by the public. Other events such as Community Litter Picks have grown both in size and number with much higher turnouts demonstrating resident's willingness to improve their areas.

The community will continue to be supported by the Council for celebrations and events; as this is an annual indicator there will be no results reported until quarter four.

Husam El-Henawy explained that he had once contacted GBC to see what his school could do to help develop the Community further however he never received a response.

The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) apologised for the miscommunication and advised that she would exchange contact details and follow up with him after the meeting.

4. Enhance the borough's cultural offer:

The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) explained that the increased footfall during quarter three for the Market and Woodville's was due to the Christmas Markets and the pantomime production.

One Member noted the improved performance of the Christmas pantomime productions in recent years and claimed that many people only had positive comments to say about it. However, he explained that the monthly classical concert was relatively unknown and needed far more publicity to ensure it continued and attracted classical talent.

The Chair took in the comments and informed the Committee that the current pantomime producers were keen to continue the relationship they had with the Woodville's.

5. Promote Gravesham's arts and heritage:

The Assistant Director (Communities) felt that there was a growing creative strength in Gravesham especially for local arts and heritage and the Council's ambition is to increase it exponentially; as part of that growth there will be a report submitted to the next Committee regarding the Dickens 150 festival being held in June 2020 and an update on Estuary 2020 later in the year.

In conclusion, the Chair agreed that quarter 1 to quarter 3 was very positive and the additional context added to the new reporting style was very clear and welcomed.

The Committee thanked the officers for their hard work.

28. Youth Democracy Scheme

The Chair invited the participants of the Local Councillor Shadowing Award 2020 to share their thoughts about how the award was going and if any improvements could be made.

The participants of the Youth Democracy Scheme had encountered no problems completing their Local Councillor Shadowing Award and were very appreciate of the Scheme.

Molly Hepburn stated that one improvement to the Scheme would be to create a link on the Council's website that would allow all participants to download the schedule of events and any other associated documents. The link would be updated with any changes or additional events making it easier for the participants to know exactly what was happening and plan accordingly.

29. Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee - Partnership Register Extract

Members were informed of the Council's involvement in partnerships that were within the remit of the Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee.

The Assistant Director (Communities) advised that the current partnerships that most directly related to the work of the Community & Leisure Committee were listed at 2.1 of the report.

The Chair applauded the work of the partnerships explaining the importance of working with the groups as they were the fabric of the Borough providing safety, community spirit and representing many ethnicities, religions and social groups.

30. Market Working Group

The Service Manager (Theatre & Customer Services) gave an update to the Committee on the first meeting of the Market Working Group.

In the summer of last year, the findings of the Market consultation were shared with the Committee and an agreement was made to create a Member working group to review the full results, discuss the future of the Market and create a Strategy to guide its development.

The findings of the meetings were supposed to be reported back to this Committee meeting however there were circumstances which prevented that; the first meeting only took place a few weeks ago and the second meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, 11 February 2020.

The first meeting discussed what Members wanted to see compared with what the public wanted to see and there was a general agreement that the street food offerings and special events were the most popular part of the market.

Additionally, it was noted that the current opening times may have hindered footfall so later opening times will be investigated to allow families and young people to access the street food stalls after school and in the early evening.

The Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) assured the Committee that the group's findings and draft Market Strategy will be submitted to the next Committee meeting in March.

The LCSA participants were invited to share their views on the Market and how it could be made more appealing to the younger generation.

The LCSA participants outlined the following key points:

- The street food stalls have the current biggest appeal to young people and the offering needs to be expanded further
- The weekday and weekend opening times need to be extended to allow young people to access it afterschool and later on weekends
- There needs to be more of a consistent approach with the stalls so that they were there every week and more variety with the independent stalls to provide a better offering

In response to the points the made, the Assistant Director (Communities) and the Service Manager (Customer & Theatre Services) explained that:

- Sunday trading times have to be adhered too but the later opening times for weekdays and Saturday will be reviewed at the Market Working Group meetings and fed into the Market Strategy
- Originally there was an outdoor market in the Market car park however that no longer takes place due to the development that will be carried out by Reef over the next three years
- Plans for regeneration of the Eastern and Western quarters can be shared with the participants to show what is planned for the sites. The open air car park will be replaced by a car park structure

- There is not enough daily footfall for traders to maintain all the permanent stalls and the pop up stalls only attend the Market during specified events such as the Vegan Market Day. The Council are actively seeking to fill the vacancies within the Market; the direction of the Market will be laid out within the Market Strategy which should help with filling the empty spaces

The Vice-Chair requested that the Committee formally invite the LCSA participants to the meeting of Community & Leisure on Tuesday, 03 March 2020 to further discuss the Market Strategy item.

However, the Chair explained that it would be more beneficial to hold a separate meeting with the LCSA participants, before the next Committee meeting, dedicated solely to listening to their views on the Market so that they could be incorporated into the Market Strategy.

The Chair advised the Committee that a GO TRADE supported Youth Enterprise Event had been scheduled for Friday, 21 February 2020 from 10:00am-16:00pm in the Market and invited all of the LCSA participants to attend as it would give them an insight into business ventures and support anyone thinking about pursuing business interests.

Kieran Everson claimed that many people his age would be very keen to attend the Youth Enterprise Event and suggested that assemblies be held with the Secondary Schools in the Borough to advise young people of the opportunity.

The Chair advised that the idea would be fed back to the Senior Economic Development Officer.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9:21pm.