

Overview Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 17 November 2022

7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Jordan Meade (Chair)
Cllr Baljit Hayre (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Gurjit Kaur Bains
Gurdip Ram Bungar
John Caller
Sarah Gow
Leslie Hills
Bob Lane
Lyn Milner

Note: Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox (on behalf of Cllr John Burden) and Cllr Aaron Elliot were also in attendance.

Sarah Parfitt	Director (Corporate Services)
Simon Hookway	Assistant Director (Communities)
Chloe Taylor	Committee Services Officer (minutes)

12. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Morton and Cllr Morley. Cllr Lane and Cllr Caller substituted respectively.

13. To sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 13 October 2022 were signed and agreed by the Chair.

14. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

15. Scrutiny Topic Review of Street Cleanliness, Littering, and Fly-tipping throughout the Borough - Oral Update

The Chair of the Scrutiny Topic Review, Cllr Baljit Hayre, gave the Committee an update on the recommendations put forward to Cabinet regarding the Scrutiny Topic Review of Street Cleanliness, Littering and Fly-tipping throughout the Borough.

Members were informed that at the meeting of Cabinet on 07 November 2022, the topic review and its recommendations were approved.

Thanks was given to all Members and Officers who participated in the topic review.

16. Call ins - Item 'Called In' from the Cabinet meeting of 07 November 2022: Item 6. Cascades Leisure Centre Project Update

The Assistant Director (Communities) presented Members with the Cascades Leisure Centre Project Update report that was taken to Cabinet on 07 November 2022.

After considering both Part A and Part B of the Cascades Leisure Centre Project Update reports, Cabinet posed the view that the Council proceeds with Option Three as set out in section 7.1 of the report, namely progressing with the project, recognising the financial viability challenges and seeking to:

- Contain costs within the current estimate
- Increase capital funding for the scheme and/or
- Identify opportunities to reduce costs further where they are not significantly detrimental to the key objectives of the project

The Assistant Director (Communities) and Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox (Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure) explained the report in reference to 'the consultation process and public engagement', and outlined the following:

- Public Consultation was to end on 20 November 2022, and to date had received over 400 responses. The public were able to have their say on an informed set of plans, putting the Council in a good position to reflect on responses in the development of the project.
- The current stage of the project was achieved through various engagements during and earlier to the current consultation process with elected Members, sports clubs and other sporting organisations.
- The project has been one of evolution. It started with a proposal and evolved, and continued to be an on-going journey. This was phase one of a wider leisure offer for the borough to bring about leisure in fun and positive way.
- Leisure Centres were well liked and used across the community, and Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) want to maintain that long term investment in leisure.
- GBC hope to tackle the current issue of talent leaving the borough to train and compete, especially swimmers.
- The Assistant Director (Communities) and Cllr Mochrie-Cox were satisfied with the consultation process, but assured Members this was still phase one of the project.
- Throughout the consultations, leisure swimming pools were the most significantly mentioned.

In reference to 'how the proposal will address health inequalities across the borough', the Assistant Director (Communities) and Cllr Mochrie-Cox explained the following:

- They were aware of the discrepancies locally in terms of health, particularly obesity relating to active participation, and the challenges that it presented.
- The importance of getting a presence from the health sector into the leisure centre was discussed.
- High importance was given to the engagement of children and a progression route to build healthier habits and keep them interested in the leisure centre as they got older.
- There was hope individuals would influence other members of their families, and this wouldn't just be about the facilities in the building but making use of outdoor spaces.
- As a result of changing health legislation, integrated care partnerships, in collaboration with local authorities, sought to develop a higher level of care. The proposed leisure centre addressed ways to prevent people from becoming unhealthy.
- Infrastructure was at the heart of on-going regeneration health planning, and they welcomed wider partnerships.
- Through integrated care partnerships, work was conducted with local universities, such as Canterbury Christ Church and Kent. The need for health facilities was vast, such as helping people to quit smoking, eat healthier, and ensuring the café was as healthy as possible whilst respecting the need for choice.
- The advantages to building the leisure centre meant that consideration can be given to future-proofing the building. Accessibility has been at the heart of the project, where infrastructure such as pool detection cameras were able to alert lifeguards.
- The future-proofing elements to the proposed leisure centre will cater to the everchanging sports demands, e.g., ensuring sufficient storage and flexible studios.
- Members were assured that the language around the 'changing village' would be clearer to reflect the safeguarding measures in place.
- Members were assured that the most recent public consultation was not the final source of engagement.
- A session at the current Cascade Leisure Centre was held to engage with current users on what they would like to see going forward. Comments were made regarding a health suite, and Members were assured this was a useful exercise.
- The Membership numbers for the Cascades Leisure Centre have seen a slight decrease due to pop-up gyms, and the 24/7 access they offer.
- The Online questionnaire was accessible by all, not just residents of the Borough. However, based on the preliminary results, the majority of those who completed the questionnaire were located within the Borough as postcodes were asked for.
- A report of the responses will go to the Community and Leisure Cabinet Committee, as well as being a part of the planning application.

The Chair asked the Director (Corporate Services) and the Assistant Director (Communities) to explain the environmental aspects of the project and how this helped the council to achieve net zero by 2030. The following was discussed:

- The design of the building was presented as if the Lower Thames Crossing would not proceed. If the project did go ahead, they have committed to investigating the use of heat from their tunnels and sourcing power from the Lower Thames Crossing, which only further enhanced the green credentials of the building.
- As a long-term investment, the proposed leisure centre would result in a saving in ongoing running costs. Carbon neutrality involves that initial investment. There was

only one other Leisure Centre in the country that had been assessed as reaching Passivhaus standards, which was located in Exeter.

17. Exclusion

Resolved that pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded from any item included in Part B of the agenda because it is likely in view of the nature of business to be transacted that if members of the public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

18. Call Ins - Item 'Called In' from the Cabinet meeting on 07 November 2022: Item 16. Cascades Leisure Centre Part B Report

The Overview Scrutiny Committee considered, and discussed in detail, the Part B information pertaining to the Cascades Leisure Centre report.

The Committee were provided with further financial information which needed to remain confidential at this stage.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 21:41pm