

Licensing Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Report of the Joint Strategic Director for Place

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Guildford Purple Flag Accreditation

Executive Summary

The Purple Flag is an award celebrating safety, diversity and partnership working to create a vibrant well managed night-time economy.

Guildford initially received this accreditation in 2015 and has worked hard in partnership with stakeholders to successfully retain its Purple Flag status for an 8th consecutive year.

This report seeks to provide an overview of this work to the licensing committee and an update on the current position. Previously this has been provided as a verbal update.

Recommendation to Committee

That the Committee notes the updates provided, which is intended to be an annual update for the Committee's information.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:

To ensure the Committee is briefed on the Council's involvement in Purple Flag to the benefit of the Borough.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication?

No

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief the Committee on the Guildford Purple Flag Award.

2. Strategic Priorities

The Purple Flag contributes to our fundamental themes as follows:

- **Homes and jobs** – reviving Guildford town centre through retention of an internationally recognised award making Guildford a great choice for a night out; and encouraging investment in Guildford through the award and supporting local businesses by involving them in the accreditation process.
- **Environment** – ensuring the protection and promotion of the environment via the Purple Flag process which includes waste disposal, transportation, car parking, lighting and cleanliness.
- **Community** – working with partners to create strong and safe communities that come together to support the night-time economy.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Purple Flag programme was developed following the Civic Trust's "Night Vision" report in 2006 and is now managed by the Association of Town & City Management. Purple Flag is an accreditation process similar to Green Flag Award for parks and Blue Flag for beaches.
- 3.2 Towns and cities which adopt a comprehensive set of standards, management processes and good practice examples designed to help transform town and city centres at night may apply for Purple Flag status to demonstrate and promote their standards of excellence in managing the evening and night-time economy.
- 3.3 Guildford originally received Purple Flag accreditation in 2015 and has maintained the award annually ever since, with assessors recognising Guildford for providing evenings and nights out that are safe, vibrant and varied. Guildford remains the only town in the county and one of around 70 in the UK to hold the award. This has considerable benefits to many Council services in the Council, town centre businesses and the wider community.
- 3.4 The Guildford Town Purple Flag Partnership Group (GTPFP) is led by Guildford Borough Council and Experience Guildford (the town's Business Improvement District), includes a broad range of town and county organisations including Surrey Police, the Safer Guildford Partnership, Street Angels and Guildford Pubwatch.
- 3.5 There are very clear links between the Purple Flag and the aims of the Councils Corporate Plan. The award covers categories examining the wider areas of wellbeing, movement, appeal, place and policy; with the application having to demonstrate Guildford's commitment to managing these aspects of the night-time economy.
- 3.6 Purple Flag is awarded to each destination annually, alternating between a full application and assessment followed by an interim application.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 The Guildford Town Purple Flag Partnership Group (GTPFP) is a strong coalition of stakeholders who work together and link with others to improve outcomes in the night-time economy.

- 4.2 In 2018 and 2019 a comprehensive Purple Flag specific perception study was conducted in partnership with Experience Guildford which examined how safe respondents felt on a night out in Guildford, together with collecting other relevant data about perceptions of the night-time economy
- 4.3 The study was adjusted for 2021 to find out how residents and visitors felt about returning to the town centre as restrictions were easing, including perceptions of safety. This would in turn enable us to bring residents and visitors back to enjoy and support our hospitality, leisure and retail businesses safely. The survey was open April 1 until end of May 2021 (Government restrictions were starting to lift for non-essential retail from mid-April) survey had 482 responses.
- 4.4 Guildford is proud that despite the uncertainty caused by the pandemic 84% of responders stated they felt safe in Guildford town centre.
- 4.5 The perception study identified nearly 30% of respondents had heard of the Purple Flag which is a slight decrease on the previous survey. The communications toolkit will be continued to be utilised to increase this to the target of 50%.
- 4.6 The perception study is planned to be repeated for Guildford's full renewal in 2023.

5. Key Risks

- 5.1 The co-ordination of the night-time economy through the Purple Flag Award results in high safety standards and a positive partnership approach towards achieving this aim in Guildford. This in turn helps demonstrate the Council's corporate aims of supporting both stakeholders and businesses in this important sector.
- 5.2 The work to retain the Purple Flag Award is principally carried out by the Senior Specialist for Licensing and Community Safety.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There is are no financial implications to the Purple Flag update.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 Under the Licensing Act 2003, the Council has a statutory duty to promote the Licensing objectives (prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, public safety and protection of children from harm). The Purple Flag Award helps contribute to this aim.

8. Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 The Purple Flag update report can be managed from within the current resource.
- 8.2 Officers leading the Purple Flag are well connected to bodies such as the Local Government Association, Institute of Licensing and the ATCM. These specialist

networks give the individuals and the Purple Flag group as a whole access to highly experienced professionals who can provide support when required.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 9.2 The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- 9.3 The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.
- 9.4 The Purple Flag is an award celebrating diversity and safety for all in the night time economy and retaining this award helps contribute to the Equality aim.

10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

- 10.1 A number of sustainability initiatives, including public transport and cleanliness are assessed under Purple Flag criteria.

11. Summary of Options

- 11.1 The annual Purple Flag report is presented to the Committee for information.
- 11.2 As the Annual Report is presented for information only there are no further options available to Council as no further action is necessary.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 It is good practice to provide an overview of information to Committee members, which will thus enable Members to be informed about the Council's Purple Flag status.
- 12.2 This information enables Members to be informed and to aid decision making in the future.

13. Background Papers

[Local Government Association; Approaches to managing the night-time economy](#)

14. Appendices

None

Please ensure the following service areas have signed off your report. Please complete this box and do not delete.

Service	Sign off date
<i>Head of Service</i>	<i>23/02/2023</i>
<i>Director</i>	<i>03/03/2023</i>
<i>Finance / S.151 Officer</i>	<i>03/03/2023</i>
<i>Legal / Governance</i>	<i>01/03/2023</i>
<i>HR</i>	<i>03/03/2023</i>
<i>Equalities</i>	<i>03/03/2023</i>
<i>Lead Councillor</i>	<i>03/03/2023</i>
<i>CMT</i>	<i>03/03/2023</i>
<i>Committee Services</i>	<i>24/02/2023</i>