

# Meeting of the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 9 March 2021, 10.00 am

Meeting held virtually, via Skype

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## 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 Barry Dobson, The Deputy Leader of the Council

## Officers

Assistant Chief Executive, Housing  
Delivery (Ken Lyon)  
Head of Arts and Culture (Michael Cross)  
Head of Leisure (Karen Whitfield)  
Corporate Operations Lead (Paul  
Stokes)  
Visitor Economy Lead, InvestSK Ltd  
(Mary Powell)  
Democratic Officers (Lucy Bonshor,  
Naomi Page)

## Other Members present

Councillor Phil Dilks

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## 85. Comments from Members of the Public

None received.

## 86. Register of attendance, membership and apologies for absence

A register of attendance was taken and all Committee Members were present.

An apology for absence was received from the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy, Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew.

**87. Disclosure of Interests**

None disclosed.

**88. Action Notes from the meeting held on 5 January 2021**

The action notes from the meeting held on 5 January 2021 were agreed.

**89. Updates from the previous meeting**

Members noted the updates from the previous meeting.

**90. Impact of Covid-19 to the Culture and Arts Community**

The Head of Arts and Culture gave an update to the Committee on the impact of Covid-19 on the Culture and Arts Community. The following points were made.

- Despite the Government's road map announcement, there was still a lot of uncertainty for the arts and cultural sector.
- The demand for support from organisations, following the budget announcement of £390m in new grants, would be huge across the country.
- The second round bid from the Culture Recovery Fund had been submitted and would be announced at the end of March.
- The sector remained pro-active and planning for outdoor work had started prior to the announcement on 22 February 2021.
- Programmes for half-term had been moved to Easter and the Easter programmes moved to the end of May/June 2021. Due to the uncertainty around Government timescales the programmes were flexible.
- The Live and Local Rural Touring Scheme bookings had re-opened for shows from May to the end of August 2021 and local organisations were invited to take advantage of that programme of work.
- Work was on-going to start workshops again in larger rooms at all SKDC arts venues, subject to infection rates and local restrictions in place. A wider programme of events was in progress to include cinema, again subject to restrictions.
- On-line participation programmes had been popular and work was being done to develop this area of the digital offer. Examples of programmes were given, including a new creative writing programme delivered by a local author.
- Free on-line events popular, although people would pay for programmes they were interested in.
- Work was on-going in the community to reach those who did not have access to an on-line digital platform.

- Creative Producers are looking to set events up within the four main towns including rural villages.
- A scheme to utilise the Arts windows in Ironmonger Street, Stamford had proved very popular. A selection of local creatives was being put together to launch an exhibition from next month (April 2021).
- Plans for artists' markets would be re-introduced as soon as possible to give freelance artists the opportunity to sell goods. This initiative provided an opportunity for those not having access to a digital platform.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Arts for his update and she also updated the Committee in respect of work that was being done in respect of the Deepings Literary Festival which would be back in 2022 and highlighted other events happening on-line in respect of literary projects.

## **91. Arts Pop Up**

Members received a presentation from Sam Roddan on Art Pop-up which was an innovative, non-profit contemporary visual arts organisation based in Stamford. The project's aim was to create thought provoking work that inspired everyone within a community.

The organisation had been running for 10 years and they had raised over £323,600. The organisation had 177 freelance creative practitioners and had engaged with 67,711 people through events and workshops.

The organisation had no core funding but raised funds through a variety of funders including Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and The Woodland Trust. A lot of work was based in Peterborough and partnerships with other organisations included MindSpace Stamford and the Langdyke Countryside Trust.

The aim of the organisation was to reach out to everybody particularly those who were isolated.

Programmes included:

- Community art.
- Festivals and outdoors.
- Children and young people.
- Schools programmes.
- Workshops.
- Artist residences and exhibitions.
- Mentoring.

Although the Art Pop-Up was not a well-known organisation they had launched a Covid-19 Emergency Response on 23 March 2020. The project had been funded by the community in just three days and Ms Roddan detailed

the work undertaken by the project which included an analogue journals project for 400 residents which included an online campaign and prompts, and a community exhibition of creative works made in lockdown. The project had been facilitated by Evergreen, SOS Stamford, Morrisons and schools.

The Arts Council England had funded SPARK an innovative research and development programme with community partners and the wider community to look at who did not engage, why they did not engage and what would they participate in.

Ms Roddan then spoke about the Secret Doorstep Festival and the Journals projects that had been held in 2020, together with the creative participation programme held between August and December 2020.

She concluded her presentation speaking about the challenges faced by the organisation which had no core funding, capacity was an issue as they were a very small organisation, which went from project to project depending upon the funding received. Marketing and audience development were also challenging aspects together with talent development.

Members of the Committee congratulated Ms Roddan on the work that the organisation had carried out and how quick they had responded when the first lockdown had been put in place. Members gave examples of work that had been undertaken by the group and the excellent job that they did.

It was requested that the PDF slides be circulated to Members of the Committee.

## **ACTION**

**That the slides used in the presentation be circulated to Members after the meeting.**

The Chairman thanked Ms Roddan for her inspirational presentation and for attending the meeting.

## **92. Marketing to support tourism**

The Committee received a presentation from Mary Powell on the draft Tourism Strategy document. The following points were made about the draft document:

- The document had been written in a casual style.
- The approach within the document had been based on stories relevant to the area.
- It was important to get over to the reader a sense of place and to not be “dull” in the document.
- Where the document fit within the national and regional context.
- Green tourism toolkit for the area.

- South Kesteven was a good place to use as a base to explore Lincolnshire.
- Attract a high spending staying visitor, value not volume.
- Highlight the South Kesteven countryside, accommodation, road and rail links.
- Good place for walkers and cyclists.
- Good base for short stays, plenty to do.
- Repeat visitor market.
- Get the message across through stories relevant to the area.
- Use the best quality i.e. photography, marketing.
- Reference both people and buildings, give the project a personality.
- Be friendly, consistent, open and honest. If delays or mistakes happen apologise, be upfront, people appreciate honesty.
- Use the word unique sparingly, overuse of the word cheapens its effect.
- South Kesteven to be shared through stories about its history, make it interesting, entertaining, inspiring.
- Manage expectations.
- Edit the document ruthlessly.
- Include references to local produce, heritage, country houses and people.
- Include stories from people who work “behind the scenes” such as gardeners, joiners etc.
- Encourage businesses and partners to participate, reward and recognition packages.
- Use of the website to tell stories.
- Have a bank of stories available, make them interesting to the reader.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee thanked Mary Powell for the presentation and the work that had been done in respect of the draft Tourism Strategy document and the story approach that had been taken. The Committee looked forward to being sent a copy of the document.

## **ACTION**

**The Committee to be sent a copy of the draft Tourism Strategy document as soon as possible after the meeting.**

### **93. LeisureSK Ltd Performance Reporting**

The Deputy Leader of the Council updated the Committee on how the performance of LeisureSK Ltd would be assessed against the leisure management contract. The establishment of LeisureSK Ltd was a positive move for the Council to ensure that the level of leisure services improved in line with the Council’s Leisure Specification which was appended to the report before the Committee. The document formed part of the formal contract arrangements between LeisureSK Ltd and the Council.

A series of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) had been developed and formed part of the leisure management contract. The KPI's would be used to assess the performance of LeisureSK Ltd against the Council's identified priorities and the Corporate Plan objectives. The first year of the contract would be used to collect data which would be used as a baseline. Improvement targets would be set from year two and on an annual basis thereafter.

A list of the KPI's was contained within the report. A holistic view of LeisureSK Ltd had been taken to look at the financial aspects, customer experience and the operational feedback.

The Deputy Leader then spoke about the current lockdown and how engagement with customers of the leisure centres had been carried out with on-line fitness classes. The recommendation before the Committee included a proposal for the Committee to receive a six monthly update of the performance of LeisureSK Ltd against the leisure contract outcomes including KPI's and feedback from customers.

Members congratulated the Deputy Leader on the report and the Head of Leisure for the work that was being done in respect of leisure. The recommendations contained in the report were proposed and seconded and a vote by exception was taken.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. The Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report from the Deputy Leader including the Leisure Specification and contract Key Performance Indicators.**
- 2. The Committee agreed to receive a report every six months on the performance against the leisure contract outcomes, to include the key performance indicators and feedback from users of the facilities.**

#### **94. Corporate Plan Performance Indicators**

Members were presented with a report with the first set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) that they had agreed at the meeting in November 2020. It was noted that the KPI's were currently a work in progress due to the timing before the end of the financial year. The information during 2020/21 would be used to establish a base-line for the coming year and the KPI's before the Committee gave an overview of progress made to date.

Member's attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report and the tables contained therein which gave a high level overview of the actions completed to date. Most of the actions were in connection with bringing strategies forward. Of the five actions shown, 2 had been completed and three were in progress. Areas highlighted included the engagement with visitor economy attractions across the district which was a key area for the district in

supporting the post Covid-19 recovery. The target was in relation to markets and keeping all markets operating during the pandemic.

The Committee were informed that at the next meeting Officers responsible for those KPI areas would be in attendance to answer Members questions.

Members noted the progress to date and that an annual report for 2020/21 would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

**ACTION:**

**The annual KPI performance report to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.**

**95. 2020/2021 Work Programme**

The following items to be included on the Work Programme:

- The KPI's as appended to the Corporate Plan Performance Indicators report.
- A report on the performance against the leisure contract outcomes including key performance indicators and feedback from users of the facilities to be reported to the Committee in six months' time (September 2021).
- An update on the business impact of Covid-19 and the role of volunteers.

A short discussion followed in relation to litter picking in the District and also participation in the Britain in Bloom/East Midlands in Bloom competitions and the work undertaken by volunteers to make towns in the District to look attractive.

**96. Close of meeting**

The meeting closed at 11:21.