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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday 11th February 2021

Present: Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Harpreet Uppal
Councillor Habiban Zaman

Observers: Councillor Paul Davies

110 Membership of Committee

All Members of the Committee were in attendance.

111 Minutes of Previous Meeting

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

The Chair provided updates to Members, as follows:

- In respect of the Domestic Abuse Strategy; the information requested in respect of repeat calls had been circulated to Members of the Committee. It had confirmed that the police data indicated that repeat victim and repeat suspect rates in Kirklees remained stable and at similar levels to the same time last year and had been relatively stable for the last 3-4 years. (Minute 97, 29th October 2020).
- In relation to the Council's response to Covid-19; as requested, consideration had been given to using the opportunity provided by the implementation of mass community testing to disseminate information in relation to support services and this was being done through written material as well as staff conversations and discussions with those accessing testing. This primarily related to immediate COVID related support but would be varied as a route to providing other key information and receiving feedback. With regards to vaccination sites, work was underway with NHS colleagues to look at how to make the most of this opportunity. However at the present time the key information people needed to take away was that they must still follow the public health guidance despite having their vaccinations. (Minute 106).
- The development of the Kirklees Climate Commission continued to follow the process set out to the 3rd December meeting;
 - The first Advisory Panel meeting had taken place on 29th January 2021, chaired by Professor Andy Gouldson (University of Leeds and Chair, Leeds Climate Commission) and with the Council represented by Councillor Davies (the Portfolio Holder) and Colin Parr (Strategic Director, Environment and Climate Change).
 - The second meeting was arranged for 26th February.

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- It was anticipated that there would be one or two further meetings to agree the Terms of Reference and the process for appointing full Commission Members along with initial work priorities.
- After an appointment process it was expected that the full Commission would launch in May 2021 (Minute 107).
- The Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel had considered the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme at its meeting on 21st January 2021 and made a number of recommendations in relation to the need for a focus on those in the self-employed creative sector, engagement with businesses and effective communication with applicants (Minute 109).

112 **Interests**

No interests were declared.

113 **Admission of the Public**

All items were considered in public session.

114 **Deputations/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

115 **Public Question Time**

No public questions were received.

116 **Culture, Heritage and Tourism Strategies**

Adele Poppleton, Head of Culture and Tourism, and Deborah Marsland, Museums and Galleries Manager, were in attendance to present a report in respect of the development of three inter-related strategies; a Cultural Strategy, a Heritage Strategy and a Tourism Strategy. Councillor Paul Davies, the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Greener Kirklees was also in attendance.

Representations and submissions were read out on behalf of the Friends of Spen Beck and Mann Dam; the Red House Heritage Group; and Environment Kirklees and the Three Valleys Nature Park. These had also been circulated to the Members of the Panel prior to the meeting.

Adele welcomed the submissions and explained that the strategies were at an early stage of development. She informed Members that work was already being undertaken with the Red House Heritage Group and she would put the Friends of Spen Beck and Mann Dam in touch with the relevant officers, in the Parks and Streetscene department, in respect of woodland planting. She also undertook to respond and engage directly with these groups in respect of the issues they raised and to ensure that they were involved in the development of the strategies.

The presentation included:

- An overview of the proposals to develop three separate, but interlinked, strategies, connected by the wish to explore, tell and promote the district's stories. The focus would be on people and stories, not just buildings and physical assets.
- Definitions of 'culture' 'heritage' and 'tourism'.

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- The range of benefits that could be achieved through investment in culture, heritage and tourism.
- The inherent nature of creativity and the contribution that creative activity and engagement could make to people's wellbeing.
- The need for the strategies.
- The plan for recovery from the significant impact of the pandemic on this sector, both locally and at a West Yorkshire level.
- The key underlying approaches, principles and themes for the Heritage Strategy; which was the most advanced in terms of its development.
- The key themes and aims for the Cultural Strategy.
- The key themes for the Tourism Strategy and the links being made to the 'Yorkshire' brand, in partnership with 'Welcome to Yorkshire'.
- The timescales for the development of the three strategies.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members and the following key issues were covered during discussion:

- The integration of past heritage with links to the present and future was important. In respect of textiles, this could be seen in the development of cutting-edge textile design and technology in Kirklees. The heritage of the district in terms of engineering excellence should also be included.
- The involvement of communities was important. Strong communication and ensuring understanding of what culture meant and the range of benefits it could bring would be key and may prove to be a challenge.
- An events calendar to bring together information on all the activities and dates for all interests and groups would be helpful, providing clarity on what was being offered and when.
- Linkages with walking and cycling routes to local places and businesses, such as cafes, pubs, microbreweries and signs to direct people to places of interest would be beneficial. This would also assist local people to explore and understand their area.
- The impact of culture and heritage on good mental health and wellbeing was recognised and there was an important link to be made with the move towards social prescribing.
- It was vital that the capacity to deliver the ambitions of these strategies was considered. Good communication and publicity would also be important.
- The focus on stories of peoples' lives, not just buildings and structures, was welcomed as was the celebrating radicals and rebels theme. Migration was also an important element of the district's history.
- There were a number of nice places within the urban areas which would benefit from some improvement; parts of the canal path being a good example.
- A significant amount of this work had been done before and it was questioned what was new with the proposed approach and strategies. Initiatives had been delivered in the past and had made an impact with communities but had not been sustained. This could cause potential difficulties in re-engagement of community groups. It was essential that there was a sufficient level of resources and to ensure sustainability.

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- It was considered that the first Woven Festival had been too centred on certain areas and had not encompassed the vast and rich range of experience and heritage across many of the other areas in Kirklees.

Councillor Davies said that the proposals were exciting and the Authority would seek to engage and work with communities and focus on people; it was crucial that this was inclusive. There was a wish to use the work undertaken in the past in a positive way, as a basis to build on and enhance.

In responding to the issues raised Adele explained that:

- A calendar of events did already exist but an integral part of the strategy would be to improve communication and marketing of the offer.
- Linking walking and cycling routes with places of interest and local services was a good idea. It was noted that signage did not necessarily have to be a physical feature and could be provided through digital means.
- Capacity was a key consideration in this work. The strategies aimed to encourage partnership working and collaboration to help find innovative ways to increase the capacity and resources to facilitate delivery. They would also provide a clear statement for investors and to access funding streams.
- Diversity and inclusion would be a key strand throughout the strategies and there would be a need to engage with the community to build upon the existing collections of stories and objects/artefacts to illustrate those stories.
- The period of austerity in public spending and the necessary prioritisation of limited resources had meant that this sector had suffered cuts in funding. However, a period of growth was now in evidence and the work undertaken, and the lessons learned, in the past would be used and evolved for the future.
- The first Woven Festival had been developed within a short timescale; and the need ensure a wider reach would be addressed on the next occasion.

Further comments were made as follows:

- Ward Councillors should be engaged and consulted; they were in the position to be able to provide information about local history, community groups and grassroots organisations in their areas.
- It was considered that these strategies would form part of the recovery from the pandemic and should be seen in that context.
- The close links with health had not been fully reflected in the report.
- There was a need for the Council's Heritage Champion to have a higher profile.
- It was important that the experiences of the present were captured to provide an historic record for the future.
- Investment in the quality of footpaths/ canal towpaths would be welcomed; such measures would link in with a number of other strategies, such as those associated with green travel and health.
- There was a need to ensure that young people and local people could access and felt a connection with the tourism and culture offer and could benefit from what was available.

Adele acknowledged that work was needed to identify the barriers that prevented people from accessing local culture and what could be done to break them down.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the Head of Culture and Tourism and the Museums and Galleries Manager be thanked for their interesting and informative presentation.

(2) That the draft documents for each strategy be submitted to the Committee for further consideration, in due course.

(3) That the Head of Culture and Tourism be asked to respond to, and engage with, the groups that made submissions to the Committee.

(4) That officers be requested to consider the points and suggestions raised by the Committee and that they be used to inform the development of the Culture, Heritage and Tourism Strategies.

117 Work Programme 2020/21

It was reported that the Peer Review Update report had been deferred until Autumn, in light of the necessary re-prioritisation of activities and resources associated with the pandemic response. The Committee would maintain an oversight of the approach to working with the voluntary and community sectors in the interim.

The Work Programme for 2020/21 was noted.

118 Any Other Business

The Chair reported on the following urgent decisions:

- A report in relation to the establishment of a Community Champions Grant Scheme had been submitted to Cabinet on 15th December 2020. It had been agreed that the item would be exempt from call-in due to the very short timeframe for implementation, which was also impacted by the Christmas period. A request had been made that an update be provided to the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel at its next meeting.
- An urgent officer delegated decision had been made by Rachel Spencer-Henshall, as Director of Public Health, on 16th December 2020 to allow Kirklees to enter into a collaborative agreement with the Department of Health and Social Care to deliver Covid-19 community testing. It had been agreed that the item would be exempt from call-in, due to the emergency situation and the need to enter into the agreement before delivery of the programme (beginning the following day). A request was made that an update be provided to the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel.