



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

3 December 2020

7.00 pm – 10.28 pm

Remote Meeting

Minutes

3

Membership

Councillor Simon Pickering (Chair)

Councillor George James (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Chas Townley

Councillor Paul Denney

Councillor Trevor Hall

Councillor Nick Hurst

P = Present

A = Absent

P	Councillor Haydn Jones	P
P	Councillor Norman Kay	P
P	Councillor Skeena Rathor	P
P	Councillor Haydn Sutton	P
P	Councillor Jessica Tomblin	A
P	Councillor Tim Williams	P

Officers in Attendance

Strategic Director of Place

Senior CN2030 Officer

Principal Planning Officer

Housing Strategy and CIL Manager

Senior Community Infrastructure Officer

Head of Community Services

Community Services Manager

Accountant

Democratic Services & Elections Officers

Other Member(s) in Attendance

Councillor Doina Cornell and Jim Dewey

Others in Attendance

Beth Boughton, Managing Director, UBICO

EC.024

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tomblin.

EC.025

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

EC.026**MINUTES****RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 3 September 2020 and 15 October 2020 are approved as a correct record.

EC.027**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

EC.028**UBICO PRESENTATION**

Beth Boughton, Managing Director of UBICO, delivered a presentation on the Business Plan for 2021/2022. The presentation highlighted that UBICO had seven shareholder councils who all had an equal vote on the operation of the business. Business Plan themes were being developed and the Member councils would have an opportunity to give feedback in February with the aim of the plan being approved in May 2021. The key elements being developed in the plan were; people, operation, climate and the business landscape.

UBICO has 650 employees and there was a strong focus on training and development with: the launch of the UBICO training academy, ideas to develop an on-line platform for employees to provide feedback and development of apprenticeships.

To support the targets of carbon reduction, 'driving excellence' had been identified and new fleet vehicles would be fitted with the technology to record driving skills which would be used to improve driving standards in area such as speed, braking and cornering. Options for the purchase of electric vehicles were being researched. Councillor Paul Denney informed the Committee that he had seen an electric refuse vehicle working and was pleased to note that the vehicle had been supplied by a company in Cam.

The Chair thanked Beth Boughton for the presentation and extended thanks and appreciation to all the employees at UBICO, particularly for keeping the service operating during the current pandemic.

EC.029**STROUD DISTRICT 2030 STRATEGY - LIMITING, ADAPTING, RECOVERING AND RESPONDING IN A CHANGING CLIMATE**

The Senior CN2030 Officer introduced the report. Members were informed that a period of public consultation was being undertaken and that the report would be presented to Council in the Spring of 2021. The strategy had seven themes and twenty-one targets. The report identified that the most significant area of annual emissions in the district was the built environment and its energy use. It was highlighted that a clear implication of the 2030 ambition was how the Council managed its buildings including housing stock.

Councillor Townley commented on the Councils' housing stock and the need to retrofit homes to meet the 2030 target and suggested that this would need to be a key priority.

Councillor Hurst stated that he fully supported the climate reduction aims but expressed concern about the impact of outside factors and the relatively small contribution of the District Council in a global context. Additionally, he raised the question relating to the statement in the report 'we will do everything within our power' and asked what remit that implies in terms of cost balanced with effectiveness. The CN2030 Officer replied

that a holistic approach across the whole Council was required and that the Council would use its sphere of influence across the district, working in conjunction with the private sector to become an exemplar Council, with the strategy setting out how the responsibility would be shared.

Councillor Rathor stated that a massive cultural shift was required to meet the target of 2030, which would not be good enough and that 2025 would need to be the target date. Members noted the impact that current food production and agriculture had on the environment.

The Chair drew attention to the clarification that item c) in the decision box had changed to March 2021, which would now be the date for the draft 2030 Strategy to be commended to Full Council for adoption.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried with 10 votes for and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED

- a) To endorse the draft 2030 Strategy;**
- b) To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Place and Senior Carbon Neutral 2030 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee to make any changes to the draft 2030 Strategy arising from the current engagement and consultation process; and**
- c) To commend the draft 2030 Strategy for adoption by Full Council in March 2021, incorporating any changes made as a result of the consultation and engagement process referred to in b) above.**

EC.030

SEVERN ESTUARY RECREATION & MITIGATION STRATEGY (SERaMS)

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the report which highlighted that the Severn estuary is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site for important populations of overwintering birds, and as a Special Area of Conservation. Approximately 22km of the Severn Estuary shoreline falls within the jurisdiction of Stroud District Council.

An update on the progress of the Strategy was provided since its adoption in 2017 which was devised in consultation with Natural England and other partners and outlined the requirements in the Strategy for a developer contribution for every net additional dwelling within the catchment zone. This would apply unless the developer could demonstrate to the planning authority and Natural England that they could provide alternative measures which fully mitigate or avoid the impact of the development. The cost per net dwelling stood at £385.

In response to questions the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the Council was working with neighbouring authorities and with the Forest of Dean District Council. He also confirmed that this was the first report back to Council since its adoption.

Councillor Jones referred to a document which stated the value of the Severn Estuary for migrating birds. It also noted that in this respect the area had the potential to be as important as the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge. He raised concern about some of the aims in the strategy such as dog walking and footpaths. These aims would need to be managed effectively so as not to have a detrimental impact on the nesting

birdlife. The importance of providing Wardens who could patrol and educate visitors would be a vital addition to the work of the area.

Councillor Jones proposed a formal amendment to resolution b) in the decision, to replace the previous b) (to agree an annual update to this Committee on the implementation of the SE RaMS over the previous year) and to include instead, in its place, the following resolution: b) In consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment Committee, and Officers, establish a small working group to: i. further consider the strategy and update if required to provide effective recreation mitigation, and ii. consider revised governance arrangements that are accountable, proportionate and appropriate to facilitate implementation of the approved strategy.

Councillor Hurst suggested that this amendment would tighten up accountability and that the small working group should enable detail to be resolved more simply and outside of Committee time. Councillor Townley questioned the need for the amendment, given the original resolution for an annual update to Committee, to which Councillor Jones replied advising that it was his opinion that the current systems were not fit for purpose, with the last report back on this matter not received since 2017. Potential flaws identified include that the scheme was overly influenced by potential beneficiaries, the question of where the best value of mitigation can be achieved, and a lack of accountability which may go towards explaining the recent stasis on this issue. Councillor Kay, seconder of this amendment, stressed the need to establish a structure that can encompass wider governance issues not in the remit of the advisory panel and to increase parish and district council involvement.

The proposed amendment was put to the vote and passed with unanimous support.

The Substantive Motion was then put to the vote, and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

- a) To note progress with the implementation of the SE RaMs and**
- b) In consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment Committee and Officers, establish a small working group to**
 - i. Further consider the strategy and update if required to provide effective recreation mitigation, and**
 - ii. Consider revised governance arrangements that are accountable, proportionate and appropriate to facilitate implementation of the approved strategy**

EC.031

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) – SPENDING ALLOCATIONS

The Housing Strategy and CIL Manager introduced the report which set out the proposed funding commitments under the CIL Infrastructure Levy. The Council adopted CIL in February 2017 and implemented the charge in 2017. It was noted that CIL partially replaced S106, with S106 being retained for large strategic sites.

There are two funding routes to CIL: the neighbourhood portion to parish and town Councils for local projects, and the strategic infrastructure delivery fund. Regulation 123

sets out the criteria for eligible projects under the strategic fund. All seven of the project bids put before Members met the test of the Regulation.

In response to a question from Councillor Hurst in respect of holding some investment back to allow for larger projects to come forward, the Housing Strategy and CIL Manager confirmed that the proposed CIL investment for 2021/2022 was £282,050. A sum of £136,647 would be retained to help create a larger fund over time.

Members gave their support for the projects and noted those which showed a link to creating and improving cycle networks.

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

RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE **That funding commitments are agreed according to the report.**

EC.032 **REVENUE ESTIMATES REVISED 2020/21 AND ORIGINAL 2021/22**

The Accountant introduced the report which presented the revised budget for 2020/2021 and the proposed budget for 2021/2022. Included in the proposal was £80,000 from the Waste and Recycling Reserve for the purchase of in-cab technology for UBICO vehicles. The tables within the report set out the proposed changes and noted the impact that COVID-19 has had on income to some services.

In response to Members' questions the Accountant advised that further information and data was being collated on the impact of COVID-19 on lost income and the financial support from Central Government. More detailed information of the impact for 20/21 was set out in the Budget Monitoring Report Q2 Information Report.

A question from Councillor Townley was raised about the purchase of replacement vehicles for UBICO in particular the purchase of electric vehicles. Members were informed that a five-year replacement plan had been put into place and that some of the smaller vehicles in the fleet would be the first to be replaced by electric vehicles.

At 10pm, in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Section 3: Paragraph 6) Members voted unanimously to continue with the meeting.

Councillor Townley asked a question about there being no funding in the budget for 2021/22 regards the cycling and walking plan. The Chair confirmed that Members could propose an amendment, which if supported would be a recommendation to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Townley proposed an amendment which was seconded by the Chair, to add in £200,000 to the Capital Budget for walking and cycling projects in 2021/2022. He felt that it was important to set money aside in the budget to achieve more projects for walking and cycling. Other members noted that it was difficult to deliver projects and Members would need to be clear exactly how the money would be spent. The Chair suggested that the money could be held to facilitate future projects.

The wording of the amendment was clarified with Members: d) Recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee that £200k is allocated to the walking and cycling strategy. This wording was then agreed by the Chair.

On the amendment being put to the vote, there were 4 votes for and 4 against, and there were 2 abstentions. The Chair used his casting vote to support the amendment.

The Substantive Motion was then put to the vote, and carried with 7 votes for and 3 abstentions.

- RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**
- a) **The revised Environment Committee revenue budget for 2020/21 and original 2021/22 revenue budget are approved;**
 - b) **The Fees and Charges list as shown at Appendix B is approved;**
 - c) **The use of £80k from the Waste and Recycling Reserve for the purchase of in-cab technology, and**
 - d) **That £200k is allocated to the walking and cycling strategy.**

EC.033 APPOINTMENT OF PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPRESENTATIVE

The Performance Monitoring Report had been circulated to Committee Members.

Councillor Townley was appointed as the second Performance Monitoring representative to replace Councillor Brine who had left the Committee.

EC.034 MEMBER REPORTS

- a) Planning Review Panel
The report had been circulated to Committee Members. There were no further questions.
- b) Stroud Regeneration Committee
The report had been circulated to Committee Members. There were no further questions.
- c) Performance Monitoring
Councillor Hurst asked if the items relating to a Green Burial Ground on a site could be answered by Officers. The Chair suggested that from his involvement with the Stroud Valleys Project such a proposal may be difficult.

EC.035 WORK PROGRAMME

In response to a question from Councillor Townley, the Chair suggested that the County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer is invited to the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Dewey raised a question about ash dieback and what could the Council do in response to the problem. The Chair replied that he had asked the relevant Officer to report on the ash trees on District Council Land. A bigger issue may be the trees adjacent to the highway, which would be the responsibility of the County Council. He

added that the County Council had set aside a budget of £13m over the next 10 years to address ash dieback.

EC.036

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

The meeting ended at 10.28 pm

Chair