

Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Tuesday, 31 January 2023

7.30 pm

Present:

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

Councillors: Derek Ashenden
 Helen Ashenden
 Gurjit Kaur Bains
 Harold Craske
 Aaron Elliott
 Nirmal Khabra
 Emma Morley
 Christina Rolles

Simon Hookway	Assistant Director (Communities)
Anita Tysoe	Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services)
Sean Steer	Community Safety Operations Manager
Adrian Hickmott	Leisure & Resilience Manager
Mandy Hare	Cultural Manager
Kath Donald	Strategic Manager
Karen Gingles	Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

23. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Ejaz Aslam. Cllr Derek Ashenden substituted.

24. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 10 November 2022 were signed by the Chair. However, the Chair made a typographical amendment to minute 22. The last sentence read 'Members held a robust decision' but should have stated that 'Members held a robust discussion'

25. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox declared an interest in the item listed on the agenda relating to Cascade Leisure Centre, as he was a Council appointee on Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL) and The Gr@nd CIC.

26. Arts & Cultural Strategy Update

The Committee were presented with the Arts & Cultural Strategy Update. The update was an information paper reflecting the work of the Arts and Culture team in 22/23 and

outlined the plans and aspirations for 23/24.

The Cultural Manager referred Members to the action plan attached to the main report which outlined the key priorities for the delivery of art and culture to the community. She reminded the Committee that the key priorities were:

- Delivering a cultural and creative community
- Supporting and developing artists and creatives
- Establishing a vibrant and aspirational arts and cultural events programme
- Enhancing and promoting our assets and heritage
- Developing our children and young people creatively

The Cultural Manager updated the Committee on the achievements of the Arts & Cultural team within the last year, informing Members that all priority areas set in the strategy had been delivered. Some of the key achievements highlighted were:

- The opening of St George's Arts Centre with a full programme of events from community hires to national touring exhibitions. This had been the biggest achievement of the past year with the centre attracting over 12000 visitors in its first year of opening. It was noted that there had been an additional one thousand visitor over the past weekend due to the Festival of Light.
- During 2022 the community engagement through performances, workshops and exhibitions had brought in strong audiences, with workshops averaging a maximum capacity of 10 for 42 workshops in the year to date.
- Regular hire bookings in St George's Art Centre had been secured including Reeves Café in Unit 20 and regular bookings from KAB and Involve Kent.
- Match funding of projects at £16300 had resulted in funding coming into the borough of £143402 for a variety of projects. This funding from other sources had enabled music tuition for preschool age children, multiple artist residencies and immersive theatre.
- The 2022 Art and culture events programme supported the Gravesham Fringe Festival, which brought over 5000 visitors into local venues for over 40 events for 10 days in June.

The Cultural Manager informed Members that due to the reduced budget for 2023/24 the Arts and Culture team would look to push for more match funding and work with partners. The team would look to deliver on the key priorities identified in the strategy in the most efficient way for both Council and community.

The Cultural Manager informed Members that when delivering on the strategy priorities, some of the key areas the Art and Culture team would focus on in 2023 would be:

- Partnership work
- Increasing Match Funding Bids
- To apply for both the Fringe Festival and Light Festival again
- Work with more music artists
- Explore other creative spaces through work with partners.
- To continue to work with education partners.

The Chair thanked the Cultural Manager for her report and commended the Art and Culture team for the vast amount of work that went into organising the events.

The Chair invited the Committee to ask questions or to make comment.

Members agreed the Light Festival had been a magical event and that the footfall within St George's Art Centre's first year of opening was quite an achievement. Praise was given regarding the children's workshops and the facility to host children's parties with afternoon tea, as this was another way to spread the word of what the centre had to offer.

The Chair concluded and agreed that the footfall of 12000 to St George's Art Centre within its first year was to be commended. He also acknowledged that an additional 1000 visitors to the centre over the past weekend had been fantastic. The Chair praised the Light Festival event and highlighted that such events had a positive effect on the local economy and supported jobs in the community. He stressed the importance of Match Funding and working partnerships.

The Committee noted the report.

27. Cascades Leisure Centre - Consultation Process for New Leisure Centre - Information Report

The Committee were presented with the Cascades Leisure Centre - Consultation Process for New Leisure Centre - Information Report. The purpose of this report was to provide Members of the Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee with an overview of the involvement of various stakeholders with regards to the new leisure centre development as well as the recent public consultation process.

The Leisure & Resilience Manager gave some background to Members stating that a commitment to replace Cascades Leisure Centre and improve the Borough's leisure offer derived from the 2019-2023 Corporate Plan. Development of proposals for a new centre has been further influenced by a range of stakeholder and community engagement processes, including public consultation.

The Leisure & Resilience Manager advised that following public consultation overall the proposed development had been well received with respondents feeling very positive about the proposal and the investment in facilities.

The Chair thanked the Leisure & Resilience Manager for his work during the process so far and advised the Committee it would be remiss not to mention that the proposal was still subject to planning approval.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comment.

The Committee were informed that the planning application would potentially be presented at the March Planning Committee Meeting.

Members raised concern regarding the security of the site especially in relation to the neighbouring Southern Valley Golf area. The Chair agreed the importance of securing the site in its entirety and preventing the use of mopeds which were a danger to public safety.

The Chair also encouraged Members to report any incidents of motorised bikes on the site to Kent Police, as this was in their jurisdiction under the Road traffic Act.

The Chair commended the report and informed the Committee of the extensive work that had been carried out with this project.

The Committee noted the report.

28. Violence Against Women and Girls & Domestic Abuse Strategy

Upon introducing this agenda item, the Chair highlighted that this report was incorrectly titled on the agenda front sheet and should have read 'Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) & Domestic Abuse Strategy'.

The Committee were presented with the Violence Against Women and Girls & Domestic Abuse Strategy. The purpose of this report was to report the Council's draft Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Domestic Abuse Strategy 2023-2026. The Strategy had been developed to ensure that the Authority was as effective as possible in addressing the challenges presented by VAWG and domestic abuse. It set out the Council's priorities, providing a framework for addressing the over-arching objective of preventing VAWG and domestic abuse through support, engagement, partnership working and communication. The Committee were informed that unfortunately Jackie Hyland had left GBC but had contributed to the work undertaken. Her post would be filled as soon as possible.

The Community Safety Operations Manager informed the Committee that there had been a recent community engagement in the form of a VAWG walk and talk event in the town centre. The purpose was to obtain the views of the public, regarding violence against women and girls. He also notified Members that the Domestic Violence One Stop Shop would be returning to the Civic Centre.

The Chair paid tribute to Jackie Hyland for the work she had put in and wished her well in her future endeavours.

The Assistant Director (Communities) advised the Committee that the strategy still required editing before it could be presented to chair for ratification.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comment.

Members acknowledged that the strategy had involved a great deal of work and noted the report.

29. 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.

30. Community Safety Partnership – Draft Strategic Assessment 2022 - Summary of Key Findings

The Committee were provided with a Summary of Key Findings of the annual Strategic Assessment prepared on behalf of the Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The Assessment primarily considered levels of crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and other issues pertinent to community safety for the 12-month period ending 30 September 2022 and drew comparisons with levels recorded in both the years of the pandemic as well as the pre-pandemic year ending 30 September 2019. Gravesham's position was considered against that of other Kent Districts and Medway and where possible, data had been provided by Council Ward to enable a better understanding of issues that may be more prevalent at a local level.

After discussion the Chair gave permission for the Strategic Manager to express to the Community Safety Partnership that Members would appreciate further breakdown of crime statistics.

The Committee noted the report.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8:40pm