



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

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

13 January 2022

7.00 - 9.19 pm

Council Chamber

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Doina Cornell (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Craig
 Councillor Stephen Davies
 Councillor Nicholas Housden
 Councillor Nick Hurst
 Councillor Martin Percy
 Councillor Chris Brine

*= Absent

Councillor Catherine Braun (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Keith Pearson
 Councillor Steve Robinson
 Councillor Mattie Ross
 Councillor Ken Tucker
 Councillor Chloe Turner

*

Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive
 Strategic Director of Resources
 Accountancy Manager
 Senior Policy and Governance Officer
 Head of Planning Strategy

Revenue & Benefits Manager
 Human Resources Manager
 HR Systems and Data Officer
 Senior Community Infrastructure Officer
 Senior Democratic Services & Elections
 Officer

SRC.051 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Brine.

SRC.052 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

SRC.053 Minutes

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021 were approved.

SRC.054 Public Question Time

There were none.

SRC.055 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - SPENDING ALLOCATIONS FOR 2022/2023

The Senior Community Infrastructure Officer introduced the report and advised that Stroud District Council had adopted CIL since 2017. It was confirmed that the types of projects that could be funded using CIL were listed in the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) available on the Councils website. The statement had been made deliberately broad to give greater scope for the Council to consider the best type of infrastructure to best meet the needs created by housing growth and the districts communities. It was further confirmed that any project approved must closely align to meet the objectives stated in the Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

The Senior Community Infrastructure Officer stated that 9 bids requesting CIL funding had been received in the current 2021/22 round and it was recommended that the Committee agree to grant funding to 4 of those bids, one of which had been a project variation of an approved scheme agreed the previous year. The Environment Committee had agreed to recommend the 4 projects for approval at Strategy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Turner, Chair of Environment Committee, further introduced the report and thanked the Senior Community Infrastructure Officer for the information briefing sessions provided for Members. They advised that the project for the Stratford Park Pool would require a small amount of money but was exciting as it would provide the potential for a longer swimming season due to the small increase in temperature of the Pool.

Councillor Pearson asked whether there was any reason as to why the North of the district was not proportionally represented in the bids or future potential bids. Councillor Turner advised that the Senior Community Infrastructure Officer did work with Parish and Town Councils to make sure they were aware of opportunities to submit bids. The Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development advised that currently there was very little growth in the northern part of the district and therefore most of the CIL infrastructure was in the centre, however this would continue to change based on where development was happening. Most of the development that had occurred in the North of the District has S106 agreements, which already provided for those needs.

Councillor Davies asked whether any more needed to be done to promote CIL. The Senior Community Infrastructure Officer advised that they had the right balance in promoting CIL whilst also trying to manage expectations. All Town and Parish Councils had been contacted with the relevant information as well as a wide range of strategic delivery organisations. They stated that Appendix B showed the millions of pounds of infrastructure that may be required over the next few years and stated that it would become increasingly difficult to prioritise funding.

Councillor Hurst raised concerns regarding 2 projects in Appendix B, the Merrywalks roundabout redesign and Brimscombe Port. The Senior Community Infrastructure Officer confirmed that Appendix B contained a list of infrastructure needs that the Council was aware of but no formal bids had yet been received. It illustrated the scope of project needs across the district, but as no project assessment had taken place the list assumes no future funding preference or priority.

Councillor Craig asked whether applications could be received all year round rather than within the current timescales. The Senior Community Infrastructure Officer stated that the majority of projects would be submitted by strategic delivery organisations and that these projects would generally be 'big ticket items' costing many tens of thousands. As such they are likely to require extensive planning prior to bids being placed therefore the bid timescales shouldn't be a problem. They also encouraged any Town or Parish Councils who were considering placing bids to speak to the CIL team so that good working relationships could be established and project advice and support could be given.

Proposed by Councillor Turner and Seconded by Councillor Ross.

Councillor Robinson stated that the County Council and Environment Agency were also putting forward money to help the Nailsworth flood prevention and drainage scheme and that it would make a huge difference to those affected by the flooding.

Councillor Braun offered her support to the proposals that were being recommended and thanked the CIL team.

The Chair, Councillor Cornell, was pleased to see funding for projects that wouldn't otherwise receive funding and drew Members attention to the recommendation for funding to Archway School for an all-weather pitch.

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

RESOLVED To note the Community Infrastructure Levy funding recommendations made by Environment Committee and agree to the individual project funding allocations according to the report below.

SRC.056 THE FAIR PAY AND SENIOR PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

The Human Resources Manager introduced the report and advised that the Council had to agree and publish the document annually in accordance with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011. The Statement must:

- Address the Council's policy on remuneration of Chief Officers.
- Provide a definition of its lowest paid employees and their remuneration.
- Make clear the relationship of pay between the lowest and highest paid employees.

At Stroud District Council the ratio between the highest and lowest paid employees was 1:10, government guidance stated that the ratio should not exceed 1:20.

The Human Resources Manager highlighted key parts of the report including:

- The apprentice pay in section 2.3 which was currently the National Minimum Wage rather than the statutory apprentice rate.
- The current levels of remuneration specified in the table on Page 3.
- There had been the most movement in terms of number of staff in the Stroud 2 and Stroud 3 grades due to the filling of vacant posts.
- There was an overall increase in the headcount and this was mainly due to the filling of vacant posts.

Proposed by Councillor Braun and Seconded by Councillor Pearson.

In the absence of any questions the Motion was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

RECOMMEND That this statement is approved.
TO COUNCIL

SRC.057 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

The Revenue and Benefits Manager outlined the above report and drew Members attention to Paragraph 4.1 which inaccurately referred to a second proposal which had been removed from the report. They confirmed that since 2013 the Council had adopted the Governments default scheme which had meant no changes or reduction in the support provided. It was also advised that the recommendation meant that the Council would continue to provide up to a maximum of 100% support protecting the most vulnerable residents in the district.

The Revenue and Benefits Manager summarised the recommended change which would stop any small monthly changes to universal credit having an impact on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. This would therefore simplify the process for both the claimant and the authority. It was advised that the approach was being adopted by some neighbouring councils.

Councillor Davies asked whether in the future a more in depth look at the scheme should be taken to consider further appropriate changes. The Revenue and Benefits Manager said that they now had software in place that would allow them to analyse the District and would hopefully allow them next year to carry out modelling.

Councillor Braun asked whether the £10 limit for changes to Universal Credit could be set higher, it was confirmed that there would be scope to increase it if necessary.

Proposed by Councillor Turner and Seconded by Councillor Robinson.

Councillor Ross stated that she was pleased that the Council still provided up to 100% support and paid tribute to the Revenue and Benefits Team for all of the grants that they managed to facilitate during the Covid Pandemic.

Councillor Davies offered his thanks to the Revenue and Benefits Team for distributing the Covid grants fairly, sensibly and rapidly.

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

RECOMMENDED That it adopts the scheme and changes for 2022/23.
TO COUNCIL

SRC.058 Budget Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2021/22

The Accountancy Manager introduced the budget monitoring report for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) covering Quarter 2 (Q2) and highlighted the following key points:

- General Fund position forecast was an overspend of 186k, this was confirmed to be a lower overspend than expected at Q1 due to a decrease in the expected loss of income.
- Additional expenditure within housing benefit due to not being fully reimbursed from central government for supported housing.
- Expecting an overspend in ICT.
- Additional income from Waste and Recycling.
- Underspend against minimum revenue provision.
- HRA was expected to have an overspend of £519k.
- An additional £250k had been put aside to try and bring voids back into use more quickly. Since the report was written a further impact had been seen due to Covid and self-isolation, therefore further detail would be provided in the Q3 report.
- The Capital Programme included the proposed revised budgets that would be presented at the next Strategy and Resources Committee.
- The variances in the report with regards to the Capital Programme were mostly due to slippage.
- Variances were to be expected with the New Build Programme due to increased lead times and cost of labour and materials.

In response to a question from the Chair, Councillor Cornell, it was confirmed that the impact of inflation would be raised where it was known in the Q3 report.

Councillor Davies asked for clarification on the New Build Programme and land acquisitions. The Accountancy Manager confirmed that the land acquisitions budget was opportunity led and some of the budget which hadn't been spent in previous years had been rolled forward. It was also advised that the New Build Programme had been re-profiled and they were expecting to spend less than was in the base budget.

Councillor Housden requested confirmation that he would receive the data he requested at Housing Committee on voids. Councillor Ross confirmed that she would contact Officers to ensure these figures were supplied to Councillor Housden.

In response to a further question from Councillor Housden the Accountancy Manager confirmed that the figures, with regard to the cultural services sports centre, were regarding loss of income and additional staffing costs. It was further advised that the budget allocation had been increased due to the leisure review.

Proposed by Councillor Ross and Seconded by Councillor Turner.

Councillor Ross congratulated Members and Officers for coping with the pressures that had been seen in the last couple of years and stated that despite the problems the budgets were showing that the Council was doing quite well.

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

- RESOLVED**
- To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund Revenue budget.**
 - To note the outturn forecast for the Housing Revenue Account.**
 - To note the outturn forecast for the Capital Programme.**

SRC.059 **Stroud Canals Vision and Strategy**

The Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development advised that the Vision and Strategy (the Strategy) had been in preparation since April 2021 and that Members were being asked to approve the draft documents for public consultation. He advised that they had been missing a long term vision and strategy to ensure a consistent approach was taken across the whole canal network in order to maximise opportunities to achieve broader social, economic and environmental objectives.

He drew Members attention to the appendices included with the report:

- Appendix A – the Strategy in the form of a wallchart.
- Appendix B – information on the 14 canal strategy areas, profiles of each and placemaking frameworks
- Appendix C – a pilot study for the Wallbridge area.

It was confirmed that further material for the public consultation including an introductory film was being prepared and all background documents would also be made available at that stage. Following the Committee, the Draft Strategy would be published online for a formal period of public consultation. This was intended to be for 8 weeks and would involve material being available on the website, via social media, at Town Council offices open to the public and at libraries.

The Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development advised that the final amended Strategy would be taken to Environment Committee in May 2022 for approval and adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document. Furthermore, an Action Plan would be considered at a future meeting of Strategy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Pearson asked whether the masterplan and strategy produced in approximately 2005 was used in the production of the Draft Strategy being presented. The Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development advised that the consultants had considered many documents and spoken to stakeholders and he would confirm following the meeting whether the document had been examined. In response to further questions from Councillor Pearson it was confirmed that all Parish and Town Councils had been contacted at the beginning of the process and approximately 10 had been actively involved.

Councillor Craig raised concerns regarding the issues associated with the growing popularity of the canal. The Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development confirmed that there were areas of the canal network where there were pressures and conflicts not just between local people and tourists but also those that used the canals. He further advised that the role of the strategy was to support improvements to the canals in certain locations and that there were references to pressures and the need for action to alleviate the problems within it.

The Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development and the Chair, Councillor Cornell, confirmed they would be able to check with the Canal Project Board what the long term intentions were with ownership and management of the canals and whether on completion the Canal and River Trust would be approached to adopt the Cotswold Canals.

In response to questions from Councillor Housden it was confirmed that a budget of £60k had been allocated to the Canal Strategy and had been approved by Strategy and Resources Committee. It was confirmed that costs were likely to come in within budget. The Chief Executive advised that until now there had been a lack of any strategy that looked at the Canal Corridor in terms of the social, environmental and infrastructure opportunities. The new strategy could help the Council with its new focus on health and wellbeing and would help them to produce an action plan that would be useful should future funding opportunities arise.

Councillor Percy questioned whether business engagement would include leisure trades such as bike and boat hire. The Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development advised that a wide range of businesses would be contacted regarding the consultation and that they would be utilising the business contacts they had on their Local Plan database.

Proposed by Councillor Ross and Seconded by Councillor Pearson.

Councillor Pearson stated that he was looking forward to the canal being linked up. He also advised that the pressures that may be felt on the Cotswold Canals would be completely different to those on the Sharpness Canal as the canal traffic would be different due to the restrictions on depth.

Councillor Davies thanked the Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development and his team for the work carried out to create the draft strategy and stated that the level of detail was impressive. He also raised concerns with the Canal and River Trust and highlighted some current ongoing issues with the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal.

Councillor Hurst asked for Officers to consider using plain English in the strategy and advised that it was too dense and repetitive and would need significant modification to make it more presentable to the public. He advised that he was dedicated to the success of the canal project and recognised the opportunity to have the strategy as a supplementary planning document.

Councillor Braun stated that the document would help to explain the benefits of the canal to local Parish and Town Councils and stated she was interested to see the action plan with clear timescales and deliverables.

The Chair, Councillor Cornell, stated it was important that this document contained the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal as well as the Cotswold Canals. She advised that the document was detailed and complex and they would need user friendly ways to introduce it to members of the public and encouraged everyone to get involved with the consultation.

Councillor Turner stated that the video being produced for the public would be really important in bringing the strategy together and would help to support the document.

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

RESOLVED To approve the Draft Stroud Canals Vision & Strategy set out in Appendices A-C for a period of public consultation.

Councillor Pearson left the meeting prior to the start of Agenda Item 10

SRC.060 **Council Plan and Performance Indicators**

The Chair, Councillor Cornell, briefly introduced the report and advised that it was a working document and that the key performance indicators would continue to be monitored and revised if required. She invited all Members of the Committee be involved with that process.

The Senior Policy and Governance Officer confirmed that the KPIs had been to all Committees apart from the elements coloured in yellow in Appendix A, those hadn't previously been assigned to Committees. The revised performance reporting template in Appendix B was highlighted to Members and it was confirmed that it would show a RAG status for the project, objective or the measure. It was advised that meetings would take place with Chairs of Committees and Performance Monitors to confirm the appropriate system for performance monitoring as they would not be able to report back on every objective at every committee meeting.

In response to a question from Councillor Davies it was confirmed that Appendix A showed which objectives the Council led on and which they contributed to. It was further confirmed that the Council Plan would be updated to show where the Council would be working in partnership.

Councillor Percy asked whether there would be definitions of the red, amber and green statuses used in the performance monitoring reports to ensure everything was assessed using the same criteria. The Senior Policy and Governance Officer confirmed that they would look at providing suitable definitions.

Proposed by Councillor Braun and Seconded by Councillor Ross.

Councillor Davies stated that it was an excellent piece of work but was missing a target to reduce the Carbon impact. Councillor Braun advised that one of the actions that had been discussed was establishing a performance management system for the CN2030 strategy and encouraged everyone to support the documents.

After being put to a vote, the Motion was carried.

- RESOLVED**
- a) **To agree the performance indicators relating to the Council Plan**
 - b) **To approve the revised performance reporting template for use by the member performance champions.**

SRC.061 **Member/Officer Reports**

a) **Leadership Gloucestershire Update**

A verbal update was provided by Councillor Braun and it was confirmed that a written report would be circulated.

Councillor Braun highlighted the following topics raised at Leadership Gloucestershire:

- Review of race relations final report set out different calls to action which included establishing a county wide vision for workforce equality and setting up an independent permanent institution for Gloucester and Gloucestershire.
- Director of Public Health gave an update on Covid case numbers.
- Mass transit scheme for Gloucester and Cheltenham which proposed work on a guided busway.
- Brief update on the Western Gateway and the Fusion bid.
- Agreed to continue with the current arrangements and funding for Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee until a review could be completed.
- One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System update.

b) **Regeneration and Investment Board**

A written update was provided by the Strategic Director of Place and was published in the document pack. There were no questions.

c) **Brimscombe Port Board**

The written update was circulated to Members ahead of the committee.

Councillor Hurst asked whether the public would be involved in the selection process of the developer partner. The Chair advised that the decision would be coming back to Strategy and Resources Committee and at that point they may be able to work with the members of public who were interested.

SRC.062 **Member Questions**

There were none.

SRC.063 **Work Programme**

Councillor Braun asked for the following items to be added to the work programme:

- Canal Strategy Action Plan
- Place Prospectus
- Outline business case for the Stonehouse - Bristol Road Station
- Report regarding retrofit in relation to training and skills setting out some of the issues and areas where they could focus.

RESOLVED To note the above updates to the Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 9.19 pm

Chair