

Minutes

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 30 November 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 James Denniston (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Virginia Moran

Cabinet Members present

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

Other Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison

Officers

Nicola McCoy-Brown (Director of Growth and Culture)
Graham Watts (Monitoring Officer, Assistant Director of Governance and Public Protection)
Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure)
Claire Saunders (High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Manager)
Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)
Debbie Roberts (Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance)
Charles James (Policy Officer)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

26. Public Speaking

There were none.

27. Apologies for absence

Councillor Virginia Moran substituted for Councillor Emma Baker.

Councillor Matt Bailey had replaced Councillor Robert Leadenham's seat on the Committee.

28. Disclosure of Interests

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor James Denniston and the Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance declared an interest on agenda item 9 – LeisureSK Limited Management Fee request for 2024/25, due to being Directors of LeisureSK Limited.

29. Minutes from the meeting held on 5 September 2023

One Member raised a query in relation to a previous decision made for Members to be involved and work in collaboration with the Director of Growth and Culture in producing the HelloSK App. It was noted that this was an action point for the January meeting.

Consideration of holiday activity for young people was raised as an action point ahead of the January meeting to look at in advance of the March meeting.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure clarified that holiday club activities was not one of the Council's responsibilities, however, conversations would take place outside of the Committee meeting.

ACTION: To discuss the issues around the HelloSK app and for Members to have an input on future improvements.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023, were a correct and accurate record.

30. Updates from previous meeting

The Chairman had sent out a letter in relation to markets to the Parish Council's that wished to engage with the Council. Markets would be on the agenda for the next Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members thanked all Officers involved in arranging the Leisure Centre visits for the Committee. It was requested whether visits to Arts Centres could take place in due course.

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

The Deputy Leader of the Council confirmed that an Extraordinary meeting of Full Council would take place on 11 January 2023 to discuss Deepings Leisure Centre.

A Joint Finance and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee would also be taking place in the near future.

32. Grantham Mid-Lent Fair - results of consultation

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure presented the report, following a request by the Showman's Guild to extend the dates for the Grantham Mid-Lent Fair for 2024. The Committee were provided with a map to clarify the location of the fair in Grantham. The Showman's Guild had requested a change in 2017, which was rejected.

To ensure that the Council could fully consider the request, including the views of affected residents, businesses and wider stakeholders, a consultation exercise had been undertaken.

The Mid-Lent fair dates were contained within the Royal Charter of Grantham (1484), and should the Council agree to the requested change of date, the decision would need to be referred to the Secretary of State for final approval. This decision was timely, due to all applications for road closures would need to be submitted at the beginning of December 2023.

The statistics from the consultation showed a balanced opinion, however, the majority of local businesses were against the proposal.

(Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing declared an interest of being an honorary Member of the Showman's Guild, he did not participate in the debate or vote.)

It was queried as to what the Showman's Guild thought the date changes would bring to the town.

It was confirmed that the proposal was a commercial venture for Showman's Guild, to encourage people to visit on evenings of the weekend.

Concern was raised on residents previously complaining regarding parking when the fair was on at the weekends.

Clarification was sought around the days Showman's Guild were proposing.

It was clarified that Showman's Guild were requesting the Mid-Lent fair to take place from Wednesday to Sunday.

One Member informed the Committee that swapping the nights of the fair would coincide with two busy nights in the town for the evening trade. Issues were raised on anti-social behaviour at the weekends without the fair, it was believed that the fair may exacerbate these problems. The impact on residents and local businesses were discussed.

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

The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee reject the proposals received from the Showman's Guild in relation to the event period for the Grantham Mid-Lent Fair.

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

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the information report which presented a national review of Blue Plaque Schemes. The Blue Plaques in South Kesteven were highlighted.

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

The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Endorses Officers collaborating with Civic Societies, Town Councils and other stakeholders, in creating a list of figures who have shaped their community via a consultation exercise targeted at residents and local groups which allows people and buildings from across South Kesteven to be nominated.**
- 2. Endorses raising the profile of Grantham, by encouraging residents to download the TrailTale app.**
- 3. Endorses the Council's Economic Development Team and Planning Conservation Officers to engage in an audit of existing heritage plaques in South Kesteven to inform future recommendations regarding levels of existing representation and future additions to the TrailTale app.**
- 4. Agrees to receive a further update on the plans to expand the official blue plaque scheme beyond London when this becomes available.**

34. LeisureSK Limited Management Fee request for 2024/2025

One Member queried why certain Members of the Leisure SK Ltd Board were removed from the meeting, however, one Board Member remained in the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that the Chairman of the Board was presenting the report and answering any questions from Members. It was deemed necessary that any other Members of the Board leave the Chamber for this item.

The Chairman of Leisure SK Ltd presented the report which requested the Committee to secure the ongoing provision of leisure across the District. The Council was entering the annual process of budget setting.

The report provided the restructure and the significant changes in key income costs that were increasing (fitness, swimming, staffing and utilities). There were encouraging funding opportunities that had been actively sought in partnership with Council Officers and Members of Leisure SK Ltd.

Appendix 1 of the report provided the Committee with a full transparency of the budget proposal.

The Committee were reminded of the early notification that works were due to take place at Bourne Leisure Centre on the roof, which will result in further costs.

One Member noted the fact that Deepings Leisure Centre was losing out on £20,000 for central marketing and supply, despite being closed. It was queried whether that cost would be put back into the other three leisure centres.

It was confirmed that the document presented was an overtyping of another document and there should have been pages removed from it, one of which related to Deepings Leisure Centre. The Chairman of Leisure SK Ltd was satisfied with the main part of the costs as presented in the report.

Concern was raised on the £1 per month increase on the swim school lessons from September 2025 being an extremely low increase.

The £1 per month increase on the swim school lessons was consulted with the Leisure SK Ltd Board. The Chairman of the Board was happy to reconsider the matter at a future Board meeting.

The Committee were reassured that there had been an underprice increase on monies that was agreed the previous year and therefore, had increased significantly in the last two years. As part of that agreement, the board were provided with benchmarking information to consider costs of swimming lessons regionally and locally.

Clarification was sought around the deficit monies proposal and the proposed budget.

The Chairman clarified that the proposed budget allocation of £454,422 was to support the trading operation of LeisureSK Ltd. Without the monies, the Council's ability to provide leisure provision across the District would be compromised.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure reassured the Committee that the contract between the Council and Leisure SK Ltd was set up in such a way that the Council fund the deficit via management fee payments. If the company moved to a surplus position, then the monies would be returned to the Council, in line with the contractual arrangements.

Responsibilities of the Council were highlighted in relation to repairs and maintenance and improving leisure facilities. The Council had previously undertaken condition surveys, which were being worked through on all three leisure facilities.

It was queried as to how much the condition surveys had cost.

The fully costed 30-year condition survey had been undertaken, with partnership working ongoing with Property colleagues to prioritise tasks needing to be completed. All tasks flagged as being 'end of life/urgent' had been completed.

One Member questioned whether the budget monitoring figures within the exempt appendix were up-to-date. For which the Chairman of Leisure SK Ltd confirmed they were.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that the exempt appendix be discussed in closed session (By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Members discussed the recommendations set out in the report, alongside taking the exempt appendix into consideration. Members felt they were unable to make a decision on the management fees at this time, due to lack of information provided.

The Chairman of Leisure SK Ltd highlighted that the Committee had the correct figures available, however, comparisons from previous years would be brought back to the meeting in January. Members were urged to approve budget proposal, in order to be included within the budget.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to postpone and defer the LeisureSK Limited Management Fee Request for 2024/2025 to the next Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, being held on 9 January 2024.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED**:

That the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1. Agree to receive and analyse the Business Plan for LeisureSK Ltd for financial year 2024/2025 at the scheduled meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 January 2024.**

35. Mid-year KPI Performance Monitoring

The Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance presented the mid-year report that outlined South Kesteven District Council's performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the year of 2023/2024.

2023/2024 would be the final year of monitoring these existing KPIs. A refresh of the Corporate Plan was currently underway. To accompany the new Corporate Plan, a new suite of KPIs will be developed to reflect the priorities, ambitions and actions of the new Plan. These KPIs will be approved by each Committee and reporting will commence from April 2024.

Appendix A presented the overall performance against the four actions being presented, as well as specific performance against the sub measures contained

within those. Specific commentary had been provided for each action, which was summarised as follows:

4 of the actions are rated Green. These are actions which are on or above target as planned.

One Member queried as to how the KPIs were measured.

It was noted that the delivery of 'growth and our economy' target to engage with attractions was 40 and it had achieved 75, meaning the target had been met and overachieved. All targets were set at the setting of the Corporate Plan when it was adopted in 2020.

Clarification was sought on two of the same actions that had different status outcomes.

The Chairman highlighted that these KPIs fell under the responsibility of another Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

That the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny 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 the ongoing work programme of the Committee.**

(Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing left the meeting at 11:30)

36. STEAM 2022 Report - Economic Impact of the Visitor Economy

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report which provided the Committee with insights into the economic impact of the visitor economy in South Kesteven for 2022. The purpose of the report was to collectively develop an understanding of the wider visitor economy landscape to identify how the Council can support the continued recovery of the sector, whilst maintaining long-term resilience amongst key stakeholders.

The Committee were provided with an interactive version of the STEAM data, which included the following trends:

- The visitor economy was resilient.
- Overall visitor numbers were down.
- Visitors were spending more.
- Staying visitors had increased.

Members queried how the visitor economy figures had been measured and detailed accurately.

The Deputy Leader of the Council clarified the STEAM report quantifies the local economic impact of tourism from staying and day visitors through analysis and use of a variety of inputs, including visitor attractions numbers. It was also measured by tourist accommodation, bed stock, events, attendance occupancy levels, accommodation tariffs, macroeconomic factors etc.

A further query was raised on how visitor spend data was collected.

Clarification was sought around the data provided around youth hostels and whether there were any in the District.

The Chairman clarified there was a youth hotel in Thurlby, Bourne.

One Member highlighted impacting factors of the presented data was missing, for example, traffic congestion on the A1 potentially drawing people towards Belton House.

It was queried as to whether the data had been shared with Parish Councils.

The Director of Growth and Culture informed the Committee that Parish Councils had not received the data directly, however, they could access to the document.

It was noted, GPS (Global Positioning System) footfall data had been used as a tool for some of the data sets.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED**:

That the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Examines the Scarborough Tourism Economic Accommodation Model (STEAM) data for 2022**
- 2. Considers the wider visitor economy landscape to identify how the Council could support the continued recovery of the sector, whilst maintaining long term resilience amongst businesses and key stakeholders.**

37. Grantham Heritage Action Zone

The Leader of the Council presented the report which provided an update on the progress of the Grantham High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme.

The majority of the programme budget in 2023 was for the completion of the Capital Grants Programme supporting shopfront regeneration works and the Westgate Hall regeneration project.

9 shopfront regeneration were scheduled for completion by the end of the programme. Out of the 9 projects, 3 had been completed and 4 were currently under delivery. Project officers had met with contractors for the two remaining shopfronts, which were expected to begin before 2024.

The Westgate Hall regeneration project was progressing well, however, there had been some slight delays in the initial delivery schedule as a result of a need to discharge a number of planning conditions relating to roof treatments before the materials could be ordered. This had since been resolved and the installation of roof lights, completed. The grant aided works to Westgate Hall were anticipated to be completed by December 2023.

Delivery of the restoration of 71 High Street, Grantham remained significantly behind schedule and Officers were working closely with property owners to bring the project to a resolution. This delay may result in increased total project costs; however, the grant of value would not be increased, with any additional costs being met by the property owner.

A draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan had been completed by Heritage Trust Lincolnshire. It was undergoing the initial review by the Planning Team to ensure the recommendations were in line with approved Council policy documents.

The 'Grantham's Hidden History' trail had been completed and launched on the free Trail-Tale App in June 2023. It had already received positive feedback from users, along with press coverage, including featuring on BBC Radio Lincolnshire.

The Leader of the Council informed the Committee of the cultural programme.

One Member queried whether there would be continued engagement with the dramatic society. In response it was confirmed, the programme was to ensure Grantham's culture thrived to stimulate the visitor economy.

The High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Manager clarified the intention was for the organisations the Council was working alongside, to deliver elements of work beyond the end of the programme.

One Member requested figures for the 'Trail-Tale App' and whether the app was still promoted.

The last update received was from a few months ago, where there were 170 unique users of Grantham's Hidden History. The Council were continuing to promote the programme beyond the scope of the scheme. The potential future of developing trails on the same platform for other towns would be explored.

The Committee thanked Officers for their work on the ongoing project.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED**:

That the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Reviews and endorses the report first presented to both the Finance and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 September 2023 and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 October 2023.**
- 2. Agrees to receive a report on the closure of the programme in six months.**
- 3. Is invited to share any comments they may have on this report with the programme board.**

38. Performance of Council funded Arts venues

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure presented the report which provided information on the current performance of the Council's arts services. In particular, how the service had recovered from the impact of the pandemic. Although the behaviour of cultural audiences had changed, it was pleasing to see how the Council's venues had responded.

The programmes on offer currently were returning to pre-pandemic levels. As detailed within the report, the Council's arts service was not only centred on the venues themselves, it included outreach activity and the provision of high quality performances within rural areas.

Since September 2023, the 'pay it forward' scheme had attracted over £1,300 in donations and the money was being used to provide free tickets to residents who would otherwise be unable to access performances.

The comparison charts for pre-pandemic levels were discussed. It was queried as to why Stamford Arts Centre were only holding 56% of events held pre-pandemic, however Guildhall Arts Centre were holding the same amount of events.

The Assistant Director for Culture and Leisure clarified the roof replacement on Stamford Arts Centre had severely impacted the programme of events.

It was suggested the Committee receive a tour of all Council-operated arts venues in the District.

One Member informed the Committee of the Deepings short film festival. It was suggested other arts venues may consider the provision of showcasing short films with the assistance from local authorities.

An update on the replacement boiler in the Guildhall arts centre was requested and whether it would impact ticketed performances.

It was confirmed the replacement of the boiler was out to tender at present, with Officers working alongside Property colleagues. The timescale for the replacement boiler would be confirmed once the letting of the contract work had taken place.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED**:

That the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Examine the information provided in the report relating to the current operating and performance of the Council's three arts venues.**
- 2. Support an application to Arts Council England for a project grant to undertake an audience development project.**

39. Work Programme 2023-24

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

The following item was added to the Work Programme for the meeting held on 9 January 2024:

- LeisureSK Limited Management Fee request for 2024/25

The following item was added to the Work Programme for the meeting held on 26 March 2024:

- Draft KPIs
- Review of Hello SK / Discover SK

One Member suggested an additional meeting be scheduled for late January in order to address additional items on the Work Programme.

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

There were none.

41. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:42.

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