

Meeting of the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 17 November 2020, 10.00 am

Meeting held virtually, via Skype

Committee Members present

Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith

Councillor Judy Stevens (Chairman)
Councillor Jill Thomas
Councillor Hilary Westropp (Vice-
Chairman)

Cabinet Members

Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew (Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy)

Officers

Michael Cross, (Head of Arts)
Ken Lyon (Assistant Chief Executive
Housing Delivery)
Paul Stokes (Corporate Operations
Lead)
Ben Russell (Performance Lead)
Kate Taylor (Executive Assistant)
Zena West (Scrutiny Officer)
Susan Hislop (Democracy Officer)

Other Members present

Councillor Jacky Smith

62. Comments from Members of the Public

None.

63. Register of attendance, membership and apologies for absence

A register of attendance was taken, confirming all committee members were present.

64. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

65. Action Notes from the meeting held on 15 September 2020

The Action Notes from the meeting held on 15 September 2020, were agreed as a true record by all present.

66. Updates from the previous meeting

It was noted that the Tourism Action Plan had been circulated to members on 29 September 2020 and was presented to the committee under item 9 by the Visitor Economy Lead from InvestSK.

A further action requesting any items for consideration at a future meeting by Members had been noted at the previous meeting.

An update to the Deepings Festival was provided by the Chairman who informed members that an online series of events were being held as a precursor to the Literary Festival. An initial event was successful with a virtual audience with the author Louise Doughty attracting 35 people. Further events were planned with accomplished authors.

67. Mental Health Challenge Workshop

The Assistant Chief Executive informed Members of the Council's proposed response to the Mental Health Challenge, set by seven mental health charities who are working together to improve mental health across England. A workshop was planned for December 2020, with all Culture and Visitor Economy and Rural and Communities scrutiny members invited to attend.

A Member recommended the inclusion of Don't Lose Hope Café based in Bourne to the Workshop. The Assistant Chief Executive would liaise with the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy, and if appropriate, extend an invitation to the Don't Lose Hope Café from the Head of Organisational Development. The Chairman commended the community response during lockdown.

The following Committee Members volunteered to attend the Mental Health Challenge Workshop:

Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Judy Smith

A non-committee member also volunteered:

ACTION 1

- Assistant Chief Executive to liaise with the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy and if appropriate, request invitation to Mental Health Challenge Workshop be sent to Don't Lose Hope Café of Bourne from the Head of Organisational Development.

68. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Assistant Chief Executive presented a report on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), informing members that the Corporate Plan had been approved by Full Council on 1 October 2020. This would set out the vision of the Council for South Kesteven.

Various actions had been identified within the Corporate Plan that generated KPIs for consultation with the relevant committees. A proposed set of KPIs and targets had been set for this committee and were presented for consideration and approval with the targets then monitored going forward. The setting of new baselines would be necessary.

The Chairman observed the excellent progress and work on markets towards being self-sufficient with acknowledgement that the target for next year would require realigning due to the impact of the pandemic.

In response to Members' questions the Assistant Chief Executive advised that an annual review would be undertaken after quarter 4 to look at performance and to consider targets and actions. The Head of Arts updated the Committee on work and plans being undertaken for the promotion of historical figures from the District. The impact of the pandemic on the Town Hall at Bourne had presented challenges though there remained great positivity for the future. The high level of support needed for all facilities post pandemic was recognised by members.

An update on the progress of the KPIs will be provided at each meeting of the committee. The hard work of the officers was noted by the Committee.

On being put to the vote it was AGREED:

1. To approve the proposed Key Performance Indicators and targets associated with the actions in the South Kesteven Corporate Plan 2020-23.
2. To note that key performance indicators and success criteria for each action will be reviewed and if necessary revised as part of the annual review process.

ACTION 2

- To add KPIs to the work programme for each meeting going forward.

69. Culture Recovery Fund Update and Service Action Plan Proposals for 2021-22

Members were directed to slides that had been provided ahead of the meeting. In his presentation to the Committee, the Head of Arts updated members that to date £230,000 of Culture Recovery funding had been provided by the Government in response to a bid made by SKDC. The funding received was to protect jobs, particularly assisting freelancers and restart performances over a six-month period from October 2020. The Head of Arts confirmed he was holding ongoing discussions with the arts community focussing on job creation for the freelance sector.

Stewarding and safety measures have had to be considered when delivering past and future phases of work. Social distance measures in indoor venues were being investigated and reviewed for a continued phased reopening of venues.

Funding was also based on delivering activities and redelivery of activities when safe to do so and took into account actions such as redeployment of staff to try to support the wider work of the council. Planned events for November had been suspended; once Covid-19 guidance was known for December it was hoped to continue some activities including pay to view options that were being explored. Refurbishment work to venues would be reported back when progress has been made.

Members congratulated the Head of Arts and his Team for their handling of the pandemic crisis. They also observed the low level of funding that had been supplied from government, and were encouraged to attend the next meeting of the SK Creative Artists' Network, with future dates to be sent to Members by the Head of Arts and to extend invitations to include representatives from the visitor economy. The network is an informal forum for individuals and organisations within South Kesteven's creative/cultural sector, brought together every 8-10 weeks in order to share their projects, aspirations and challenges, thereby informing future strategic priorities and initiatives.

ACTION 3

- The Chairman to liaise with the Head of Arts regarding inviting a representative from Arts Pop Up, a non-profit contemporary arts organisation, to attend a future meeting of the Committee
- The Head of Arts to circulate to members invitations to future meetings of SK Creative Artists' Network and to investigate extending invitations to include representatives from the visitor economy

Council Services Action Plan

The Council action plan links to identified KPIs that will be monitored by the Committee. Proposed Cultural Services Activity Plans activities had been identified as part of the report on the Cultural Strategy. The Committee was invited to identify priority items to pursue as a service and in particular any areas relating to the Cultural Services' KPIs identified in the previous item.

A cultural creative Community Interest Company was being explored to build on potential investment from the private sector and other external bodies where funding is not generally available to the Council. It is intended that the Council will identify individuals and organisations to work with in partnership in order to bring larger amounts of grant funding to the district.

In response to concerns over accountability of a Community Interest Company, the Head of Arts explained that the structure was not known at present. However, any future partner organisation would be community focussed rather than specific to a particular discipline or geographic area, with a broad selection of representatives from the creative sector included in its organisational structure.

Skills training and professional development

The Cultural Strategy had identified the importance of a strong, cohesive and inclusive cultural service, delivered through appropriate skills and resources. Developing links with visitor economy colleagues had been identified as an area for increased participation and engagement, with work continuing.

The concept of working in tandem with the community and the inclusion of the visitor economy with the culture sector was welcomed by Members.

Members were requested by the Chairman to inform her or the Head of Arts of any other areas for priority or additions to the future programme as well as suggested Committee priorities.

70. Visitor Economy and Tourism Action Plan

Members received an update of the action plan from the Visitor Economy Lead of InvestSK.

The discretionary grant went live on 13 November 2020 for businesses that had to close during lockdown. Applications were already being received. It was reported that the Visitor Economy Officer was in constant communication with tourism businesses. A winter attraction list was being prepared and updated in readiness for the end of the lockdown.

Funding had been received from Visit England towards Cycle England and Explorers Road, with access to further funding available to support the tourism

action plan. Members additionally heard that following commissioning of new photographs these were now available free to use for marketing by local businesses. A draft of the new website 'Visit Lincolnshire' would be provided to members after the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy informed councillors that a 'Tea Break' meeting was organised to ensure all local businesses including B&Bs, were aware of support available which attracted 120 people, many from the visitor economy.

Appreciation was extended by the Committee to the Visitor Economy Lead and the Visitor Economy Officer from InvestSK for their work to support local people and businesses.

ACTION 4

- The Visitor Economy Lead from InvestSK to provide members with details of the new 'Visit Lincolnshire' website.

71. Work Programme

The following to be added to the Work Programme:

1. KPIs to be presented by the Assistant Chief Executive at each meeting
2. Impact of Pandemic to continue to feature at each meeting

The Committee agreed to amend the meeting times of all virtual meetings of the Committee to the morning.

ACTION 5

- Democracy Services to update the meeting times for all virtual meetings of the Committee.

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

Committee members and the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy extended their appreciation to the Scrutiny Officer for her contribution to the committee and wished her well in her new role outside the organisation.

Meeting closed at 11:25