

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

7 March 2019

7.01 pm – 9.38 pm
 Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

3

Minutes

Membership:

Councillor Doina Cornell (Chair)	P	Councillor Mattie Ross	P
Councillor Nigel Cooper	P	Councillor Tom Skinner	P
Councillor Stephen Davies	P	Councillor Chas Townley	P
Councillor Colin Fryer (Vice-Chair)	A	Councillor Ken Tucker	P
Councillor Nick Hurst	P	Councillor Martin Whiteside	P
Councillor Keith Pearson	P	Councillor Debbie Young	A
Councillor Simon Pickering	P		

P = Present

A = Absent

Officers Present:

Chief Executive	Director of Development Services
Head of Business Services Planning	Policy Implementation Manager
Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer	Head of Asset Management
Revenue and Benefits Manager	Democratic Services Officer
Principal Estates Surveyor	

Other Member(s) Present:

Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy

SRC.058

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Fryer and Young.

SRC.059

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

SRC.060

MINUTES

RESOLVED

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2019.

SRC.061

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were none received.

SRC.062**LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP)**

Mr Chakraborty provided Members with a verbal update on the work of the LEP and the Local Industrial Strategy referring to a powerpoint presentation for some points.

Mr Chakraborty advised Committee on the following areas:

- LEP Investments in the Stroud District stated that the prime objective was to drive economic growth and create new jobs.
- An update on the Growth Hub network located in County libraries and other dedicated buildings which supports all types of businesses.
- The new Inward Investment Team working on non-EU international investment for the County focusing on fibre, agri-tech, advanced engineering and manufacture and the renewables sectors.
- The Energy Strategy for the County. Hard copies of the strategy were distributed to the Committee. Mr Chakraborty encouraged the Committee to email feedback on the energy strategy.
- Local Industrial Strategy which has the aim of improving productivity.

The Committee discussed the content of the presentation.

Questions were raised on:

- The infrastructure required for the number of electric vehicles targeted in the Energy Strategy.
- Investment in commuter infrastructure.
- Organic and local co-operative development.
- The involvement of the County in road development projects.
- The involvement of the LEP in the figures provided by the JPS review.
- The timeline for the projects.

It was stated that new charging points were included in all development areas and that all new houses in the district would be required to have charging points. It was also stated that a new rail strategy was in the pipeline and that local investment would be sought as well as international. Examples of local development partners were given. It was stated that the County was still, involved in road projects. It was also stated that there was a 1:12 uplift in investment in cycle paths as opposed to a 1:1 uplift for development in roads.

SRC.063**RECOMMENDATION FROM HOUSING COMMITTEE ON
7 FEBRUARY 2019****Options for providing temporary accommodation for homeless households in the Stroud District**

Councillor Townley, Chair of Housing Committee presented referring to a report circulated prior to this meeting. The Committee debated the proposal.

Questions were raised on the level of costing information, the existence of a feasibility study for the proposal, the investment strategy and the effect on the project timescale of delays while additional information was assembled.

Officers confirmed that a full financial appraisal had been made and that the summary was in the business case that had been presented but that the detail was also available if required. It was advised that the proposal would incur the same net cost as at present, broadly speaking but this project would improve the standard of accommodation. The

gross cost would be higher, but it would attract housing benefit as a consequence of being managed by a registered provider giving a net cost equivalent to the current costs.

It was also confirmed that a feasibility study would be undertaken and the final decision on this proposal lay with Council not with the Committee.

Councillor Townley stated that further information on this proposal would be brought to the meeting on 11 April 2019. It was confirmed that this would appear on the Work Plan for that meeting.

Councillor Pickering moved an amendment, that the wording of the recommendation to Council be modified to state it would be subject to a satisfactory business case being made. Councillor Skinner seconded the Motion.

Upon the vote the Motion was carried.

RESOLVED AND RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL **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.

SRC.064

SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS UPDATE

The Head of Property Services gave a verbal update in which it was stated that all contracts had been agreed and the Subscription Rooms Trust had been admitted to the pension fund. It was also reported that there had been some water ingress to the building but that this was being dealt with.

The Committee thanked the Head of Property Services for the work that had been undertaken.

RESOLVED **To note the update.**

SRC.065

LAND AT MAY LANE/PROSPECT PLACE, DURSLEY

The Principal Estates Surveyor presented the report. The background to the project was described and a request made to approve the funds to complete a feasibility and viability study.

The Committee discussed the proposal.

Questions were raised regarding the resources to complete the study, the enhancement to the value of the site and the benefits consequent to this project, the need and basis for using compulsory powers and the funds available for an ecological study. A question on the Dursley Lions club building was raised.

It was confirmed that the Property Services Team had the resources to oversee the study, but that there was a need for specialist surveys and reports with some capacity to buy external support if required within the requested funding. It was advised that bringing all the separate parcels together would enhance the Council's lands. Officers confirmed that it would be necessary to use compulsory purchase powers to acquire the land required due to the numerous and complex land interests involved and the reluctance of some land owners to sell. The Council's Solicitor believes there to be a sound legal basis for doing this. It was stated that some ecological studies had already been carried out for a previous planning application. It was reported that the Dursley Lions had in the past refused proposals from landowners to relocate their club house.

- RESOLVED**
- 1. Allocate a £50,000 budget for technical investigations and property and procurement advisers to confirm the level of viability, the procurement approach and the extent of property to be acquired at May Lane/Prospect Place, Dursley, and**
 - 2. Instruct the Head of Property Services to return to this committee with a report on a delivery strategy for a residential led, town centre regeneration scheme at May Lane/Prospect Place, Dursley.**

SRC.066 **BUSINESS RATES PILOT PRINCIPLES OF DISTRIBUTION**

The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented referring to a report circulated prior to the meeting referring to section 3.4 for that report to give uses for the funds and section 5.4 for the decision-making process. Sections 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 of the same report were referred to the community bank, carbon reduction and the conversion of Council vehicles to either electric or hybrid power sources.

Questions were raised about the process for approval, the funds for the business case and Government guidance.

It was stated that the funds will be from the Council's reserve, the business case for use of funds will be required and that proposals would be returned to Committee in May once all districts have completed their accounts. It was further stated that the Government had not provided any guidelines and that a clear process needed to put in place.

The timeline for approvals and decisions was also discussed.

- RESOLVED** **To approve the principles and process of the allocation of the business rates pilot contained within this report.**

SRC.067 **BUSINESS RATES – RETAIL DISCOUNT**

The Revenue and Benefits Manager provided an update. The Committee discussed the types of business that would benefit from the business rate discounts and the existing levels of relief.

- RESOLVED** **To approve the Business Rates Retail Discount scheme for 2019/20 and 2020/21.**

SRC.068**WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme leading up to the next meeting in April was discussed. It was stated that there would be a further report on the temporary accommodation business case and the asset management plan at the April meeting.

SRC.069**MEMBER REPORTS**

- (a) Performance Monitoring – there was nothing to report at this meeting. A report will be given at the April meeting. Councillor Cooper stated that he would be attending the next performance monitoring meeting. It was also stated that Councillor Mossman will be replacing Councillor Craig on the Planning Development Panel.
- (b) Investment and Development Panel – This group had not met since the last meeting of the Committee, the next meeting will take place on 4 April 2019.

SRC.070**TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

- (a) ICT Working Group – The Head of Business Service Planning reported that the Infrastructure, Data and Systems Strategies were complete and that the Digital Strategy would be ready for review by the end of March. He further reported that all Council members would be consulted during the period April to May and that the first meeting of the Committee after the AGM everyone would be fully informed and there could be a recommendation for full approval and adoption at that point. The Committee discussed the issue of access to personal information.
- (b) Constitution Working Group - Councillor Pearson stated that the working group had not met since the last meeting of Committee and would provide an update at the first meeting of this Committee after the AGM.

A question was raised on member substitution. It was stated that an Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer would be looking at the work of the Constitution Working Group.

SRC.071**LEADERSHIP GLOUCESTERSHIRE UPDATE**

The Chief Executive provided a verbal report. The Vision 2050 was described including the proposition for a Severn Vale Board. The proposals for two other boards for Cheltenham and for Rural Ambition were also described. It was stated that there will be a further meeting to discuss the proposition for a Severn Vale Board.

The Committee discussed the proposal for a third Severn crossing. It was stated that there was no clear benefit to a new road bridge at this time and that the proposal for a new rail bridge had yet to be explored. Potential funding for Stroud district was discussed.

SRC.072**MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

There were none.

The meeting closed at 9.38 pm.

Chair