

**COUNCIL MEETING****25 APRIL 2019****7.00 pm – 9.45 pm****Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud****3****Minutes****Membership:**

Martin Baxendale	P	Trevor Hall	P	Nigel Prenter	P
Dorcas Binns	A	Nick Hurst	P	Skeena Rathor	A
Catherine Braun	P	Julie Job	A	Sue Reed	P
Chris Brine	A	Haydn Jones	P	Mark Reeves	P
George Butcher	P	John Jones	P	Steve Robinson	P
Miranda Clifton	P	Norman Kay	P	Mattie Ross	P
Nigel Cooper	P	Darren Loftus	A	Tom Skinner	A
Doina Cornell	P	Stephen Lydon	P	Nigel Studdert-Kennedy	P
Gordon Craig	P	John Marjoram	P	Haydn Sutton	P
Rachel Curley	P	Phil McAsey	P	Brian Tipper	P
Stephen Davies	P	Karen McKeown	P	Chas Townley	P
Paul Denney	P	Jenny Miles*	P	Jessica Tomblin	P
Jim Dewey	P	Dave Mossman	P	Ken Tucker	P
Jonathan Edmunds	P	Gill Oxley	P	Martin Whiteside	P
Chas Fellows	A	Keith Pearson	A	Tim Williams	A
Colin Fryer	P	Simon Pickering	P	Tom Williams	P
Lindsey Green	P	Gary Powell**	P	Debbie Young	P

\*\*Chair \*Vice-Chair P = Present A = Absent

**Officers Present:**

Chief Executive  
 Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring  
 Officer

Democratic Services & Elections Manager  
 Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer  
 Democratic Services & Election Officers

**CL.058 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Binns, Brine, Fellows, Job, Loftus, Pearson, Rathor, Skinner and Tim Williams.

**CL.059 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer declared an interest in Agenda Item 8, Designation of Monitoring Officer and left the chamber before this item was discussed.

**CL.060      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED To approve the minutes of the Council's meeting held on 21 February 2019.**

**CL.061      ANNOUNCEMENTS****Chair of Council**

- This year the Council's Charity is Allsorts a charity which supports children with additional needs and their families throughout Gloucestershire.
- Members were reminded that a photographer will be taking photos outside the Council Chamber from 5.00 pm – 7.00 pm prior to the Annual General Meeting on 16 May 2019.
- Councillor Lindsey Green was welcomed to her first meeting of Council.

**Chief Executive**

- An additional Development Control Committee for the football stadium will be held on 12 June 2019 at 6.00 pm.
- Because 23 May 2019 is the date for the European Parliamentary Election and the next scheduled meeting date of the Strategy and Resources Committee, May's meeting has been postponed until 13 June 2019.

**CL.062      PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

**CL.063      RECOMMENDATION FROM STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 7 MARCH 2019****Options for Providing Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households in the Stroud District**

Councillor Townley, Chair of Housing Committee outlined the above report which had been discussed at length at Housing Committee. At Strategy and Resources Committee it was also discussed, together with additional financial information. If the sale were to go ahead it would provide temporary accommodation to homeless persons and applicants who were being investigated.

Councillor Townley answered Members' questions.

Councillor Pickering seconded the Motion, reiterating the options and that the proposal was the subject of a business case. The figure of £500k was an estimate.

Members debated the topic. Councillor Townley clarified that if the project did not go ahead discussions would take place at Housing Committee.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED That delegated authority is granted to the Head of Property Services in consultation with the Head of Finance and Chairs of Housing and Strategy and Resources Committee:**

- 1. To purchase the former Salvation Army building in Stroud utilising the General Fund; and**

2. To commission the conversion of this property into temporary accommodation; and
3. To commission the management of the completed property as temporary accommodation for homeless households.

Subject to a satisfactory business case being made and due diligence being undertaken.

#### **CL.064 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

Councillor Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee referred to the above report and stated that this report was to ensure that a capital budget was in place for the purchase of temporary accommodation, at an estimated cost of £500k.

Councillor Hurst suggested an amendment by adding the words “and renovation” after the word “purchase” to the decision box.

Councillor Townley confirmed that costs for providing temporary accommodation had been increasing steadily since 2014 and neighbouring Councils were in a similar position.

Councillor Pickering seconded Councillor Hurst’s amendment. On being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

Members voted on the substantive Motion which was also carried.

**RESOLVED To approve a £500k budget for the purchase and renovation of temporary accommodation.**

#### **CL.065 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 11 APRIL 2019**

##### **(a) Support for the Foundation of Avon Mutual**

In outlining the above report Councillor Cornell referred to the Members’ Information Evening where the topic was discussed and questions answered. For clarification the funding would be grant funding from the business rates reserve. The bank would support the local economy, local businesses and align with the Council’s priorities.

Councillor Whiteside seconded the Motion and in summing up acknowledged that there was a risk but this was an important opportunity.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED 1. To approve the use of £50k of the Business Rates Reserve for purchase of shares in Avon Mutual.**  
**2. To delegate authority to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Head of Legal to conclude the share purchase.**

##### **(b) Repairs and Maintenance Service 2020**

Councillor Townley outlined the above report confirming that the option to bring the day to day repairs in-house had been agreed by the Housing Committee. The planned maintenance would remain with an external contractor.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Kay.

Councillor Townley confirmed that figures were based on the current take up and demand may increase. A considerable amount of resources were currently spent on managing contractors. Budgets and performance would be closely monitored.

A few Members suggested that the project had been rushed and not thought through enough and a risk management plan had not been undertaken. Councillor Townley referred to the detailed appraisal which formed part of the papers to the Housing Committee.

Councillor Ross confirmed that the report had been discussed at length at Housing Committee and stated it was not always about money; it was about a better service for our tenants. A risk assessment had been carried out by the report author and could be monitored through excelsis, it was time to bring this service in-house.

Councillor Kay confirmed that there were problems with the current system and this would improve the quality and reliability of works carried out.

A briefing session had been provided for Members by the consultant.

Councillor Townley summed up. On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED To approve an additional revenue budget of £53k in 2019/20 and £132k in 2020/21 to cover the one-off implementation and set-up costs, and a new capital programme for HRA IT systems totalling £175k over 2019/20 and 2020/21.**

**(c) Recommendations of the Constitution Working Group (CWG)**

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer outlined the above report. The three topics that the Working Group were asked to look at had been completed.

Councillor Kay stated that he had put forward other topics which had not been actioned. The Monitoring Officer stated that the CWG had to work to the remit set by the Strategy and Resources Committee as set out in the report. After discussion it was agreed that Councillor Kay would supply the Monitoring Officer with his letter to the previous Monitoring Officer.

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer confirmed that topics may well come forward as a result of the recent Peer Review, but at the moment he was unable to say what this could be. It was apparent that the Working Group would have more work to do in the new civic year.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy, in the absence of Councillor Pearson, who had Chaired the Working Group, confirmed that they had discharged their duty.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED That the Role Profiles for Councillors section of the Council's Constitution be amended as shown in the Appendix to this Report, in accordance with the recommendations set out in this report.**

**CL.066**      **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

**RESOLVED** To note the following appointments:-

1. **Community Services and Licensing Committee - Councillor Tipper filled the vacancy.**
2. **Housing Committee – Councillor Skinner was replaced by Councillor Green and Councillor Dewey was replaced by Councillor Pickering.**
3. **Environment Committee – Councillors Haydn Jones and Mossman replaced Councillors Skinner and Tipper.**
4. **Audit and Standards Committee – Councillor Binns filled the vacancy.**

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer left the Chamber.

**CL.067**      **DESIGNATION OF MONITORING OFFICER**

The Chief Executive explained that Patrick Arran had been appointed through One Legal and was not an employee of the Council. It was not a requirement for the Monitoring Officer to be an employee of the Council. Patrick had a huge amount of experience and whilst here would be carrying out a review of Legal Services.

The report was moved by Councillor Powell and seconded by Councillor Townley.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council had to have three statutory officers, the Chief Executive, the 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED** To designate Patrick Arran as Monitoring Officer until 26 September 2019.

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer returned to the Chamber.

**CL.068**      **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

**CL.069**      **MOTION REGARDING THE MODERN SLAVERY CHARTER**

Councillor Cornell outlined the Motion regarding the Modern Slavery Charter and also referenced the 10 action points, more information on these was available on line. Members were requested to raise their awareness and lend their support.

Councillor Kay had seconded the Motion and also spoke in support of the Charter.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED** This Council notes:

**Though slavery was abolished in the UK in 1833, there are more slaves today than ever before in human history. Figures from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) suggest that there are more than 40 million people in modern slavery across the world, with nearly 25 million held in forced labour.**

**There were 3805 victims of modern slavery identified in the UK in 2016. In 2017 the Home Office suggested that there may be at least 13,000 people living in Modern Slavery, however National Crime Agency officials have since asserted that it is far more likely to be in the tens of thousands.**

**Modern Slavery is happening nationwide. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. This can include sexual and criminal exploitation.**

**That in Gloucestershire, important work is already being done by the Gloucestershire Anti-Slavery Partnership which was founded in 2016 and brings together local authorities including Stroud District Council, the police, NGOs and other organisations, in a concerted effort to tackle trafficking and slavery across Gloucestershire.**

**This Council believes:**

**That action needs to be taken to raise awareness of modern slavery and the fact that it is happening all over the UK.**

**That the current support for victims is not sufficient and needs to go beyond the 45 days they are currently given by the government.**

**That councils have an important role to play in ensuring their contracts and supplies don't contribute to modern day slavery and exploitation.**

**This Council resolves:**

**To adopt the Co-operative Party's Charter against Modern Slavery to ensure our procurement practices don't support slavery.**

**Stroud District Council will:**

- 1. Train its corporate procurement team to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.**
- 2. Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.**
- 3. Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.**
- 4. Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.**
- 5. Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.**
- 6. Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.**
- 7. Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.**

8. **Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.**
9. **Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.**
10. **Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.**

**CL.070      MOTION REGARDING THE RIGHT TO WORK FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM**

Councillor Butcher outlined the Motion on the Right to Work for People Seeking Asylum. Security checks are carried out on all asylum seekers. Individuals whilst awaiting for their status to be changed want the opportunity to integrate into communities and to work.

Members asked questions which were answered by the Councillors Butcher and Braun.

In summing up Councillor Butcher stated we should do all we can to welcome asylum seekers.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED This Council notes that:**

1. **Since 2002, people seeking asylum have only been able to apply for the right to work after they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over a year, and only if they can be employed into one of the narrow, highly-skilled professions included on the Government's Shortage Occupation List;**
2. **Asylum decisions are getting slower with over half (53%) of asylum decisions taking more than 6 months in 2017. This situation is getting worse: it was 41% at the end of 2016 and 20% at the end of 2015. People seeking asylum are left to live on a government stipend of £5.39 per day, struggling to support themselves and their families, and left vulnerable to destitution, isolation, and exploitation;**
3. **This issue affects people in our District and County. The organisation Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS) is currently working with over 900 people in the county, who are asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors and refugees. At any one time, they support around 150 asylum seekers who are not allowed to work. Across the country, the UK spends between £70 and £100 million per year housing and supporting asylum seekers who could be working, earning, and fending for themselves;**
4. **This Council further notes the work of the Lift the Ban Coalition, which includes more than 150 organisations from across the UK who have come together to call on the Government to give people seeking asylum the right to work.**

**This Council believes that:**

1. **People seeking asylum who are unable to work are unable to properly integrate with their local area, can't get to know their neighbours, and find it more difficult to learn English;**

- 2. Restrictions on the right to work can lead to extremely poor mental health outcomes, and a waste of potentially invaluable talents and skills both for the economy of Stroud District and the UK; and**
- 3. We are right to campaign for people seeking asylum to be given the right to work unconstrained by the Shortage Occupation List after they have waited three months for a decision on their initial asylum claim.**

**This Council resolves to:**

- 1. To join the Lift the Ban Coalition.**
- 2. To call on the UK Government to change the law to give people seeking asylum the ability to seek work under the conditions outlined above.**
- 3. To seek to ensure appropriate provision to support asylum seekers in Stroud District, including promotion of education and training to enable them to better integrate into the District and play an active role in the success of the local economy.**

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

Chair