



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

Tel: (01453) 754 351/754 321

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To all Members of Stroud District Council

09 December 2020

You are hereby summoned to attend a remote meeting of **STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL** on **THURSDAY 17 DECEMBER 2020 at 7.00 pm.**

Kathy O'Leary
Chief Executive

This is a remote meeting in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Venue

This meeting will be conducted using Zoom and a separate invitation with the link to access the meeting will be sent to Members, relevant officers and members of the public who have submitted a question.

Public Access

Members of the public, who have not submitted a question, are invited to access the meeting streamed live via Stroud District Council's [YouTube channel](#).

Recording of Proceedings

A recording of the meeting will be published onto the Council's website (www.stroud.gov.uk). The whole of the meeting will be recorded except where there are confidential or exempt items, which may need to be considered in the absence of press and public.

A G E N D A

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive declarations of interest.
- 3 **MINUTES**
To approve the Minutes of the Council's meeting held on 22 October 2020
- 4 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
To receive announcements from the Chair of Council.

5 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chairs of Committees will answer questions from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS

Noon on Monday, 14 December 2020

Questions must be submitted to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud and can be sent by email to democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

6 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

Housing Committee – 8 December 2020

The relevant Committee reports are available on the Committee's website page for this Council meeting.

The Chair of Housing Committee will present these items.

6a **COUNCIL HOUSING – HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION (Agenda Item 8 – 9 December 2020)**

To put recommendations from Housing Committee to Council for consideration and, if appropriate, approval.

7 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

See Agenda Item 5 for deadline for submission.

8 **MOTIONS**

8a **Motion regarding Supporting Universal Basic Income is proposed by Councillor Catherine Braun and Seconded by Councillor Trevor Hall**

A Universal Basic Income is a non-means-tested sum paid by the state to cover the basic cost of living, which is paid to all citizens individually, regardless of employment status, wealth, or marital status, which has been widely debated in recent months. Advocates argue it is the fairest, most effective way to mitigate the effects of coronavirus on people's incomes. A network of Universal Basic Income Labs has been set up and works with local authorities across the UK developing UBI proposals to address problems such as poverty, inequality, discrimination and environmental damage, long-term and immediately, in relation to coronavirus.

This Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the leader of the party in Government, their counterparts in all opposition political parties in parliament, our local MPs, and to Gloucestershire County Council to express the following:

- 1) That the current benefit system is failing citizens, with Universal Credit causing hardship to many communities in Stroud District;
- 2) There is a danger of increasing numbers of people facing poverty as a result of the coronavirus crisis;
- 3) Testing a UBI is needed, as a UBI has the potential to help address key challenges such as inequality, poverty, precarious employment, loss of community, and breach of planetary boundaries through:

- i) Giving employers a more flexible workforce whilst giving employees greater freedom to change their jobs;
 - ii) Valuing unpaid work, such as caring for family members and voluntary work;
 - iii) Removing the negative impacts of benefit sanctions and conditionality;
 - iv) Giving people more equal resources within the family, workplace and society;
 - v) Breaking the link between work and consumption, thus helping reduce strain on the environment; and
 - vi) Enabling greater opportunities for people to work in community and cultural activities or to train or reskill in areas that will be needed to transition to a lower-carbon economy.
- 4) The success of a UBI pilot should not be measured only by impact upon take-up of paid work, but also the impact upon communities and what the people within them do, how they feel, and how they relate to others and the environment around them; and
 - 5) Given its history of social innovation, wealth of expertise, and active networks across community, business and public services, Stroud District is ideally placed to pilot a UBI.

8b Motion regarding Food Poverty is proposed by Councillor Steve Lydon and Seconded by Councillor Simon Pickering

This Council notes:

1. That Trussell Trust research shows 3m children are at risk of hunger during school holidays.
2. Foodbank use has dramatically increased, the Independent Food Aid Network recorded a 59% increase in demand for emergency food support between February and March.
3. That the government has committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 “To End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture “. The first target under Goal 2 being – “By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round”
4. In the UK WRAP estimate 9.6 million tonnes of food is wasted of which 4.5 million tonnes of that is edible food - products that could have been eaten. Unless treated safely this food waste has the potential to generate 25m t of Greenhouse gasses
5. The COVID – 19 pandemic has highlighted the risk of long supply chains on both the supply and cost of food

This Council believes:

6. No one in the UK should go hungry, not least the vulnerable, elderly and children. Food justice is about taking action on the causes of hunger such as affordability and availability of good nutritious food.
7. Local Councils, local businesses and communities have played and continue to play a key role during the COVID -19 pandemic and that should be recognised.

This Council resolves to:

8. Appoint food justice champions who will work with partners to tackle food justice locally and make a local contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2.
9. That the food justice champions will work with partners to set up a food partnership and to develop a food action plan to address the causes of food poverty and promote food justice

References

WRAP January 2020 - <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Food-surplus-and-waste-in-the-UK-key-facts-Jan-2020.pdf>

United Nations - <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

GfirstLEP Recovery Plan July 2020



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COUNCIL MEETING

22 October 2020

7.00 pm – 10.00 pm

Remote Meeting

Minutes

Membership

Gary Powell (Chair)

Steve Robinson (Vice-Chair)

Martin Baxendale

Dorcas Binns

Catherine Braun

Chris Brine

Miranda Clifton

Nigel Cooper

Doina Cornell

Gordon Craig

Rachel Curley

Stephen Davies

Paul Denney

Jim Dewey

Jonathan Edmunds

Chas Fellows

Colin Fryer

P = Present A = Absent

A	Lindsey Green	P	Nigel Prenter	P
P	Trevor Hall	P	Skeena Rathor	P
P	Nick Hurst	P	Sue Reed	P
P	George James	P	Mark Reeves	P
P	Julie Job	P	Mattie Ross	P
P	Haydn Jones	P	Tom Skinner	P
P	John Jones	P	Nigel Studdert-Kennedy	P
P	Norman Kay	P	Haydn Sutton	P
P	Darren Loftus	A	Brian Tipper	P
P	Stephen Lydon	P	Jessica Tomblin	P
P	John Marjoram	A	Chas Townley	P
P	Karen McKeown	P	Ken Tucker	P
P	Jenny Miles	P	Martin Whiteside	P
P	Dave Mossman	P	Tim Williams	P
P	Gill Oxley	P	Tom Williams	P
P	Keith Pearson	A	Debbie Young	P
P	Simon Pickering	P		

Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive

Strategic Director of Resources

Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring
Officer

Strategic Director of Change & Transformation

Canal Manager

Strategic Director of Place

Head of Community Services

Democratic Services & Elections Officer

Senior Democratic Services & Elections Officer

CL.023

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Powell and Pearson, Marjoram and Loftus.

The Chair agreed a change to the order of the Agenda, the Committee agreed to take Agenda Item 12 after Agenda Item 9.

CL.024 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

CL.025 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED **That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2020 and 7 September 2020 are approved as a correct record.**

CL.026 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A minute silence was held for Dennis Collins who was previously the Council's Chief Executive before retiring in the late 1980's and John Stephenson-Oliver was appointed Leader of the Council in 2001.

The Chair also announced that two additional reports had been added to the Agenda, Items 7d and 12. Whilst the item 'Referrals from Committees' was on the agenda, Item 7d) was not specifically mentioned on the original published agenda. The Chair confirmed that the Monitoring Officer was happy that the summons had included the item and the report had also been in the public domain for some time. The Chair advised that he had accepted Item 12 due to its urgency, in line with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the special circumstances are that a decision has to be made to accept the grant by the 30 of October 2020.

The Leader provided reassurance that Group Leaders, Officers and the Chief Executive were working together and with partners to ensure that communications regarding Covid-19 were reaching local residents and businesses. The Leader also paid tribute to all who had contributed to the success of the Canal which has led to The National Lottery Heritage Fund's decision to approve the grant.

The Canal Manager gave a presentation which outlined the achievements of the Canal Project and the next steps. It was also confirmed that the National Lottery Heritage Fund had awarded £8.94million to the project, the Canal Manager thanked everyone for the ongoing support that had been provided.

CL.027 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

CL.028 **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Chair announced the following changes to Committee memberships:-

- Police and Crime Panel - Councillor Ross is to be replaced by Councillor Brine.
- Strategy and Resources Committee – Councillor Steve Robinson is to be replaced by Councillor Rachel Curley.
- Development Control Committee – Councillor John Marjoram is to be replaced by Councillor Norman Kay.
- Audit and Standards Committee – Councillor Rachel Curley is to be replaced by Councillor Colin Fryer.

RESOLVED **The above Committee changes were noted.**

CL.029 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES****Audit and Standards Committee - 25 August 2020 and 6 October 2020**a. Proposed Amendments to the Code of Conduct for Members and the Arrangements under which Allegations can be Investigated

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy, Chair of Audit and Standards Committee, introduced the report that had been taken to Audit and Standards Committee in August, following this Committee the Monitoring Officer was instructed to make further amendments which were again considered by the Audit and Standards Committee in October and were now being recommended for Adoption by Council.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy advised that the Council had a legal duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members of the authority and that the Code of Conduct applied to all Members of the Council whilst acting in their official capacity as a Councillor, he drew the Members attention to Page 16 onwards which contained further information. Councillor Studdert-Kennedy also recommended the guidance to all Local Councillors.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy continued by introducing the arrangements of dealing with complaints in District, Town and Parish Councillors. It was advised that all Councillors should read from Page 25 onwards however Councillor Studdert-Kennedy outlined the following:

- The Monitoring Officer would usually appoint a deputy to act when he/she is not available
- The Council appoints independent persons from outside the Council to assist the Monitoring Officer and Standards Panel in dealing with Complaints
- The current appointed independent persons were John Acton and Phyllida Pyper
- No Member or Officer of Stroud District Council or any Parish/Town Council will participate in stage of the arrangements if he/she has or may have any conflict of interest in the matter.

Upon the vote the Motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED To adopt the amended Code of Conduct and Arrangement for investigation alleged breaches of the Code with immediate effect.

Audit and Standards Committee - 6 October 2020b. Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement and Strategy 2020-2023

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy, Chair of Audit and Standards Committee, introduced the above report and advised that the Covid-19 pandemic had had an impact and local authorities had seen a rise in fraud activity in certain areas. The Strategy was based on 5 key themes which were set out on pages 49 and 50, however it was advised that the policy should be read in full.

Upon the vote the Motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED To approve the Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement and Strategy (including Anti Bribery Policy and Anti Money Laundering Policy) 2020-2023 as recommended by the Audit and Standards Committee.

Community Services and Licensing Committee - 1 October 2020c. Adoption of Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy

Councillor Brine, Chair of Community Services and Licensing Committee, introduced the report and advised that the policy had to be reviewed every 5 years, consultation had been carried out and a working group had been set up to look at the policy before its recommendation from the Community Services and Licensing Committee.

Councillor Braun stated that she was really pleased to see in the Statement of Licensing Policy that the Town and Parish councils were noting the importance of reducing single use plastics.

Councillor Jones thanked the Licensing team for all of their hard work producing the revised policy.

Upon the vote the Motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED To Adopt the Final Statement of Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003 (Appendix A).

Strategy and Resources Committee - 8 October 2020d. Budget Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25

Councillor Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee, introduced the Budget Strategy report and drew the Members attention to the following areas:

- Confirmation of the 4th Tranche of support for Local Government of £100,000 for use in the response to Covid-19
- The difficulties of making 4 year financial plans during the current pandemic
- Appendix C sets out the estimated financial losses due to Covid-19 impact
- It was announced that the planned 3 year spending review had been cancelled so there would only be a 1-year settlement for local government. This therefore meant that some of the assumptions in the report would be subject to change.
- With regards the Business Rates Pooling Agreement, S151 Officers across the County have consulted external experts on the risks surrounding continuing with the Pool. They are suggesting that we submit a request to government to form a Pool but with the option to withdraw after the local government settlement if the situation at that time is not favourable.

Councillor Townley asked for clarification on the 4th tranche of support for Local Governments. The Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that the criteria used to work out how much each council received is based on a combination of population and deprivation data and comparisons to the funding received in the first 3 tranches.

Councillor Braun asked a question regarding paragraphs 5.6 and 5.10 and retrofitting the HRA properties to meet the Carbon Neutral 2030 commitments. Councillor Cornell advised that work was ongoing regarding retrofitting and the Council had engaged with the One Public Estate Team.

Upon the vote the Motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

- a. To approve the Budget Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25 as set out in this report and appendices**
- b. To continue with the Business Rates pooling agreement, subject to the recommendation of the Section151 Officer Group**

As recommended by Strategy and Resources Committee.

CL.033 **APPOINTMENT TO THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

Councillor Cornell, The Leader, introduced the above report and advised that in January 2020 the Council appointed 4 members to the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), which is shared with Gloucester City Council. Two members of the IRP have since had to step down and an application has been received from Chris Markley, it is now recommended that he is appointed to the IRP. Councillor Cornell also advised that the IRP were interested in Members views on the impact of remote working on Councillors.

Upon the vote the Motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED **To appoint Mr Chris Markley to the Independent Remuneration Panel for three years.**

CL.034 **CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the above report and advised the amendments made to the Scheme of Delegation were to reflect the new Senior Management Structure and the move of Legal Services to One Legal as of the 1 October 2020.

Councillor Kay asked to what extent Officers took delegated decisions in consultation with the relevant Committee Chair and Vice-Chair. The Monitoring Officer advised that this would be dependent on the decision but anything of gravity or matters arising from a Council report would be in consultation with the Chair.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy asked for clarification on the location of the Common Seal of the Council. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the delegation to seal documents was now with One Legal under the S101 agreement.

Upon the vote the Motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED **To adopt the amended Scheme of Delegation and any consequential changes to rules of procedure arising from the new Scheme.**

CL.034 **GREEN HOMES GRANT – LOCAL AUTHORITY DELIVERY SCHEME BID**

Councillor Cornell, Leader of Council, presented the report and provided background on the Warm and Well Partnership. It was stated that an analysis was carried out in 2019 on health and housing data which identified a significant issue within the Warm & Well area with those with chronic health problems occupying poorly insulated and heated Park Homes. Park Homes, due to their nature, had usually been ineligible for other Government energy efficiency programmes. A pilot scheme had been carried out where 90 park homes were insulated in the Stroud District. A bid had been submitted for the Green Homes Grant: Local Authority Delivery Scheme and confirmation that the bid was successful was received on the 1 October 2020, the offer must be formally accepted by the 30 October 2020.

Councillor Cornell requested that the Committee accept a 'friendly amendment' to the recommendation in the report by adding paragraph c. in the decision box to read 'Progress on the Grant is to be reported to Housing Committee'.

Councillor Townley advised that he had visited the pilot scheme and had seen how it had had an impact on people's quality of life however asked how we would get further funding so that work could be completed on more properties. Councillor Cornell advised that there was an ongoing process of applying for any funding that arises and that hopefully there would be more funding coming forward. The Housing Renewal Manager advised that it was part of the Warm and Well remit to take advantage of any funding opportunities that arise, she also stated that they were also in conversation with the South West Energy Hub.

Councillor Hurst asked a question regarding longevity and whether the investment in air source heat pumps would have sufficient payback time. The Housing Renewal Manager advised that it would mainly be non park homes that would be allocated an air source heat pump and that many of the park home sites were within gas areas.

It was confirmed that as no objections had been raised the amendment proposed by Councillor Cornell to add section C. to the decision box had been agreed.

The Members debated the topic at length.

Upon the vote the Motion was unanimously carried.

- RESOLVED**
- a. Authorise the Chief Executive to sign the Memorandum of Understanding and accompanying documentation in relation to the Green Homes Grant: Local Authority Delivery Grant Determination Notice at appendix B and take all necessary steps to arrange for delivery of the objectives
 - b. Add the Green Homes Programme to the Capital Programme, fully funded by the Grant.
 - c. That progress on the Grant is reported back to the Housing Committee.

The Chair proposed a short adjournment to the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9.16pm and reconvened at 9.24pm.

CL.035 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Members' Questions were submitted by Councillor Davies. They were answered by the Chair of Housing Committee, Councillor Ross. Supplementary questions were also answered. ([Refer to the recording of the meeting](#)).

CL.036 MOTION

A Motion regarding making the Stroud District Council more diverse and representative of the residents of our District was proposed by Councillor Whiteside and seconded by Councillor James. Councillor Whiteside advised that the purpose of the Motion was to take a step towards making Stroud District Councillors more representative and diverse with currently 70% of Members identifying as male and approximately 65-70% over the age of 60. Councillor Whiteside advised that due to the current issues the population faced including systemic racism, impact of Coronavirus on different population groups and climate change a truly diverse and representative council was important. He also advised that they would need the governments permission to carry out the following:

- Trial a more proportional voting system
- Enable elected Councillors to job share
- Enable 16 year olds and above to vote in local elections.

Councillor Whiteside advised that he was not proposing a voting system as this would be for discussion should the Government give permission for the Council to trial a different system. It was also stated that job sharing would allow more diversity and help to enable parents to both work and care for their children.

Councillor Davies advised that the Motion was requesting changes that we did not have authority to carry out and he would be abstaining due to the unsuitable use of Member and Officer time.

Councillor Townley asked whether this should be discussed with the Local Government Association (LGA) to look at in more detail and to help build more consensus within Local Authorities. Councillor Whiteside advised that the Motion would enable the Council to take a position and they could also write a letter to the LGA.

Councillor Cornell stated that she wasn't aware of evidence that supported job sharing increasing diversity and that Multi-Member Wards already allowed some job share arrangements. It was also stated that the government should be concentrating on Covid recovery and Officers shouldn't be allocated additional work to bring in an additional voting system.

Councillor Pickering urged all Members to support the Motion and request that the government allow the changes to be implemented.

Councillor James, in summing up, advised that the voting system currently in place weakens democracy. He gave the following examples

- In Lewisham Labour won 52% of the vote and 100% of the seats
- In East Hertfordshire Conservatives won 49% of the vote and 100% of the seats
- In Kingston upon Hull Liberal Democrats won 43% of the vote and were given 9 seats whereas Labour won 40% of the vote and were given 10 seats.

Upon the vote the Motion was not carried by 15 votes for, 13 against and 11 abstentions.

RESOLVED

To note that:

- 1. No system of election is perfectly fair, but it is our wish to make those elected to the District Council as representative of the residents' wishes and demographics as is reasonably possible. The Council considers that a more representative and diverse Council can make better decisions and increase the level of ownership of those decisions by our residents.**
- 2. The electoral system used for local elections in England and Wales, First Past the Post (FPTP), is not a fair system, because it means that votes do not have equal weight and many votes are wasted. This can lead to voter apathy and a feeling of disconnection from local democracy. In Stroud District in 2016 we had a number of 3 member wards in which only 41-43% of votes were cast for candidates of a party resulting in all 3 councillors for that party being elected. In effect 57-59% of the electorate's votes didn't count.**
- 3. An alternative to FPTP is a system of proportional representation (PR), where votes cast for parties translate more proportionately into seats won. There are many variants of PR; the Single Transferable Vote system (STV) variant of PR is already in use for local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland. With this system, voters rank candidates and those who receive the most backing (including second and subsequent preference votes) are elected to serve. The introduction of PR for local elections in Scotland has led to an increase in voter turnout.**

4. Council also recognises that in age, gender and in other protected characteristics the members do not adequately reflect the demographic of our Stroud District Council Agenda Published on 14 October 2020 22 October 2020 residents. Although not guaranteed, a more proportional system like STV may provide a means for improving this that we as a Council could try.
5. Changes in the voting system do not preclude the Council and political parties also using other positive actions to increase diversity of representation that do not require permission from central Government.
6. An additional barrier to a more diverse member make-up is the time commitment required to be an elected councillor. Job sharing is already an established practice in many spheres of professional life. The opportunity to job-share the councillor role might enable younger people, people working inflexible hours and people with caring commitments (often women) to take on this role. It could also increase the range of skills delivered by councillors. Job sharing councillors would only have one vote in a committee between them and share one councillor allowance.
7. Stroud District Council has already passed a motion in favour of votes at 16 years old.
8. This motion does not preclude a more proportional system of election being requested for Town and Parish Councils, but it seems fair to leave them to make the case for what is appropriate to them.

This council therefore requests the Chief Executive to write to Her Majesty's Government to request changes to legislation that would permit Stroud District Council to take steps to increase its diversity and representativeness by:

- (a) Allowing the Council to trial a more proportional voting system in District Council elections;
- (b) Allowing job sharing of the elected councillor role;
- (c) Allowing those aged 16 and over to vote in local elections

The meeting closed at 10:00 pm.

Chair

COUNCIL

17 DECEMBER 2020

6a

Report Title	RECOMMENDATION FROM HOUSING COMMITTEE – HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION			
Purpose of Report	To put recommendations from Housing Committee to Council for consideration and, if appropriate, approval.			
Decision(s)	The Council RESOLVES to approve an additional budget of £260,000 in 2020/21 to allow Tenant Services to invest in a single integrated housing management system encompassing the whole housing and repairs functions, as well as better integration with the wider Council, as recommended by Housing Committee.			
Consultation and Feedback	Please refer to the original Committee report available here			
Report Author	Sara J Weaver, Income & Systems Manger Tel: 01453 766321 Email: sara.weaver@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	The Council may accept the recommendation, amend the recommendation, or decide not to accept the recommendation.			
Background Papers	n/a			
Appendices	Appendix A – Housing Management System Business Case			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

1. On the 8th December, Housing Committee considered a report which related to the procurement of an integrated Housing Management System (HMS). The full report can be viewed [here](#).
2. Housing Committee approved the recommendation to procure a new HMS and resolved to recommend that Council approves an additional revenue budget of £260,000 in 2020/21 to allow the Council to invest in a single integrated system encompassing the whole housing and repairs functions, as well as better integration with the wider Council.
3. There have been longstanding concerns with the current Housing and Repairs IT Systems and their ability to support the needs of the Council, our tenants, and our communities, and it is clear that the current situation cannot continue. Investing in a new HMS will address the current risks and issues and see benefits and efficiencies achieved for the Council, allowing us to deliver improved customer services.
4. The main housing system in use by the Council was procured 20 years ago. Since then, the needs of the service and of our tenants and communities have changed, as has the technology available to meet those needs; therefore, investing in a HMS is crucial to future-proofing the Council's housing service. The need for a single, modern, integrated HMS has become even more apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. In April 2019, £175,000 towards essential repairs systems improvements was approved by Council as part of the project to move the repairs service in-house. Housing Committee recommends that Council approves an additional £260,000 to allow the Council to move forward with the procurement of a single integrated HMS.

6. **Financial implications**

The report sets out a requested increase in capital budget of £260k for a new Housing Management System, that would be added to the existing approved budget of £175k.

This initial capital outlay could be funded from the Major Repairs Reserve. This would have no impact on the financial position of the HRA in the short term, but would offset funds that are set aside for other capital projects within the HRA.

There are identified revenue savings of £15k from the ongoing annual software costs which would help repay this balance, along with staffing efficiencies that would help improve the service offer within the HRA by freeing up officer time.

Lucy Clothier, Accountancy Manager, Email: lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk

7. **Legal implications**

The procurement of the integrated Housing Management System will need to be in accordance with the Council's Contract and Procurement Rules as set out in the Council's constitution.

One Legal

Tel: 01684 272691 Email: patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk

8. **Equality implications**

There are no specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

However, it is noted that any new HMS procured should allow the Council to monitor tenants' protective characteristics, particularly disability, so we can meet their specific needs as required.

9. **Environmental implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.