

Minutes

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 26 March 2024, 2.00 pm

Council Chamber – South
Kesteven House, St Peter's Hill,
Grantham, NG31 6PZ



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Paul Fellows (Chairman)
Councillor James Denniston (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Robert Leadenham

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Richard Cleaver (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillor Phillip Knowles (Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing)
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Cabinet Member for People and Communities)
Councillor Paul Stokes (Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture)

Other Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Ian Selby

Officers

Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive, S151 Officer)
Alison Hall-Wright (Director of Housing)
Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place)
James Welbourn (Democratic Services Manager, Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Nick Hibberd (Head of Economic Development)
Debbie Roberts (Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance)
Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)
Jade Porter (Arts and Cultural Services Manager)
Matt Chamberlain (Contract Manager, LeisureSK Ltd)
Charles James (Policy Officer)

54. Public Speaking

There were none.

55. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Susan Sandall.

Councillor Robert Leadenham substituted for Councillor Susan Sandall.

56. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

57. Minutes from the meeting held on 9 January 2024

Minutes from the meeting held on 9 January 2024 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED.**

58. Updates from previous meeting

The Committee noted the updates from the previous meeting.

59. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service

The Leader of the Council informed the Committee that positive discussions were continuing regarding the refurbishment and reopening of the Deepings Leisure Centre.

60. Verbal Update on LeisureSK Ltd

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture provided the verbal update. The Committee were informed that the Leader of the Council had written to LeisureSK Ltd requesting that their business plan be reviewed.

It was noted that other leisure facilities in the country had recovered to pre-COVID levels, but LeisureSK Ltd had not. It was suggested that LeisureSK Ltd bring a monthly performance report to the Committee going forward.

One Member suggested that a monthly, public, sub-committee be set up exclusively for LeisureSK Ltd with all members of the Culture and Leisure Committee. The issues surrounding LeisureSK Ltd were taking a lot of the Committee's time and a sub-committee would free up time to discuss other aspects of the Committee's remit within Committee's meetings.

The Monitoring Officer had confirmed that a sub-committee would be possible, if agreed by the Committee.

The Leader of the Council raised concern on the idea of having a sub-committee in public due to the sensitive nature of the discussions, such as employment and corporate plans, which would be inappropriate to discuss in public. It was further noted that quarterly meetings should be sufficient, rather than monthly meetings.

Other Members supported the idea of a sub-committee of the Culture and Leisure Committee to undertake detailed scrutiny of LeisureSK Ltd.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer recommended that the proposed sub-committee would be more fitting as a working group.

The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd queried the type of information that was expected within the reports on LeisureSK. It was stated that it would take two weeks after the end of a month to compile financial data, therefore, the report would almost always be at least six weeks behind.

The Chairman suggested that the remainder of the discussion take place under the agenda item, 'LeisureSK Ltd Performance Report'.

61. Cultural Strategy Update

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture presented the update report which outlined the implementation and achievement of KPIs, which had been previously approved by the Committee in September 2023.

One Member queried whether programs produced by community amateur groups could be included within the "what's on" brochures.

The Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place clarified that community amateur groups were added to the "what's on" brochure as long as they provided the information before the deadline.

The report stated that there was discount offered on room hire fees to certain groups and individuals, if the circumstances were appropriate. It was queried whether Officers felt that the discount was advertised sufficiently to the community.

It was confirmed that the venue hire was a set rate but the Arts Centres could use discretion to ensure the price was not a barrier to participation. It was reminded that the Council needed to cover their costs.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee Members have a tour of the Arts Centres and meet the colleagues working within the settings.

ACTION: For Committee Members to have a tour of the Arts Centres within the District.

It was queried as to what the Arts Council England was doing to get schools involved in artistic engagement.

The Arts and Cultural Services Manager said that, as part of the project grant application to Arts Council England, there would be a public consultation that would gather information including the opinion of adults responsible for children of school age. A separate survey would go out to artists within the District.

That the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Provides suggestions on any additional information required for future updates in relation to the implementation of the Council's Cultural Strategy

62. Draft KPIs

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing presented the report.

The Corporate Plan 2024-2027 was adopted by Council on 25 January 2024 (see Appendix 1). It was proposed actions, key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets would be developed by the relevant overview and scrutiny committees (OSCs), which would retain oversight of the performance management arrangements at a strategic level. Cabinet will receive performance reports on a quarterly basis. Scrutiny committees will also be able to take a deeper dive into any areas of concern.

One Member queried the KPI relating to attendance in leisure centres and whether this could be further broken down to gym, swim, casual attendance.

The Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance confirmed that the break down of leisure centre attendance could be included within the KPI.

The Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place informed the Committee that the information breakdown could be included as part of the regular six-monthly update provided to the Committee.

A Member queried whether there were trends available from previous years to compare and benchmark within KPI reports.

The Leader of the Council clarified that KPI metrics and trends had been put onto the Council's website. The next step was to put the information into an easier format.

It was queried whether a KPI could be included to reduce energy consumption in leisure centres.

The Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place discussed future funding options for leisure centres, for example, the Swimming Pool Support Fund Phase 2.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that the Committee:

- 1. Approves the key performance indicators it wishes to review associated with the actions in the Corporate Plan 2024-27.**
- 2. Notes that key performance indicators will be monitored throughout the year as determined by the Committee in agreeing its work programme.**
- 3. Notes that the KPI suite will be reviewed and if necessary revised as part of the annual review process.**

63. An update on the Hello SK app

The Leader of the Council presented the report.

The report provided an update on the Hello SK app, followed by an introduction to the work of the Destination Management Organisations. The latter was explored in more detail in a report entitled 'Update on the Discover South Kesteven and the Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy' which featured later in the Committee's meeting agenda.

One Member noted that a lesson learnt may be the lack of statistics from the app.

It was queried whether Officers were satisfied that Destination Lincolnshire would offset some features of the Hello SK app successfully.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** for the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee to recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. The cessation of use of the Hello SK app.**
- 2. Instruct Officers to initiate partnership activities with Destination Lincolnshire to offset the features of the Hello SK app**

64. Discover South Kesteven and the Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy

The Leader of the Council presented the report.

The latest STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) evaluation model data was reported to the November 2023 meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). This confirmed South Kesteven had attracted more than three million visitors in 2022, an increase of almost a third on the previous year, with an economic impact of £218 million and higher than pre-pandemic levels.

At the September 2023 meeting, the OSC: considered the content of the updated Discover South Kesteven website; agreed to its live publication; and to receiving a six-monthly update.

To support the visitor economy sector, the Council (through its Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer), collaborates with partners, stakeholders and businesses at a national, regional and local level to promote the many attractions within South Kesteven to the wider visitor market.

Discover South Kesteven was the tourism brand of South Kesteven District Council. As previously reported to Committee, the website received an update last year which has been well-received.

The following data relates to website visits during January 2024:

- a total of 236 users to the site, of which 232 new users.
- average engagement time on the site was 1 minute and 13 seconds, which is strong as it shows people are staying on the site when they find it.
- engagement sessions per user were 0.69 illustrating a good return and a low bounce rate, which means more than half the visitors to the site are staying on the page.
- 94 of the sessions came from organic searches.
- 82 were direct visits to the URL (uniform resource locator i.e. a web address).
- 74 came from referral from another website.
- 54 came through social media.

One Member informed the Committee that the Lincolnshire coast had seen a recent uptake on social media. It was suggested that the Council work in conjunction with Lincolnshire coast authorities to increase footfall in South Kesteven.

Members queried as to why a specialist consultant was necessary. It was encouraged for the Council's Officers to set their own strategy.

The specialist consultant would be utilised to provide expertise advice on any gaps in knowledge the Officer's may have had, following the completion of the strategy.

The Chairman highlighted that the team would note the comments around the need for a consultant, go back and reconsider whether this was required.

One Member suggested that Members be involved in the process of completing a Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy.

It was noted that this strategy could capitalise travel links to London with further advertising.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** for the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee to:

- 1. Consider any further additions or amendments to be reflected on the Discover South Kesteven website.**
- 2. Agrees to receive an update, at a future meeting, on the Destination Management Plan for Lincolnshire being prepared by Destination Lincolnshire.**
- 3. Agrees to the development of a Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy for South Kesteven, which will align with the new Corporate Plan and the emerging Destination Management Plan.**

65. LeisureSK Ltd Performance Report

The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd presented the report which outlined their performance from August 2023-February 2024.

The report covered activities which had taken place between August 2023 and February 2024. Subsets had been created as follows:

- A. An overview of LeisureSK Ltd Operations/Staffing
- B. An overview of LeisureSK Ltd Community and Outreach Activities
- C. An update on the Council's Leisure Centres
- D. An update on the work of the Council's Leisure Team
- E. LeisureSK Ltd Performance Monitoring
- F. Leisure Centre Condition Surveys
- G. Quality Assurance

One Member queried outreach community activities that LeisureSK Ltd undertook and whether any discussion had taken place on cancelling certain activities to reduce the overall cost to LeisureSK Ltd.

The LeisureSK Ltd Board Members had discussed outreach activities and funding coming to an end. Once the funding ended, the activities would not be continued, however the Board were exploring ways to continue certain activities in order to mitigate costs.

It was noted that there had been 6 closures in the last 6 months within the leisure centres. It was queried what had caused the closures and whether LeisureSK Ltd had a budget for any emergency repairs.

The Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces clarified that a closure in Stamford Leisure Centre was due to a boiler failure which was awaiting parts to repair. Other closures were due to unforeseen circumstances, for example faecal fouling in the swimming pool.

The contract between the Council and LeisureSK Ltd set out maintenance responsibilities. Anything up to the cost of £500 was at the responsibility of LeisureSK Ltd, and anything over £500 or at the end of life would fall at the responsibility of the Council.

One Member queried the wave machine at Stamford Leisure Centre and whether it would be replaced or removed altogether. Concern was raised on the timescales of receiving parts to repair the wave machine.

It was confirmed that the wave machine at Stamford Leisure Centre was in the process of being repaired and was undergoing commissioning. Staff would receive relevant training following the replacement of the machine.

The current wave machine at Stamford Leisure Centre was over 30 years old, whereby new parts were not always readily available. Moreover, the wave machine had a completely new control panel built.

Issues around maintenance and cleanliness were discussed including the showers not being fixed and floors in the changing room not being cleaned in Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.

The Contract Manager for LeisureSK Ltd noted that showers and changing rooms at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre were an ongoing challenge due to the age of the building.

One Member queried the timeframe in which the wave machine at Bourne Leisure Centre would be repaired.

The timeframe on the repairs of Bourne Leisure Centre wave machine was unknown. The Council's Property Team were attending the next LeisureSK Ltd Board meeting to present planned future maintenance repairs.

Concern was raised that Grantham Meres Leisure Centre had seen an increase of the medium/high risks health and safety actions in the last three months.

The Contract Manager for LeisureSK Ltd clarified that following health and safety audits, recommendations would come forward which would be categorised into low, medium and high. Due to the financial situation for LeisureSK Ltd, all non-essential works had been delayed, however, those with an immediate health and safety risk had been dealt with immediately.

The annual health and safety audit figures included risk assessments, a walk round and training records etc. Leisure SK Ltd had set a benchmark in 2022, to achieve 80%, which was deemed acceptable in the leisure industry.

(The Committee had a 10-minute break)

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to exclude the press and public at this stage of the meeting as it was anticipated that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the likelihood that otherwise exempt information, as described in paragraph 3 of the Act would be disclosed to them.

(The Committee went back into public session)

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Notes the contents of the report and suggests any enhancements to the level of information provided for inclusion in the next Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2024.

66. Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Action Plan six-monthly update

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture presented the report.

The Council's Corporate Plan (2024-2027) identified Connecting Communities as a key priority. To underpin the priority, the Council was delivering on the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (the Strategy) which was adopted in 2021.

The Council's Leisure Team was responsible for implementing the actions identified in the Strategy, targeting key areas, and working with partners to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to live healthy, active lifestyles.

The remainder of the report provided a further update and was broken into two key areas with subsets as follows:

- A. An overview of the work undertaken to support the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
 - Physical Activity Initiatives for Council Employees
 - Partnership and Collaborative working
 - Active Lincolnshire
 - Events
 - Proposed Amendments to the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2021-2026

B. The Active Lives Survey

One Member queried what 'Street Tag' was.

Another Member highlighted that the Wyndham Park Visitor Centre was closed due to there not being enough officers to staff it. She said that it was a shame that the community was unable to use the centre.

The Assistant Director for Culture and Leisure clarified that the Wyndham Park Visitor Centre was now ran by volunteers with a busy programme of activities scheduled.

It was confirmed that 'Street Tag' was an app used to track activity and collect virtual tags and points. It was being rolled out to Primary and Secondary schools within South Kesteven, and then to all residents.

In noting the progress and delivery of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for South Kesteven, it is recommended the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Suggests any enhancements to the extent and clarity of the information produced for the next six-monthly update report.**
- 2. Considers the results of the latest Active Lives data available for South Kesteven and notes the results of future Active Lives survey data will form part of regular six-monthly updates.**
- 3. Endorses the suggested amendments to be made to the Council's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy following the launch of the Government's 'Get Active' Strategy and agrees to receive a draft of the refreshed Strategy at a future meeting.**

67. Work Programme 2023-24

The Committee noted the Work Programme 2023-24.

An update on the performance of LeisureSK Ltd was agreed to be brought back to the next meeting in June 2024.

One Member queried why markets were encompassed in the Culture and Leisure portfolio.

The Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place stated that the remits of each Committee were set out in the Constitution.

68. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent

A Member who represented a Ward in Grantham presented a report on the Grantham Market Public Consultation that occurred in late 2023.

69. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 16:50.