

PEOPLE & PLACES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Collins (Chairman)

Cllr. Perry Cole (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Bulford, Cheeseman, Perry Cole, P. Darrington, Dyball, Esler, Hudson and Raikes

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Dr. Canet and Edwards-Winser

Cllr. Pender was also present.

1. Election of Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr Collins be appointed Chairman of the Advisory Committee for 2022/23.

(Cllr Collins in the Chair)

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr Perry Cole be appointed Vice Chairman of the Advisory Committee for 2022/23

3. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the People & Places Advisory Committee held on 1 March 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

5. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none.

6. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder presented a progress update to the Committee.

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The Community Safety Unit (CSU) undertook public engagements in Swanley, Edenbridge, and Hextable. The CSU also reported that Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) had reduced in comparison to last year.

The White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley had registered 175,886 visits since opening, and had increased its fitness membership from the 443 memberships at its opening to 2,727.

The Portfolio Holder updated the Committee on various events she had participated in and was planning to attend. The Big Community Sing was held at the Stag Theatre to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee, and raised more than £720 for local mental health services. The Run, Walk, and Push against Dementia event was held in Knole Park, which raised money for the Sevenoaks Area Dementia Friendly Community.

The Swanley Skate Jam raised £250,000 to rebuild the skate park in Swanley. The Chair of the Voluntary Sector Forum, Angela Painter, retired, and the Portfolio Holder expressed her thanks for the work she contributed to the district.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) awarded £1,000,000 for Sevenoaks District over the next three years, and the Economic Development Team were producing an Investment Plan for the funding. The Portfolio Holder outlined some of the potential projects included within this.

7. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit committee

There were none.

8. Update from A/Chief Insp Mark Stubberfield on Kent Police and Community Voice

Inspector Mark Atkinson provided an update on the 'My Community Voice' app and policing priorities in the District. The Committee heard that the 'My Community Voice' app was a two-way community engagement tool adopted this year by the CSU. Mark Atkinson explained that the current priority of the CSU was increasing the number of people signed up to the app, with an end goal of 10% of the District signed up, and that the CSU was exploring the engagement of organisations through key members, such as Town and Parish Clerks, to allow information to be shared further. He further informed the Committee that the CSU's priority in issuing updates through the app was that they provide meaningful localised information, without inundating users with too much information.

The Committee then heard an update on measures addressing violence against women and girls in the District, which was a current Kent Police priority. Mark Atkinson advised the Committee that Kent Police constructed data sets to enable more targeted action of this issue. The Committee heard the statistics for the District, and also the measures Kent Police had employed to tackle the issue, including an offender grading system to prioritise the most dangerous offenders. Mark Atkinson explained that Kent Police follow the current national strategy of

combating violence against women and girls in Public, Private, and Online spheres, and outlined the methods through which this is done in the District.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

9. Update on Community Wifi

The report was presented by Alexandra Pack and Sam Lain-Rose, who updated the Committee on Kent County Council's Community Wi-Fi pilot programme. They explained that the Community Wi-Fi programme aimed to remove barriers to access of the internet, including issues regarding cost-of-living that limit broadband usage. The Committee heard they currently planned to utilise the Kent Public Services Network (KPSN), which is well-integrated in the District, to extend its reach to areas of deprivation.

They explained that the programme took an evidence-based approach to assess where exclusion and deprivation were most prevalent, to allow for a tailored approach to address local needs. The Committee discussed a specific example of this in the Swanley Recreation Ground.

They explained that sustainability and feasibility were key concerns of the programme, and that they would work with the District Council to decide future action pending the results of their feasibility study. The Committee also heard that their focus on feasibility also included a robust exit strategy.

The Committee discussed the steps taken to ensure that attention was granted to those who need it most, to which they heard that analysis of usage metrics would allow for both safeguarding and targeted local action. The Committee also discussed the potential use of the splash screen of the Community Wi-Fi to promote Council initiatives.

Resolved: That the work being undertaken to date by Kent County Council to deliver a Community Wi-Fi pilot programme in Kent be acknowledged.

10. Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Development & Programme Manager presented the report which detailed the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) for the District for the period 2022 - 2027. He explained that the Strategy addressed the changes in supply and the labour market that resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic, and captured changes from new working and spending patterns.

He further explained the four focus areas of the Strategy, which were Business Engagement and Diversity, Tourism and Rural Enterprise, Town Centres, and Job Skills, and outlined the elements within these that the EDS specifically targets. He emphasised the importance of sustainability and Council's Net Zero plan within all these areas. The Committee raised the potential costs and difficulties associated with the transition to Net Zero, to which he outlined the resources of the Strategy for businesses to ease this process.

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The Committee then heard about the importance of the District Council's partnerships in the Strategy, and the role of consultation with these groups in the creation of the Strategy's priorities. They also heard about how the Strategy includes an annual economic report to monitor its performance.

The Committee raised the issue of jargon within the report, which might present a barrier to public understanding of it. In response to concerns raised, Members were advised it would be addressed where possible. In response to further queries Members were informed that the Strategy was local in its focus, and that problems would be prioritised on an area-by-area basis.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Economic Development Strategy 2022 - 2027 be adopted.

CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Chairman, with the Committee's agreement, brought forward consideration of agenda item 15.

11. Welcome Back Fund Project Review

Members considered the report presented by the Economic Development Officer which reviewed the Welcome Back Fund Project. She explained to the Committee that the funding of £214,212 (available as £107,106 per year between 2020 and 2022) was for temporary projects that supported the high street.

She explained how the project worked closely with Town and Parish Councils to ensure local needs were met. The Committee heard that the Council successfully spent 99% of the allocation, with 100% of the claims on the funding paid in full. The Committee then heard an outline of the projects successfully funded in this way. She further explained that the plans for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would develop upon these projects.

Resolved: That the successful delivery of the Reopening High Street Safely/Welcome Back Fund and the positive impacts the interventions had across the district, be noted

12. Community Grant Scheme Guidelines Review

The Community Projects and Funding Officers presented the report which outlined the proposed changes to the Council's Code of Practice for Grant-making, which focused on speeding up and making the process of applying easier. They also explained there would be biannual meetings of officers involved to share best practice.

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The proposed changes to the Community Grant Scheme Guidelines would better adhere to the new code of practice and be in line with current processes, with particular attention to how the lower grant limit of £500 was raised to £1000 to allow the scheme to provide meaningful grants in the current economic climate. The assessment criteria for applications were also updated.

They explained that further work would be undertaken with support from the Legal team to reduce the timescales of grant-making, and that this would be the subject of a future report.

The Committee discussed the limits on funding regarding the boundaries of the District, and it was clarified that grants were only given for work within the District.

Resolved: That

- a) the revisions to the Council's Code of Practice for Grant-making be noted;
- b) the recommended actions, as set out in paragraphs 8 - 14 of the report, be noted;
- c) the revisions to the Community Grant Scheme Guidelines, as detailed in Appendix B, be noted; and
- d) it be recommended to Cabinet that the above revisions and actions be approved.

13. Community Plan Annual Report 2021-22

The report was presented by the Chief Officer for People & Places, and provided an overview of the work of the Local Strategic Partnership Community Plan in its final year. The Committee heard that the Plan was 96% on target, with 4% relating to currently unavailable data on road safety from Kent County Council. She then outlined some of the successes of the plan within each of the six priorities of the Plan, which were Safer Communities, Caring Communities, Green Environment, Health, Sustainable Economy, and Dynamic Economy. These included more than 4000 enforcement actions against parked vehicles, the provision of 20 affordable houses, the awarding of 52 disabled facilities grants, a new Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, and the Kickstart West Kent project.

Resolved: The Sevenoaks District Community Plan's Annual Report for 2021 - 22 was considered.

14. Sevenoaks District New Community Plan 2022-2032

The Chief Officer for People & Places presented the report which outlined the new Community Plan for the period 2022 - 2032. Members were advised that the Plan was made in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and focused on Place, Economy, Environment, and People. It was explained that public consultation helped shape the direction of the plan, with particular emphasis on community spirit, the environment, town centres, and transport links.

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Members were advised that the new plan emphasised readability, to promote community engagement within it. The plan outlined both what the Council and the LSP partners would do, as well as what the public could do, to reflect the community's engagement in these matters.

The Committee praised the plan for the centrality of resident feedback in its construction and outlook, and encouraged this to continue.

Resolved: That following the Comments from the Committee, it be recommended to Cabinet that the final draft Community Plan and action plan for 2022 - 2032 be agreed.

15. Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2021-22

The Chief Officer for People & Places presented the report which provided an overview of the work of the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) from April 2021 - March 2022. They outlined the rates of victim-based crime in the District, including the 44% decrease in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the past year compared to the year before.

Members were advised of the achievements of the Community Safety Unit (CSU), which met daily and reviewed 626 daily taskings, all of which were actioned. It was reported that the CSU was commended by Kent Police as the most exceptional in Kent.

The CSP held violence against women and girls as a priority, and actions to further address this issue have been discussed held by the CSP. The Committee discussed the importance of co-ordinated work with outside organisations in addressing violence against women and girls, and the Chief Officer for People and Places informed the Committee that the CSP's plan for the future considered this.

Resolved: That the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Annual Report for 2021 - 2022 be noted.

16. Work Plan

The work plan was noted with this addition

4 October 2022

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan Update

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9:00PM

CHAIRMAN