

Minutes

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13 June 2023, 10.00 am

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



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Paul Fellows (Chairman)
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Susan Sandall

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillor Phil Dilks (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure)
Councillor Paul Stokes (Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing)

Other Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Ian Selby

Officers

Richard Wyles (Chief Finance Officer, S151 Officer)
Nicola M^cCoy-Brown (Director of Growth and Culture, Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Graham Watts (Assistant Director of Governance, Monitoring Officer)
Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure)
Jon Hinde (Head of Economic Development)
Debbie Roberts (Head of Policy, Performance and Corporate Projects)
Jade Porter (Arts and Cultural Services Manager)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

1. Public Speaking

There were none.

2. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor James Denniston.

Councillor Virginia Moran substituted for Councillor James Denniston.

3. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

4. Minutes from the meeting of Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 February 2023

It was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2023 were a correct and accurate record.

The Chairman queried whether Grantham market and the cost of the running of the market would be brought back to the Committee.

The Director of Growth and Culture confirmed a market operational report would be going to Governance and Audit Committee on 14 June 2023.

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

There were none.

6. End of year KPI's

The Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance presented the report that outlined end of year performance indicators up to 31 March 2023.

Appendix A of the report was a usual template of the KPI ratings, 4 actions were rated green and 2 were rated amber. The new Committee were provided with a general overview of all work carried out towards those indicators throughout the year.

Healthy and strong communities 11 was to improve and invest in locals arts and culture venues. There were approved ongoing capital works within the centers. Roof works had begun on Stamford Arts Centre and works taking place at the Guildhall had been completed.

Healthy and strong communities 13 was a review of the arts services and short- and medium-term action had been completed. This included the agreed restructure of the team, opening hours reviews, information around Lincolnshire One Venues (LOV) working and Leisure SK Ltd.

Healthy and strong communities 4 was the adoption of sport and physical activity strategy, which had been completed.

The new Committee were provided with links to work streams discussed. Appendix one was the relevant end of year KPIs that the Committee were responsible for:

- Capital Programme for the arts center's – rated green
- Arts restructure and Cultural Strategy – rated green
- Working towards adoption of a tourism strategic framework – rated green
- Markets – rated amber

One Member requested an update on the works taken place at Stamford Arts Centre and the timeframe of when the center would be open for full use.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure confirmed that Stamford Arts Centre was fully operational at present, and the programme levels were back to pre-pandemic numbers. The only area that was awaiting completion was the introduction of a café at Stamford Arts Centre, the lease was in its final form with the tenant.

A query was raised on whether the Tennis Club in Grantham were administering the tennis courts at Wyndham Park. It was further queried how time slots could be booked and how the resource could be paid for.

It was noted that the Council were awaiting the final details of the lease paperwork being signed and then a launch would take place. There had been a slight delay due to an agreement being sought from Fields in Trust to enter the lease with Grantham Tennis Club.

It was suggested further physical activities be available at Wyndham Park to initiate an outdoor 'mini leisure center' in the park, which would encourage communities to become more active.

The Chairman highlighted that many groups within the District were also community-led rather than Council-led.

One Member queried who moderated, measured and set the action statuses.

A further query was raised on works undertaken on the actions that were significantly below target.

Clarification was sought on the change of the Council's Corporate Plan and how new KPIs would feed into each Committee.

The Committee were reminded only KPIs 11 and 13 were relevant to this Committee, and the others would be considered by relevant scrutiny Committees and therefore, actions of underperformance would be considered in the reports for those Committees.

The original benchmarking and KPIs were set by the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the Council adopted the Corporate Plan.

The target ratings and commentary was fully endorsed and reviewed by Members, Directors and Senior Management Team prior to Committee approval.

Regarding the setting of new KPI's, each Committee would review and be a part of the KPI and performance setting which will commence in April 2024, with the new Corporate Plan being due for adoption in Autumn 2023.

One Member requested background information, funding information, purpose, target audience and objectives of the Hello SK App. It was felt 1,000 residents seemed a low number of people engaging on the Hello SK App.

The Head of Economic Development informed the Committee that funding for the Hello SK App came from the Welcome Back Fund, which was a Government initiative post-pandemic. The plan was to reach a critical mass of 200 businesses and 1,000 residents. A Member induction to the Hello SK App had been organised. The objective of the App going forward, was to engage more retailers.

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED that the Committee:

1. Review and scrutinise the performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators in relation to the delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

2. Use this report to inform and support their ongoing work programme

7. Grantham Christmas Lights

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure presented the report that outlined the Council's responsibility for the provision of Christmas lights in Grantham.

This provision had been supported by a modest budget of £17,500 from the Grantham Special Expense Area budget. The current lights were over 10 years old and the number of serviceable lights had reduced significantly.

The Christmas period 2022, had resulted in significant complaints and negative media interest.

Following a compliant procurement, there was now an option for the Council to enter a 3-year hire agreement to provide an improved light display in the town centre for Christmas 2023 and beyond.

In addition, it was proposed that this be complemented by the usual Christmas tree in the marketplace, family friendly activities and a Christmas market on the light switch-on day.

The 3-year hire cost could be met from the Grantham Special Expense Area budget or the supporting reserve and the contract could be novated to Grantham Town Council once established.

The one-off first year infrastructure costs, including the installation of uplighters on St Peter's Hill could be funded from the District allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Appendix one to the report provided a visual representation of the types of lights and interventions which would be provided, should the report be supported by the Committee.

A query was raised on whether Grantham Town Council would be financially impacted by the 3-year lease when the contract is novated over to them.

Concern was raised on whether this would commit South Kesteven District Council to paying £30,000 for an ongoing 3 years meaning a high budget. It was further queried whether the £17,500 currently being paid for Christmas lights would be deducted from the total of £30,000 if the 3-year hire cost be accepted.

Further information of the grant was requested and whether the Council could determine how the fund be utilised.

The Chief Finance Officer reminded the Committee the report was a recommendation on the allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity funding for the Christmas lights. UK Shared Prosperity had its own governance and criteria to be met. Officers had undertaken an initial assessment and deemed the appropriateness to signpost the £30,800 to UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

It was confirmed that when Grantham Town Council comes into fruition, there would still be a requirement of a Grantham Special Expense Area operated by South Kesteven District Council. Once a Town Council was formed, ongoing discussions would take place regarding the services appropriated across in a mutual agreement. If accepted by the Town Council, they would then precept upon residents of Grantham to run services. The £30,800 commitment would become a Town Council responsibility and they would precept accordingly. At that point, the District Council would stop its precept of that money and the money would be transferred from one entity to another. The Grantham residents would either pay through the Special Expense Area charge or through their Grantham Town Council charge.

The £17,500 was an existing commitment through the Grantham Special Expense Area and would need to be topped up by the balance of the new annual contracted payment. This had not been predetermined and therefore there was a gap between the existing £17,500 budget and the required annual charge with the new supplier of the Christmas lights. The gap would be funded from either in-year underspends elsewhere within the Special Expense Area or the Special Expense Area reserve which was set-up to fund one-off events and unforeseen costs.

This year, the cost would be met from the reserve if the funds cannot be found from elsewhere. Going forward, Officers would put forward the full cost of running the

contract through the budget setting process to ensure the funds are available going forward.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development informed the Committee the Community Governance Review was in its final furlong and it was hoped Grantham would have a Town Council by June 2024.

It was recognised only two Members who represented Grantham sat on the Committee and non-Grantham Members were being asked to recommend the spending money of Grantham residents.

One Member suggested schools be consulted for Grantham children to have an input into what type of lights they would like.

It was noted that £30,800 of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, if approved, would be used to pay for Christmas lights in Grantham. It was queried as to whether the other three towns would receive any funding for the purchase of new lights.

A query was raised as to whether the £30,800 included the installation of the wiring and if the lights would support climate change.

The Chief Finance Officer notified the Committee on the significance of the lead-in times on signing-off the funding. The infrastructure and the roll-out were guided by the contractors. If the decision was prolonged, Grantham would not have a Christmas light display in December 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development informed the Committee that funding from the UK Shared Prosperity would be shared across the District and grants had already been awarded in Stamford, Deepings and smaller villages.

One Member queried whether the proposed contracted Christmas lights were wildlife friendly.

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED that the Committee:

- 1. Recommends £30,800 of the District's UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation is utilised to fund the one-off infrastructure costs in 2023/2024 to enhance the festive light offer for Grantham, in accordance with the delegation approved by Council on 26 January 2023.**
- 2. Recommends that a three-year hire agreement with Gala Lights is implemented in order to provide an enhanced festive light display in Grantham Town Centre in readiness for the Christmas 2023 period.**

8. Cultural Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure presented the draft Cultural Strategy. There was a commitment within the Council's current Corporate Plan to develop a refreshed strategy to support the Council's ambition to be the best place to live, work and visit.

A significant amount of research and consultation had been undertaken prior to developing the draft strategy. The Council had been supported by Red Quadrant, who were appointed following a compliant procurement exercise.

The basis of the work and key areas included, were previously agreed by Members of the Council's former Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Appended to the report were details of the results of the extensive consultation, which had been undertaken across the District. The results of the consultation were being used to inform the final draft of the strategy.

Although the Council's arts and cultural activities were highly regarded by residents and visitors of the District, spend on the area was discretionary. It was important that the service provided value for money and delivered the Council's outcomes.

The strategy focused on engendering a collaborative approach to providing cultural activity across the District.

It was proposed the Committee receive six-monthly updates to monitor progress on the strategy, if adopted.

One Member highlighted the public engagement and that the greater proportion of respondents were aged between 65 and 74. It was noted very few respondents were aged 34 and under. It was queried as to whether the Council had a policy to encourage the younger people of the District to become involved within cultural events. The suggestion was put forward for engagement of ages 34 and under to take place on social media.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure confirmed that activities took place at the venues for children and young people. Recent Arts Council Transitional Funding had been received which would enable activities to take place out in the community. The Council were conscious of encouraging a younger audience and were also engaged with Lincolnshire One Venues which had young audience interest.

It was further suggested that Facebook groups be utilised to provide information to people within the District.

One Member requested lessons learnt, strengths and weaknesses of the previous Cultural Strategy. The journey of the document was also questioned.

It was queried as to what the low, medium and high funding ask was for the strategy and whether a timetable could be provided as to when the funding envelope would be worked on.

The draft strategy was presented to the Committee to receive input from Members, to take comments, suggestions and feedback and a report was due to be presented to Cabinet on 11 July 2023 for adoption. The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure proposed draft KPI's are brought back to the Committee to form the basis of the six-monthly updates.

The established budget had been received and there was no current ask for any additional funding. The Council were willing to work collaboratively with community groups, both to which were open to funding opportunities.

The Director of Growth and Culture confirmed the previous cultural strategy was a series of desires and aspirations. It was not a strategy which the Council would recognise and the new strategy was more in keeping with the contemporary format of other strategies the Council had.

It was queried as to whether the strategy could be a 'working document' or had to be confirmed and published as a final document.

Concern was raised on the lack of provision for young people within the draft Cultural Strategy.

The proposed Cultural Strategy ran up to 2026. The balanced budget was queried and whether a test would need to be undertaken to ensure the Council were comfortable in funding and working out where the weaknesses were previously.

The Chief Finance Officer highlighted a point around the alignment of the Cultural Strategy to the Corporate Plan and that all strategies would need to compliment and support the visions of the Council's Corporate Plan. There would need to be a realignment or test to ensure the strategy aligned with the new Corporate Plan in 2024.

It was confirmed budget setting would occur in the Autumn 2024. The Committee needed to be mindful of when budgets were being taken to Full Council, that the ambitions in the strategy were tempered accordingly within budget constraints, or proposals put forward to request bids and reallocation of funding to deliver the strategy outcomes.

The Director of Growth and Culture informed the Committee that within the report were various themes under the equality and inclusion item. It stated the focus of a percentage of programming at target audiences, especially young people.

One Member suggested other means of interacting with the community without engaging via leaflets, posters etc which would not have any cost impact to the Council.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure reminded Members the suggestion of the six-monthly updates brought back to the Committee would provide them with the opportunity to have an input on the strategy and to monitor progress.

One Member suggested the idea of an ongoing programme of sending questionnaires or feedback to organisations within the District to provide ongoing feedback of the Cultural Strategy.

The Chairman informed the Committee that any suggestions, additions or amendments of the draft Cultural Strategy be sent to himself, the Cabinet Member or the Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure.

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

- 1. Considers the draft Cultural Strategy produced, making any suggestions of additions or amendments which should be considered.**
- 2. Following the incorporation of any additions or amendments, recommends to Cabinet that the Cultural Strategy is adopted to underpin the corporate priority of Healthy and Strong Communities.**
- 3. Following adoption of the Cultural Strategy by Cabinet, agrees to receive six monthly updates on the progress and delivery of the Action Plan within the Cultural Strategy.**

9. Work Programme 2023-24

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

The following items were added to the Work Programme for the meeting held on 5 September 2023:

- Sports and Physical Activity Strategy (including health outreach working and clubs)
- Performance of LeisureSK Ltd
- Cultural Strategy KPI's
- Review of Hello SK App and presentation on the DiscoverSK Website
- Update on Markets

One Member suggested a workshop take place to discuss Cultural Strategy KPI's prior to being brought back to Committee. Performance of Arts Centers was also suggested as a future item.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Corporate Projects suggested that a workshop take place once the aspirations and deliverables for the new Corporate

Plan. The new Corporate Plan would be endorsed on 1 April 2024, therefore a workshop would be appropriate for the end of 2023.

One Member suggested the inclusion of a discussion around festivals within the District.

The Director of Growth and Culture informed the Committee that the Council used to primarily run the Georgian Festival and the Gravity Fields Festival in Grantham. A decision had already been taken that the Council would no longer fund festivals.

The following items were added to the Work Programme for the meeting held on 30 November 2023:

- Review of a district-wide Blue Plaque Guide and Information Trails

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

The Chairman informed the Committee that Bourne Skate Park was now officially open.

11. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:40.