

People & Places Advisory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Bulford (Chairman)

Cllr. Dyball (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Alger, P. Darrington, Edwards-Winsler, Granville, Gustard, Hogarth, Hudson, Manamperi

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Cathy Morgan

Cllr. Purves was also present.

34 Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held 30 November 2024 be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35 Declarations of interest

Cllr Dyball declared for Minute 41 that she was the Vice Chairman of Every Step Counts, which had made an application to the Community Grants Scheme. She further declared that she was the Council's appointee to Citizens Advice North & West Kent.

36. Actions from Previous Meeting (if any)

There were none.

37. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder gave an update on the services within her portfolio. The Communities Team held the West Kent Domestic Abuse conference on 6 December. An action plan was brought forward from this event as part of the West Kent Domestic Forum. The Silver Bells Christmas Party had over 80 older people attend. The party marked the final Silver Sunday event of the year.

A "moving on" event was held in Swanley for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Two further events were planned for March. The Youth Mentoring Plus scheme was launched, and was delivered in partnership with Millwall Community Trust and House in the Basement. The "Let's Cook" cooking classes were completed in February. These classes were funded by the Household Support Fund and provided slow-

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cooking sessions for families that were most-in-need, as identified through benefits and social services. A funding bid had been made to deliver more classes in 2024.

The number of Kent County Council Community Wardens had been reduced, meaning the district would now have a shared service with Tunbridge Wells.

£40,000 in one-off external grant funding had been applied for and secured for Citizens' Advice North & West Kent and Citizens Advice Edenbridge & Westerham. This had been awarded by KCC and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities. The Council would be jointly hosting the West Kent Expo on 14 March, as part of the Invest West Kent Business Support Programme. The Expo would hold a programme of workshops, mentoring, and networking opportunities. The Council were working to promote springtime tourism within the district through the [visitsevenoaks.co.uk](https://www.visitsevenoaks.co.uk) website.

The Growth Gurus project would begin in April 2024, and would help young adults (aged 18-24) in the Swanley area that were not in employment, education, or training. This was funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and would be delivered in partnership with The Education People. It would offer training, wellbeing and housing support, work experience, and life skills training through local businesses and the voluntary sector.

The Public Realm Commission was updated quarterly on the changes in Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. The changes to smaller sites would take effect on 2 April 2024.

Members were invited to a site visit of the council-owned leisure centres in the district on 26 March. White Oak Leisure Centre had held a 24hr "spinathon" to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association. Roughly £2,000 had been raised.

The Better Together Online Community Hub had been shortlisted for the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards 2024, in the category of Working Together. The Portfolio Holder wished the team luck with the award.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder set out a timeline of the council's work with Citizens Advice to secure funding. The additional, external grant funding was a one-off grant to help the organisation. Citizens Advice had applied to the Lottery Fund. The Health & Communities Manager updated the committee on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Members requested a complete breakdown of the scheme.

Action: For the Health & Communities Manager to present a breakdown to the committee of the number of households being supported under the Homes for Ukraine scheme in the Sevenoaks District, including details of whether the household is residing with a guest, temporary accommodation, private rented sector or has returned to Ukraine.

38. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit committee

There were none.

39. Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership 2024- 25 Strategy & Action Plan

The Health & Communities Manager presented the report, which set out the Community Safety Partnership Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-25. A strategic assessment had been undertaken in December 2023, in partnership with the voluntary sector, housing associations, the police, council officers, and other partners. The officer outlined the priorities within the Strategy, noting that a new priority relating to business crime, such as abuse to shops and staff, had been introduced. The actions for each priority were reviewed every three months. Roughly £34,000 of funding had been received from the Police and Crime Commissioner, to be spread across the priorities. £11,000 of this was reserved in a tactical fund, to be deployed where most necessary.

In response to questions, the officer explained that the community wardens service would be shared with Tunbridge Wells, for reasons of resource. The same areas would be covered under this service, but it was anticipated that response times may increase.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Strategy and Action Plan 2024-25, be approved.

40. Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Consultation Results: London Road, Halstead, Orpington By-pass, Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road

The Health & Communities Manager presented the report, which set out the results of the consultation regarding the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) relating to London Road, Halstead. There had been 113 responses to the consultation; Members were advised that this was a sizeable turnout as the PSPO affected a small area. 111 respondents agreed with all 12 actions. 39 respondents suggested that the area the PSPO covered was too narrow, but no reports had been received in the proposed areas for its expansion. The team and the police working to prevent the issue from being displaced elsewhere. It was hoped that the PSPO would be implemented in May 2024, following approval at Cabinet.

In response to questions, Members were advised that, if implemented, the PSPO would apply at all times.

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Resolved: that

- a) The contents of the report and the outcome of the public consultation be noted; and
- b) That it be recommended to Cabinet that the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and its measures at London Road, Halstead, Orpington By Pass Badgers Mount and the M25 Spur Road, for a period of up to 3 years, be approved.

41. Community Grants 2024/25

The Community Projects and Funding Officers presented the report, which outlined the Community Grant Scheme and set out the proposed schedule of grants for 2024-25. Applications were open from September to November 2023. A detailed template form was provided to applicants, streamlining the process and setting out the information required. The funding available for the Scheme for 2024/25 was £28,848 which was a reduction from the £49,800 available for 2023/24. 40 applications, requesting £151,162 in total, had been received, which was significantly more than the 30 to 32 applications usually received. All applicants have been contacted to explore alternate funding opportunities. Applications were assessed on a number of strict criteria, including their eligibility, the scheme's priorities, value for money, need, any other Council funding due to be received, and sustainability.

In response to questions, the officers explained that unsuccessful applicants could reapply for the scheme next year. Five organisations had applied to both the Community Grants Scheme and the Better Together Fund. Members discussed some of the applications that were ineligible or could not be prioritised.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

42. Leisure Operator Options Report

Resolved: that under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting when considering the Report and Appendices A and B of Agenda Item 9 above, on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information is involved as defined by Schedule 12A, paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information.)

The Chief Officer for People & Places presented the report, which set out the Council's future options regarding the management of its leisure centres in Sevenoaks and Edenbridge, and Lullingstone Park Golf Course. The current interim leisure operator contract for these facilities was due to end in May 2025. Four options were presented to the committee for consideration.

The officer set out why Option 2 was recommended to the committee. The procurement process would ensure the Council received best value for money in the contract, as it would be competitively tested in the market. Operating risk could be

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transferred to an external leisure operator, who have the expertise and resource to be more commercially focused. A contract service specification would be developed to ensure the facilities were managed against industry best practice.

A five-year (plus two) contract had been selected as it would encourage greater competition and response from the market, not be overly financially burdensome to operators and would allow for feasibility plans to regenerate the leisure centres to come forward.

In response to questions, the officer explained that other operators were not considered for the current interim contract, as the process had to be completed quickly – a variation of contract with the operator of White Oak Leisure Centre was the only mechanism fast enough for the Council's purposes to reopen the facilities to the public in April 2023.

Members were advised that the Council had received contributions from the Swimming Pool Support Fund towards utilities costs, and that a bid for capital investment at White Oak Leisure Centre had been made. Decarbonisation and energy efficiency of the other leisure centres was also a priority.

Resolved: That

- a) The options within the report be noted.
- b) It be recommended to Cabinet that
 - i) Option 2, to proceed with the procurement of a leisure operator contract for Edenbridge and Sevenoaks Leisure Centres and Lullingstone Park Golf Course for 5 years (with an option to extend for a further two years, subject to satisfactory performance) in accordance with the strategy set out in the report, be agreed.
 - ii) Authority be delegated to the Chief Officer, People and Places and Chief Officer, Finance and Trading and Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for People and Places and Cabinet Member for Finance and Investments, to conduct the procurement and evaluation exercise.

43. Work Plan

The Work Plan was noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8:31PM

CHAIRMAN