



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

Telephone 01453 766321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

Members Question to Council

Questions from Lindsey Green

Question 1

Stroud District Council has signed up for SOLACE - a project aimed at creating safer communities with a focus on Anti-Social Behaviour within our communities. I am glad to see that Stroud District Council have signed up for SOLACE but why was SDC the LAST Local authority to sign up?

Reply 1

The SOLACE programme, funded through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, was originally implemented exclusively in Gloucestershire's urban areas (Gloucester and Cheltenham DCs), The opportunity for a roll out to the remaining four, rural, district councils in the county came sometime later.

With the opportunity to become part of the SOLACE programme, all the rural councils reviewed the programme detail to properly understand its operational implications. Stroud District Council signed the SOLACE agreement only when this was properly completed. It was the final district to do so, approximately four weeks after the penultimate signatory.

The Community Services team has been working with SOLACE since January 2023, scoping community need, identifying officer resource and additional training requirements. Informed by this groundwork, One Legal assisted the Community Services team to adapt the SOLACE agreement to meet Stroud's needs at the beginning of June 2023.

The SOLACE team supported council officers as part of a Members' evening in June 2023, which discussed the Council's emerging approach to anti-social behaviour and explored how ASB can be tackled through a one council partnership approach.

Question 2

From Strategy and Resources meeting on Tuesday 11th July, agenda item 6, Appendix B, Point 1.5 it states that there is a significant efficiency saving for no longer handling cash deposits or using G4S.

SDC have also publicly stated that they no longer accept cheques too.

What are we doing to support the elderly and/or vulnerable who do not wish to or have the means to use bank cards for payments. How are we supporting those that have no other way to pay other than cash or cheque?

Reply 2

In April 2020 Stroud District Council stopped accepting cheques and cash due to the inability to process these payment methods during the Covid-19 lockdown. This period demonstrated that these payment methods were no longer essential for many of our residents. The ability



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

Telephone 01453 766321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

to present cheques has since been further reduced with the closure of the many bank branches across the district.

Currently most of our residents and tenants are able to pay by direct debit, using online banking, or by telephone with a debit or credit card. Anyone facing difficulty with these methods is invited to contact the Customer Services team by telephone or email. They will then be supported with finding a payment method that fits their personal circumstances.

For regular payments, such as Council Tax and housing rents, this could include the issuing of a Girobank card. This enables payment at any Post Office and can include payment by cash or cheque.

Over the two months of April and May 2023, 27 cheques were received by SDC. After contact with the Customer Services Team, 23 of these accounts were paid using one of our standard payment methods. The remaining four accounts, of which two were residents and two were for a business, were supported with their payments by the Customer Services Team. The business has already set up an alternative payment method for future payments.



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Appendix

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

Telephone 01453 766321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

Member Question to Council

Questions from Stephen Davies

Question 3

Stroud District Council servers went down on Monday 26th June. The servers have gone down before too, so what I would like to know is what back up do we have when servers go down to ensure that staff can continue to work and that residents are still able to contact SDC.

Reply

Incident

The service outage on Monday 26th June was caused by a loss of internet services to Ebley Mill due to a cable break in BT Openreach equipment 1km distance from the site. This did not cause the servers at Ebley Mill to go down, but there was service disruption.

A similar issue occurred last year, and the lessons learnt were applied to this issue which enabled a better response and significantly faster recovery.

Back-up

The Ebley Mill server room is the council's primary site for on premise IT services and the server room at Littlecombe is its secondary (Disaster Recovery) site. There are numerous perils that could result in service failures and the recovery responses are different.

If the scenario is of a main internet line into Ebley Mill failing, the officer impact is as follows:

- For officers who need to be in the Mill, a 4G router will be installed in the Council Chamber and this will allow access to the internet. On premise systems will be accessible from the Mill.
- Officers who can work from home will apply a manual reconfiguration and then be able to access the internet but not on premise systems until failover is invoked.
- Telephony calls will be received as normal in the Mill, but not for those working from home until failover is invoked.

In this same scenario, the impact for residents will be as follows:

- Residents will be able to send emails as normal and the council team will be able to view and respond to these emails when internet access is provided.
- Residents will be able to make telephone calls as normal.
- Social media platforms such as Twitter will continue to be operational.

The backup for the website is via the council's Littlecombe site

This page is intentionally left blank