



Public Document Pack STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB
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02 March 2022

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee will be held on **THURSDAY, 10 MARCH 2022** in the Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud at **7.00 pm**

Kathy O'Leary
Chief Executive

Please Note: The meeting is being held in the Council Chamber at Stroud District Council and will be streamed live on the Council's [YouTube Channel](#). A recording of the meeting will be published onto the [Council's website](#). 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.

Due to current Covid-19 regulations a maximum of 6 members of public will be permitted in the Council Chamber at any one time, if you would like to attend this meeting please contact democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk.

A G E N D A

1. **APOLOGIES**
To receive apologies of absence.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive declarations of interest.
3. **MINUTES (Pages 3 - 20)**
To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 13 and 27 January 2022.
4. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
The Chair of the Committee will answer questions from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS Noon on Friday, 4 March 2022

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

5. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (Pages 21 - 72)**
To approve the Economic Development Strategy and supporting Action Plan for the District.

6. **MEMBER / OFFICER REPORTS (TO NOTE)**
 - (a) Leadership Gloucestershire Update
 - (b) Regeneration and Investment Board (Pages 73 - 74)
 - (c) Brimscombe Port Redevelopment (Pages 75 - 78)
 - (d) Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (Pages 79 - 80)

7. **WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 81 - 82)**
To consider the work programme.

8. **MEMBER QUESTIONS**
See Agenda Item 4 for deadlines for submission.

Members of Strategy and Resources Committee

Councillor Doina Cornell (Chair)

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

Councillor Catherine Braun (Vice-Chair)

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



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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

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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.

2021/22

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.

Agenda Item 3

2021/22

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:

2021/22

- 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**
- a) To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund Revenue budget.**
 - b) To note the outturn forecast for the Housing Revenue Account.**
 - c) 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.

2021/22

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:

2021/22

- 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

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STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

27 January 2022

7.00 - 8.50 pm

Council Chamber

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Doina Cornell (Chair)

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

*= 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
Principal Accountant

Accountancy Manager
Senior Democratic Services & Elections
Officer

SRC.064 Apologies

There were none.

SRC.065 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

SRC.066 Stroud District Council Capital Strategy

The Principal Accountant introduced the report and referred Members to page 3 of the document pack. The Strategy was approved annually and set out the long term context of the council's capital expenditure, borrowing & investment and was a requirement of the 2018 Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code. In 2020 CIPFA carried out a consultation which resulted in the Prudential Code being revised.

The Principal Accountant drew Members attention to the amendments which had been made to the Strategy since it had been approved in 2021. They also advised that due to the recent changes to the Prudential Code some of the required changes may not be added to the Strategy until 2023/24. One of the main changes to the strategy was

Agenda Item 3

Appendix

2021/22

identified on Page 10, item 3 of the Principals of the Capital Strategy. The Principal Accountant also advised that the General Fund (GF) Total on page 12 was incorrect and should be amended to 1174, 1310, 1266 and 1217.

Councillor Davies asked for confirmation as to the amount being spent on addressing climate change listed on page 13. The Principal Accountant confirmed that there were additional items in the Housing Capital Programme.

Councillor Braun asked whether Members would consider new projects next year or if projects would be taken individually to committees. The Principal Accountant advised that new projects could be taken to individual policy committees or they could be submitted during the budget setting process.

Proposed by Councillor Brine and Seconded by Councillor Turner.

Councillor Pearson expressed hope that the council were going to look at Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points as he believed that they were starting to fall behind other parts of the County. Councillor Turner confirmed that the County Council were rolling out 500 EV Chargers they would be asking the Parish and Town Councils whether they wanted to join in with the contract. It was also confirmed that the budget included a small sum for the District Council to become involved with some research carried out by the Forest of Dean to look at installing EV Charging Points in council owned Car Parks. The Chair, Councillor Cornell advised that the County Council was the lead authority for EV Charging Points.

Councillor Braun welcomed the Capital Strategy and confirmed that the Council's climate action plan had been assessed against 324 other Councils and it had made the top 20 of all Councils and the top 4 District Councils.

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

**RECOMMENDED To Council to approve the Capital Strategy at Appendix A.
TO COUNCIL**

SRC.067 General Fund Budget 2022/23, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Plan

The Strategic Director of Resources presented the report and highlighted the following areas:

The provisional local government financial settlement

- The provisional settlement was announced on December 16th 2021 as a one-year settlement.
- The provisional settlement received was better than anticipated.
- Any updates on the governments commitment to assess how future funding allocations were decided would be reported to Members.
- District Councils were allowed a £5 Band D increase for Council Tax.
- Council Tax base growth was higher this year at Stroud District Council (SDC).
- The reset of Business Rates Growth had been delayed by a further year.

- Business Rate Pool income was not included in the base budget as the level of funding available could not be confirmed
- An additional year of New Homes Bonus grant had been awarded. The District had seen a 1.9% increase in properties and 34% decrease in the number of long-term empty properties.
- The fair funding review was expected to result in a reduction and best estimates had been included.

Adjustments to revenue budget in future years

- Inflation was a key theme in the budget, at the time of writing the report the Consumer Price Inflation CPI was 5.4%.
- There was no certainty in terms of staffing costs as the pay award had not been agreed.
- A new table had been included to show the changes in the Ubico Contract
- Appendix B highlighted a number of different pressures and showed the changes that were made to the budget. It was confirmed that some of the items that had already been agreed were on hidden rows on the table.
- Appendix C showed adjustments that had been made due to the Council Plan priorities.

Medium Term Financial Plan and the use of reserves

- Set out how the budget would be managed over the medium term.
- There was a significant deficit on the Collection Fund at the end of the last financial year, there was a reserve in place to match the deficit.
- Table 3 showed the balance of the Equalisation Reserve. The Estimated Surplus / (Deficit) row should have been removed.

Capital Programme

- Appendix E showed the full capital programme.
- The figure for the total General Fund for 2022/23 in Table 4 should have been 14,032 instead of 14,012.

Statement of the Chief Financial Officer

- Additional money was being included for a number of council plan priorities and the overall reserve balance had improved.
- The risk of inflation had been flagged.
- Highlighted paragraph 6.6 on page 44.

In response to questions from Councillor Davies the Strategic Director of resources confirmed the following:

- He would be able to provide figures showing the Council Tax collection rates and arrears following the meeting if required. At the end of 2021 the arrears had risen however this year the arrears were falling and the collection rate was stabilising.
- He would need to confirm following the meeting how many of Ubico's vehicles were low carbon.
- Biodiversity knowledge was scattered throughout the council and this knowledge could be increased for both staff and Councillors.
- The Homelessness Grant varied in Appendix B because there was an assumption that from the following year the level of grant would decrease.

Agenda Item 3

Appendix

2021/22

- The New Homes capital programme totals shown on page 65 had been subject to variation between years
- There was an average of 3% increase across parking charges, some tariffs had been frozen in the past as it was difficult to increase small charges without increasing only by pence.

Councillor Hurst asked for assurance that the local plan had been provided with sufficient budget. The Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that as part of the budget setting process they had reviewed the local plan and a reserve of £31k had been included. Further funding would be received for Strategic Planning from the Gloucestershire Economic Development Fund.

In response to Councillor Craig it was confirmed that new posts for additional Officers would mostly be helping to deliver projects for the Council Plan which would be reported to Committees. The performance monitoring process could therefore be used to monitor progress and ensure we are delivering good value.

The Chair, Councillor Cornell, asked whether the water source heat pumps impact had been reflected in the report. The Strategic Director of Resources advised that they would probably see any impact later in the year.

Proposed by Councillor Turner and Seconded by Councillor Brine.

Councillor Brine stated that the report showed that we were in a better position than last year and that the Council now had a council plan which they could set the budget against and KPIs to ensure that progress could be tracked.

Councillor Davies thanked the finance team for the hard work in putting the budget together and stated that the Council had received a good settlement. He questioned whether the council was doing enough and advised that the Council Plan and the measures set against it would mean they could evaluate in the future whether we have had any impact. He stated he was unable to support the budget because it included the HRA and because it included increased car park charges in Stroud at a time when the high streets were under pressure.

Councillor Housden stated that he was pleased to see the following:

- Support from central government was higher than expected.
- Council Tax income was up against the forecast and that arrears have fallen.
- Reserves were up.
- The employment rate was up.
- 1158k increase in salary budgets.

However, he also stated that the budget did not address Climate Change and he would therefore not be supporting the budget.

Councillor Hurst advised that he would, reluctantly, support the budget but highlighted his concerns with the housing retrofit programme.

Councillor Pearson advised that he had some reservations about the capital budget and that he would have preferred to vote separately on Council Tax.

Councillor Braun stated that it was a great budget as it would help us to deliver the council plan. She also drew Members attention to the following:

- Some of the new staff posts could save the Council money.
- The investment included help to tackle the climate emergency.
- The video available on the website showed how every department at the Council was looking to tackle the climate emergency and how it was embedding the 2030 strategy throughout.
- New tourism and Biodiversity posts which highlighted partnership working.

Councillor Craig confirmed that he was in a similar position to Councillor Pearson and advised that there were some aspects that concerned him. He expressed a wish to see more focus on things that produce a real change.

Councillor Ross offered her support for the report and stated it was a measured and good budget.

The Chair, Councillor Cornell, stated that Carbon Neutral (CN) 2030 had been embedded across the organisation and the budget. CN2030 was intrinsically linked to many projects including the health and wellbeing programme.

Councillor Pearcy advised that he was encouraged by the level of investment in sustainability proposed by the budget.

Councillor Turner stated that the budget was reflective of the council plan and that she was happy to see the level of investment in green initiatives.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was passed with 11 votes in favour and 2 against.

- RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**
- a) To approve the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan as set out in Appendices A-E
 - b) To increase the council tax by £5 to £222.52 at Band D, an increase of less than 10p per week for the services provided by Stroud District Council;
 - c) To note the uncertainty around the impact of changes to future local government funding
 - d) To approve the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix F
 - e) To approve the planned changes to the reserves as set out in Section 4 of the report and Appendix G
 - f) To approve the fees and charges policy and list of Council fees and charges as set out in Appendices H and I.

SRC.068 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ESTIMATES – REVISED 2021/22 AND ORIGINAL 2022/23 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2021/22 – 2025/26**

The Accountancy Manager introduced the report and explained that it had already been to Housing Committee on the 7 December 2021. She further explained that since that report there had only been one adjustment which was to include the role for a Resident Involvement Officer for a period of 2 years.

The Accountancy Manager then drew the Committees attention to a few key points within the report which included:

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Appendix

2021/22

- The proposed increase of Social Rents by 4.1% - This was in line with National Rent Guidance and the Budget Strategy approved by Council. A full list of the charges was included in Appendix A.
- The service charges for communal areas and Independent Living were estimated to rise by more than the proposed increase. The decision was made to wait until the figure was known before passing these charges onto tenants which could result in higher charges next year.
- Shared Ownership rents were not included in the report due to the charges being set out in each individual lease not set by the Council, however these were due to increase in line with retail prices.
- Table 1, on page 155 of the document pack, sets out the individual changes to the HRA. The changes included in table 1 were largely short term and overall had an effect of an additional £100k away from the predicted budget.
- They would be looking to transfer just over £1 mill from HRA General Reserves in order to balance the budget.
- Table 3, page 159, sets out the financial position of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2021-2026. This showed in 2025/26 the forecasted reserves were lower than the minimum recommended balance which was largely due to the inclusion of the retrofit works agreed by Housing Committee in 2021.
- Graph 1, page 160, showed the forecast of the HRA General Reserves over the next 30 years should things stay as they were. This graph enabled them to see how sustainable their decisions would be and showed there was time to put in a measured approach with regards to making savings for the HRA.
- Page 161 identified the risks and uncertainties, the biggest of those being cost inflation which would have a big impact on the Retrofit and New Build programmes.
- Page 161, section 10, sets out the borrowing position which included borrowing for the Retrofit and the New Build Programmes.
- Page 162 sets out the Capital Programme which included Major Works, New Homes and Regeneration Programme, Independent Living Modernisation and the Land Appropriation in May Lane, Dursley.

The Accountancy Manager gave the following answers in response to questions asked:

- The 3% inflation figures were produced for the Housing Committee and have since increased. If they continued to increase, further funding would need to be allocated or the projects re-evaluated to see what could be delivered.
- The existing budgets for Services that had been brought in house had been re-allocated however, the expectation was that those savings would be included once they were in place.

It was agreed to get back to Councillor Davies with an estimate of the number of new houses completed by Stroud District Council next year.

Councillor Hurst questioned whether the New Build Programme reflected the age demographic and what types of houses were being built. The Accountancy Manager explained that each individual scheme recognised the housing needs of the area and details of these were reported to the Housing Committee.

Councillor Housden questioned why £1.5 mill was set aside for the former Ship Inn site in 2 years time provided that there had been no time scales or plans for the site. The Accountancy Manager confirmed the Canal Side site was included as per the existing programme. She further explained it was likely that things could change but each site

was included in the budget around the time that they were expected to be brought into the programme.

Councillor Housden further questioned whether the £1.5 mill set aside for the Canal side Site could be invested to balancing the HRA budget instead. The Accountancy Manager explained that the one-off payment of £1.5 mill was borrowed income and would be funded through future rental income from the site in order to be repaid. In addition, she explained that the £1 mill needed to balance the HRA was an annual figure and would need to be repeated each year.

Councillor Ross proposed and Councillor Brine seconded.

Councillor Robinson commended the new homes being built in Nailsworth.

Councillors debated the topic of building Social Housing in Stonehouse specifically around the Canal Site in Stonehouse.

Councillor Ross commended the work being done with regards to building new social housing and for shared ownership homes and the work being completed on the relevant task and finish groups.

After being put to a vote, the Motion carried with 8 votes for, 3 votes against and 2 abstentions.

- RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL**
- a) That the revised HRA revenue budget for 2021/22 and original budget 2022/23 are approved
 - b) That the movement to and from HRA balances and capital reserves as detailed in Appendix B and section 9 are approved;
 - c) That from 1 April 2022:
 - i. Social rents and affordable rents are increased by 4.1% (CPI +1%), in line with national rent guidance
 - ii. Garage rents are increased by 4.1%
 - iii. Landlord service charges are increased by 4.1%
 - d) That the HRA Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix C, be included in the Council's Capital Programme
 - e) To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Resources to appropriate land and buildings at 11/11A May Lane (as shown on the plan at Appendix D) into the HRA and the New Build Programme from the General Fund, once a market valuation has been received; and
 - f) To delegate authority to the Head of Property Services to continue work on progressing this site with land to the rear of Parsonage Street, Dursley, including opening negotiations to acquire land from 3rd party private owners.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Chair

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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

10 MARCH 2022

Report Title	Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan			
Purpose of Report	To approve the Economic Development Strategy and supporting Action Plan for the District.			
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to: a. Approve the Economic Development Strategy set out in Appendix 1 b. Approve the Economic Development Action Plan set out in Appendix 2			
Consultation and Feedback	Consultation and discussions have taken place with members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Regeneration and Investment Board, town and parish councils, local businesses and business groups.			
Report Author	Amy Beckett, Senior Economic Development Specialist Email: Amy.Beckett@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	Option 1: to do nothing. This is not recommended as it could lead to the Council being without a clearly articulated strategy and objectives for supporting the local economy. Option 2: to agree or make amendments to the Strategy and Action Plan.			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Economic Development Strategy Appendix 2 – Economic Development Action Plan Appendix 3 – Consultation responses Appendix 4 – Policy Context Appendix 5 - SWOT			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

A Draft Economic Development Strategy was approved by Strategy & Resources Committee in November 2021 for a period of public consultation. The Economic

Agenda Item 5

Development Strategy sets out the vision for the future, what the Council will do, how we will work with our partners and what the outcomes will be.

2. ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The Draft Strategy was subject to a period of public consultation between December 2021 and February 2022. This involved a press release and publishing the documentation on the Council's website and on social media pages such as LinkedIn and via email to a mailing list with the request for the Strategy to be shared to a wider audience.
- 2.2 Responses have been received from neighbouring local authorities, GFirstLEP, local businesses, social enterprises including The Grace Network, DMO – Visit Gloucestershire, further and higher education providers, Hartpury University and SGS College, parish councils in the District, and members of public. A list of responses received is set out in Appendix 3.

3. A SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO THE STRATEGY

- 3.1 Officers have considered the responses received, and are recommending that the following amendments are made to the strategy, to take account of the issues raised:
 - 3.1.1 Data set sources to be included on page three and four, the profile of our local economy
 - 3.1.2 Further detail included on page 10, highlighting sustainable agriculture practices that are taking place
 - 3.1.3 Amendments to the section "Developing an Action Plan" on page 21 and the action plan to be included as appendix to the Strategy
 - 3.1.4 Updating the dataset to most recent releases from open data sets such as ONS (Office of National Statistics)
 - 3.1.5 Included commitment to support local markets
 - 3.1.6 Following comments from parishes, removal of focussed priority areas for cluster groups due to confusion.
- 3.2 The Action Plan is a living document, and has more focus on the short-term ambitions that will help the Council meet its immediate targets. The long-term ambitions set out in the Strategy are highly ambitious.

4. ACTION PLAN

- 4.1 During the period of public consultation, a ten-year Action Plan has been developed. The Action Plan identifies how Stroud District Council will work towards being an exemplar and meet the objectives and ambitions of the Strategy.
- 4.2 The Action Plan has been developed with a focus on the commitments set out in the Economic Development Strategy, this has focussed on short-term actions.
- 4.3 The actions outlined have considered the current objectives of both the Council Plan and the 2030 Strategy, how the actions of the Economic Development Strategy can ensure we meet the shared ambitions with a matrix approach. The Action Plan has been developed

on a One Council basis, to ensure the actions reflect the work programmes of all relevant services across the Council.

- 4.4 The Action Plan considers ways the Council will work with partners to meet our objectives to be encouragers and enablers. Feedback from the Strategy consultation included the need for more emphasis on the objectives that can be met through partnership work.
- 4.5 The Action Plan is a living document, able to be updated as we transition through the recovery of the economy from the Coronavirus pandemic and priorities of local businesses change.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Following consideration by Committee, it is proposed to publish the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan and develop relevant indicators and performance targets. Progress of the Action Plan will be reported as part of the Council's performance monitoring framework.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

At its meeting in July 2021 Strategy and Resources Committee agreed to ringfence £386k of Business Rate Pool funding towards economic development works. This funding can be allocated to fund the staff resource required to deliver on the Strategy and action plan.

Where specific actions or projects require additional resources in excess of those sums already allocated, they would be the subject of a separate member decision.

Lucy Clothier, Accountancy Manager

Tel: 01453 754343 Email: lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk

6.2 Legal Implications

None directly arising from this report.

Section 1 Localism Act 2011 provides an overarching power of general competence which includes economic development of the council's area.

Legal advice and support will be provided, when appropriate, as there are specific legal powers and obligations applicable to the delivery of some of the commitments and actions in the proposed Strategy and Action Plan respectively.

One Legal

Tel: 01684 272691 Email: legal.services@tewkesbury.gov.uk

6.3 Equality Implications

The Council's key objective of improving equality of opportunity and access to economic opportunities is set out within the Strategy. Detailed equality implications relating to the key projects and activities to be developed through the Action Plan will be assessed at

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that time. Equality impact assessments will be carried out for any services, projects or other schemes that have the potential to impact on communities and/or staff on the grounds of protected characteristics.

6.4 **Environmental Implications**

Environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality are key objectives of the Strategy and supporting the green economy is identified as a priority area for the Strategy. A number of key commitments seek to reduce the carbon and ecological impacts of our local economy.

Stroud District Council Economic Development Strategy

2022- 2032

March 2022

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INTRODUCTION

Stroud District has a strong and prosperous economy and is home to world class companies and innovative, resilient and successful small business sector. Yet we face both short term and long term challenges to local economic prosperity.

The District Council's new Council Plan focuses on three distinct priorities, one of which is around supporting a thriving and resilient local economy through:

- helping our high streets and businesses to recover from the impacts of Covid-19;
- delivering key regeneration sites for local job and homes;
- promoting the district to attract investment in key infrastructure and jobs;
- providing support for local businesses to grow, keeping wealth in the district and supporting local supply chains and offering rewarding local jobs;
- adopting the Local Plan to provide the strategic planning framework for prosperity

To achieve our aims this Economic Development Strategy sets out in more detail what we will do, how we will work with our partners and what the outcomes will be. Our Strategy looks forward over the next ten years and aligns with other Council plans and strategies and those of our partners. It builds upon current economic information and national and county economic policies, strategies and plans.

Purpose

The purpose of this Strategy is therefore to:

- provide a consistent vision with clear objectives and priorities for our district's economy;
- set out how the objectives and priorities will be translated into a framework for change together with the commitments needed;
- identify our role as a leader and exemplar within the local economy as well as an enabler and encourager of the activities of our public partners and the business community; and
- establish how we will measure and evaluate outcomes.

Strategies and Plans

The Strategy takes into account national, regional and county policies, strategies and plans relating to the economy. A brief summary of these key documents is set out in Appendix 1.

The Strategy has also been shaped by, and will integrate with, the District Council's other plans and strategies which are intended to have a positive impact upon the local economy. These include:

- Council Plan 2021-2026
- Stroud District 2030 Strategy and Masterplan
- Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy 2021 to 2041
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Equality Action Plan 2021-2025
- Stroud District Local Plan (2015 and emerging 2021), and related policies
- Stroud Districts Canal Strategy

The Strategy will complement the work streams of colleagues in the Council, including, but not limited to Planning and Economic Development, Community Services, Health and Wellbeing and Housing Services.

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Appendix 1

A brief profile of our local economy

- Stroud District is home to a large number of businesses, with c.6,000 enterprises located in the area, 89.5%¹ of which employ less than 10 employees and only 0.3%¹ of our businesses exceeding 250 employees.
- Businesses are varied, with the largest number 18.4% classed as within the Professional, Scientific and Technical sector, 12.7% within the Construction sector, 12.7% and 8.4% within Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing².
- The sectors with the greatest employees are: Manufacturing 20%, Wholesale, Retail and Repair of Motor Vehicles 16% and Human Health and Social Work 12%. The manufacturing employment rates are well above the national average of 8%³.
- Gross Value Added (GVA) is in excess of £2,642m (2018) including Manufacturing, £818m; Accommodation and Food, £104m; and Agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste, £85m and Construction, £199m, further evidencing how the Manufacturing sector in the district is bucking national trends and seeing growth in both employees and productivity.⁴
- Stroud is a well-educated district, with higher qualified residents than the national average. However, within Gloucestershire, Stroud District sits within the bottom half of skills levels.⁵
- Stroud District has the second lowest unemployment figures across Gloucestershire, with only 3% of the residents currently unemployed. This is significantly lower than the national average of 4.8% unemployment.⁶
- Stroud Districts earnings by residence sit within the lower half of the County, at only £578.20 per week. This is however, higher than the national average. Earnings by place of work, are below the national average at £594.1 per week, rather than £612.8 per week. However, the district is the third highest across Gloucestershire.⁷
- The working age population is projected to decrease by 2% by 2030, whilst the older population (65 years+) is due to increase by 3.6%, having a significant impact on the availability of workers and an increased need for care provision in the district.⁸

1 – NOMIS, UK business counts, 2021; 2 – ONS, Number of VAT/PAYE Enterprises, 2020; 3 – NOMIS, Employee Jobs, 2020; 4 – ONS, Regional Gross Value Added by industry, 2018; 5 – NOMIS, Qualifications 2020; 6 – NOMIS, Labour Supply, 2021; 7 – NOMIS, Earning by residence / place of work 2021; 8 – ONS, Population Projections, 2018

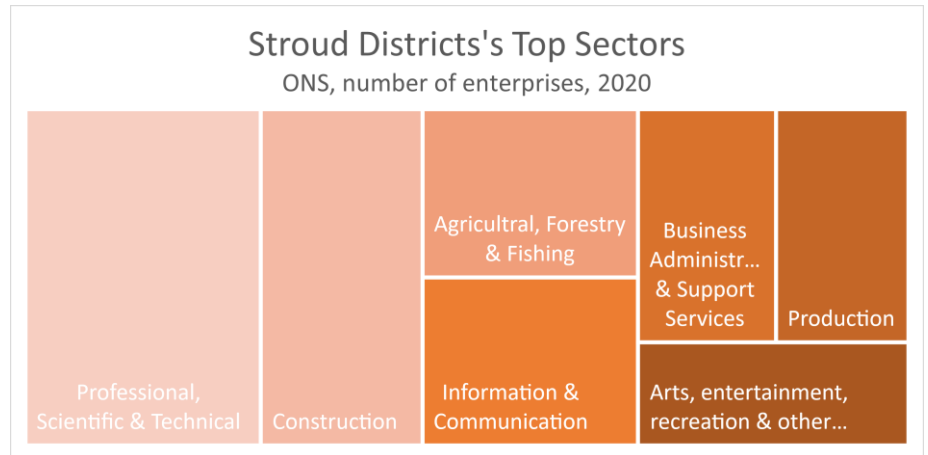
A brief profile of our local economy cont.

Population:
120,000

Projected population by 2030: 128,242
ONS Population Projection, 2018

Working Age Population:
72,000

51.4% qualified to NVQ4 or above
(11% more than UK average)
NOMIS, Stroud Profile, 2020



Qualification	Stroud District	Stroud District %	GB %
NVQ 4 & Above	33,4000	46.4%	43.1%
NVQ 3 & Above	45,400	63.1%	61.3%
NVQ 2 & Above	55,900	77.6%	78.1%
NVQ 1 & Above	65,300	90.7%	87.7%

Weekly earnings by residence:

£578.20

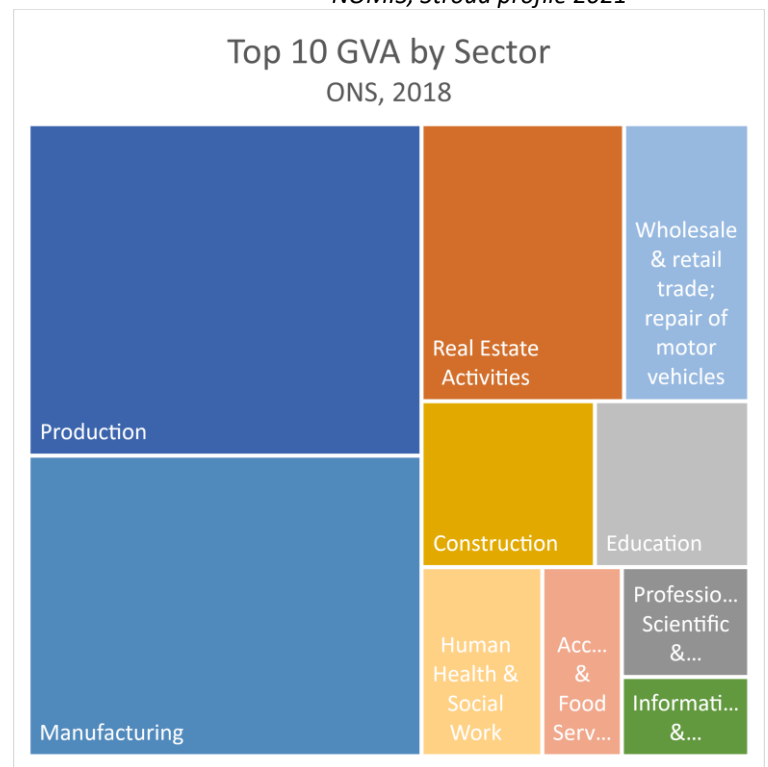
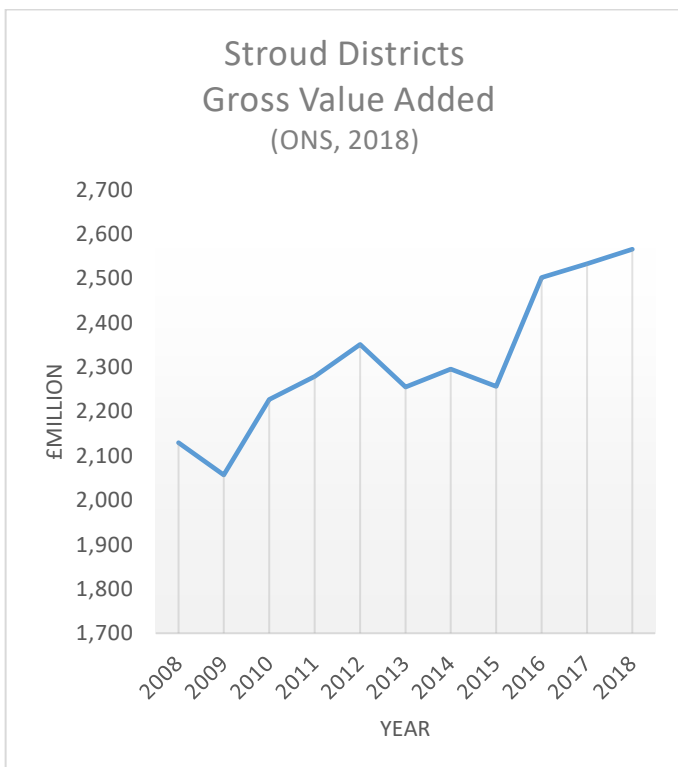
*6% less than UK av.

Weekly earnings by workplace:

£594.10

*3% less than UK av.

NOMIS, Stroud profile 2021



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Appendix 1

Current issues and challenges

Covid-19

Stroud District, like everywhere else in the UK, has been greatly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many businesses had to close their doors to trade, with food and hospitality, tourism and High Street businesses particularly heavily impacted. At the height of the pandemic, over 9,000 employees within the district were furloughed and unemployment rose and this has led to further disparities between more affluent and poorer areas in the district.

Some impacts from the pandemic are expected to be with us permanently; changes in working patterns to a more flexible and blended approach, an increased need for reliable and fast broadband connection, and advances in the transition to online shopping. However, there may also be opportunities to translate short term change into longer term patterns of behaviours, for example an emphasis on staycations rather than foreign travel.

Brexit

The UK's departure from the European Union has resulted in impacts on the local economy. The UK Trade Info reported a 12% decline in exports to the EU in February 2021 compared with the previous year and localised data gathered by the Federation of Small Businesses shows 20% of South West businesses have temporarily halted EU sales. As well as a reduction in exports to the EU, there are also signs of shortages within the workforce and labour market. In particular, the Tourism, Agriculture, Construction and Health Care sectors are anticipated to be most impacted.

The longer term impacts of Brexit are less certain at this stage, and there may be potential opportunities from reforms to the procurement system and international market opportunities as trade agreements are signed.

Longer term issues

There are a number of longer term issues and challenges which the Stroud District economy faces. Some of these are related to the structural characteristics of the local economy and some related to population and demographic change predicted over the next ten years. A full SWOT analysis of the local economy is set out in Appendix 2.

- Our economy has existing strengths and specialisms in the manufacturing sector, especially Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing (AEM). Whilst there is potential vulnerability if over-reliance is placed on these sectors, they offer major opportunities for strengthening Stroud District's economic role and developing a high skilled economy.
- There is a high proportion of SMEs and entrepreneurs in Stroud District, which provides an excellent opportunity for growth and innovation, but smaller businesses can also find it harder to improve productivity and future plan.
- The changing age profile of our district presents challenges, exacerbated by difficulties in retaining younger people and in attracting returners. The district's distinctive natural and built environment offers an enviable lifestyle and more could be made of this when attracting and retaining skilled workers.
- Stroud is a well-educated district, with higher qualified residents than the national average. However, within Gloucestershire, Stroud District sits within the bottom half of

skills levels, and due to out-commuting and the skills drains to larger towns and cities, our businesses struggle to employ the skilled workforce they need.

- There is considerable out-commuting to work within the district, which presents a big challenge if we are to reduce our district's carbon footprint.
- There are well established commercial markets within the A38/M5 corridor, at Stonehouse, Stroud, Cam/Dursley, Berkeley/Sharpness and the Stroud Valleys where future economic needs will require further business space provision to meet the needs of specific sectors and businesses.
- There is a perceived lack of well-connected grow on space within the district. Twinned with a lack of affordable and connected commercial space sees the start-up rates of the district much lower than National rates, 10% compared to 32% over the last ten years.
- A recent reduction in occupied office space within the market towns has impacted on market town spend; however, there are opportunities to develop new more flexible workspace, including co-working space and to repurpose vacant units in town centres for other commercial and community uses.
- There are real opportunities for the district to take advantage of the “staycation” trend by marketing the district effectively as a tourist location. Improvements to our High Streets and visitor attractions will support Stroud becoming a year round destination and see residents accessing opportunities in their own district.
- Connectivity of public transport to hinterlands and work spaces in the district is poor, making the accessibility of some workspaces hard to access for low income residents. There are, however, opportunities to extend walking and cycling infrastructure and to design new developments to support access by public transport.
- Whilst Fastershire is making improvements to the broadband coverage of the district there are still areas with poor connectivity. This impacts on both businesses choosing to be based in Stroud, on businesses productivity and residents' confidence working from home.

*Diagram showing location of District within County
and key local employment areas, places and connections within the District*

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Appendix 1

VISION

Our ambition is to support a sustainable, inclusive, thriving and resilient economy for our businesses, communities and visitors

Stroud District has a historic commitment to social justice and to make a just transition to a low carbon economy. We need to learn how to live well without pushing our demands beyond the limit of what our planet can support. We will learn from good practice in our own district and from leaders of place across the world to build an economic success story that reflects our district's unique strengths and opportunities in order to meet the challenges we face: rising inequality, recovery from the pandemic, and the climate emergency. In partnership with our communities, and the public and private sectors, we will harness our pride of place in our market towns and rural communities, in our unique natural environment and rich industrial heritage, to build in long term resilience and prosperity. We are committed to supporting innovation, creating locally led and distinctive approaches to economic recovery and progress and ensuring the benefits of economic development are retained locally. We believe in working to reduce inequalities and making sure that access to decent job and services is fair wherever you live.

Economic objective: Improve skills and opportunities and reduce inequality

We will work with partners to seek solutions that enable all residents fair access to valued, well paid and skilled jobs in the private sector but also the district's social enterprises, community interest companies and charities, in order that local people have a good quality of life that offers equal access to economic opportunities.

Economic objective: Reduce carbon and ecological impacts

As part of our ambitions to become the greenest district in the greenest County we will support businesses in their journey to become carbon neutral, stimulating a local, green economic sector. We will work with partners on the skills gap, encouraging the district to become a place to educate and deliver the skills needed to address and adapt to climate change. We will work to ensure businesses to have a greater awareness of their carbon footprint and have the tools to transition to a low carbon economy.

Economic objective: Boost our market towns and rural vitality

The vibrancy of our Market Towns is key to our district's resilience, with a wealth of independent traders offering a unique shopping experience within our High Streets whilst our towns provide the focus for our visitor economy and a rich arts and cultural offer, including festivals, live music and theatre which was strongly positioned prior to the pandemic. We will work with our market towns to recover from the pandemic and take advantage of the latest trends in the digital economy.

We remain a predominantly rural district, with rural areas increasingly diversifying from agricultural activities into the tourism and visitor economy, including an increase in self-catering accommodation and glamping sites. The closure of community shops and pubs and rising house prices is a threat to the vitality of our smaller rural communities. The connectivity of our hinterlands to our main towns is essential to ensuring the economy's continued development is inclusive and maximises the positive impact for all communities.

Economic objective: Support advanced and connected work spaces and communities

We must ensure that we facilitate the delivery of new employment premises and enhance existing business premises in the right locations and with the right infrastructure to meet commercial market requirements whilst being accessible to local communities. We need to consider how we can reduce the reliance on the car and continue to make improvements to our physical infrastructure to support walking, cycling and public transport. Access to superfast broadband is now essential to working life. We need to support accelerated rollout and also improvements to 4G and 5G phone coverage.

Economic objective: Support inward investment into the local economy

Seeking to support our businesses to access private and public investment is an ongoing priority for the Council. We also need to consider ways we can market effectively the district as a desirable business location to attract the right investment. At the same time, we want to capture existing community generated wealth creation, encourage local spend and develop local supply chains to maximise the value of local assets and ensure the benefits of economic development are retained locally.

Stroud District, at its heart, is a place with a sense of pride in our rich history and a vision for a better future; an innovative and progressive local economy emerging from an industrial past, set within a breath-taking environment. We possess an independent spirit that is entwined with our community led ethos, encouraging a resilient, locally led economy, not afraid of devising new ways of thinking and doing. It is vital in our future planning that we build upon our unique qualities and strengths and take the steps necessary to make Stroud District a place to live and thrive.

Priority areas

Whilst it is important to address these economic objectives for the economy as a whole, our analysis of the local economy and our review of national and county strategies and plans, has identified a series of key priority areas which drive our local economy and where the Strategy will be focussing efforts to deliver the Vision.

The Green Economy

There has been a national increase over the last decade in the green sector, with a particular focus on green technologies and innovative ways for us to live and utilise energy. The UK Government currently defines green sector businesses as those involved in: low-carbon heat and energy; alternative fuels; energy efficient products; low carbon services and low emission vehicles and infrastructure.

As a local authority with the commitment to protect and enhance our natural assets, we are proactively looking to green businesses to set up locally, supporting our ambition to be the district of choice for the emerging environmental technology sector.

The District Council is currently working closely with stakeholders to ensure the sector has access to the required skillset, with ambitious work in place already, considering the needs of specialist areas within low carbon energy and energy efficient products. However, further work is required to guarantee the district prioritises this evolving sector.

However, we want to ensure all businesses play their part in transitioning to a low carbon and cleaner economy. Further to this, we want to work with all businesses and communities to create an effective circular economy; considering different approaches to how we move people and goods around the district, the way businesses recycle, design products and consider alternative

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Appendix 1

management practices. We will work with businesses in the district across all sectors to transition to cleaner and greener ways of working; embedding positive climate change goals into their operations.

Retail and Hospitality

Stroud District is home to a range of retail and hospitality businesses; both sectors are heavily reliant on visitors and as such have been greatly affected due to the pandemic as well as longer term trends towards e-retailing in all its forms: click and collect; home deliveries; and online shopping.

There are opportunities to improve the quality of retail floor space provision within each of our main town centres in the district, although realism is required in relation to the ability for the main towns to significantly improve their respective market shares. The ongoing pattern of change suggests that for smaller retail centres such as those within our district, town centre strategies which support the evolution of the High Street are vital so we can capitalise on what makes our town centres distinctive and unique.

The UK's first national hospitality strategy was published August 2021, which outlines how to support businesses in the sector reopen and recover; with an ambitious vision to set out how the sector becomes resilient and dynamic. Businesses within this sector include cafes, restaurants, pubs, bars and nightclubs. One positive story to tell has been the rise in local food stores and food outlets, giving evidence to the trend of a newly emerging food and cafe culture. A further factor has been the growth in interest in locally sourced and organic foods and also the trend towards healthy eating.

Each of the market towns are well placed, with an array of independent retailers, public houses, restaurants and cafes, often in close proximity to tourist destinations. However, action needs to be taken to ensure the market towns thrive in the future landscape, establishing their own unique selling points and becoming destinations in their own right. Now is the opportunity to better connect communities with their market towns, enabling access to a wider variety of businesses as well as easier access for communities to services.

Tourism and the Visitor Economy

The tourism and the visitor economy sector made up 5% of the local economy in 2019 and was worth an estimated £112.4M GVA. However, more could be done to expand the tourism offer as outlined in the Economic Impact of Gloucestershire's Visitor Economy, 2019, the district ranks fifth out of the six Gloucestershire districts in terms of visitor numbers and third in terms of day visitors spend.

Stroud District forms part of "the Cotswolds" destination; whilst Cotswold District sees most of the tourism trade, the district has seen an increase in rural tourism including glamping and forms of farm diversification. We are committed to ensuring we take advantage of the increased interest in staycations through supporting low impact and sustainable forms of tourism.

Our market towns include a high concentration of independent retailers, with bespoke shops, galleries and popular farmer's markets that offer a unique experience when visiting. Because of this the location has a competitive offer when compared to other areas across the UK. This desirable combination of businesses in our market towns adds to the experiences on offer for tourists.

When considering the ratios of visitors to the area, our hoteliers note the high numbers of corporate visitors to the district. Whilst this means there are regular overnight trips to the area, the rates corporate visitors agree to are lower than the leisure market, meaning businesses have not seen

rates increase, but their overheads continue to increase year on year. There is a lack of accommodation and venues suitable for business events or training in the district near to transport hubs.

The Arts and Culture

Art and Culture contributed £58m to Stroud Districts GVA in 2018. A recent Arts Council and Centre for Economics and Business Research study found the sector to be highly productive with on average each FTE worker contributing £69,000 to the UK's economy.

There is a lively and diverse arts and culture scene within the district and performing space including at the Sub Rooms and Under the Edge Arts, but the sector has been impacted significantly by the pandemic. We must do everything we can to ensure venues can return; once more opening their doors to residents and visitors alike.

The arts and culture sector has wider socio-economic benefits creating a sense of community and civic pride and increasing health and wellbeing benefits. In addition, the more the sector grows, the more tourists and inward investment it will attract.

Moving forward we will look at how to support the sector's resilience and how to ensure they embrace environmental sustainability and digital technologies. We will work with community groups to offer creative opportunities to children and young people across the district, giving them the chances to grow their capacity for creativity. Working with partners we will encourage businesses to start up, increasing the jobs and accessibility of sector.

Agriculture, Agritech and Rural Diversification

Stroud District is largely a rural location, with communities living and working within a countryside setting. We are home to a variety of rural businesses. In addition to traditional farming, the district has seen increased diversification of agricultural businesses into the visitor economy, with farms utilising space for camping, glamping and self-contained holiday lets.

Recently, there has been an increased focus on the district's agritech business base, with the sector prioritised in GFirstLEP's Local Industrial Strategy. Stroud District is well placed to see continued advances within agritech businesses; situated within close proximity to the Royal Agricultural University where higher and further education courses are available as well as short courses and knowledge transfer partnerships on offer.

Businesses and consumers are also becoming more focussed on the circular economy of food and farming, bringing positive impacts to the sector. These aspirations compliment the needs of the wider Gloucestershire area which has ambitions to be a testbed for agricultural innovation.

The sector has faced a number of recent challenges relating to the pandemic, including a surplus of harvested crops and dairy and difficulties with staffing levels twinned with trading and markets uncertainties relating to Brexit. There are longer term challenges ahead relating to changes to land management practices and subsidy arrangements to support increasing rural biodiversity objectives. In addition, with the increased unaffordability of house prices in rural locations and continued poor accessibility to the district's hinterlands via public transport, rural businesses face difficulty recruiting and retaining staff.

We will consider ways to support our agricultural and land based businesses including to support Government schemes such as the Environmental Land Management schemes, considering how the rural economy will achieve its goals whilst committing to net zero emissions by 2030. This strategy looks at ways we can support this sector to become more resilient given these challenges.

Agenda Item 5

Appendix 1

Manufacturing and Advanced Engineering

Stroud District's manufacturing and advanced engineering sector continues to see year on year improvements, increasing its gross value added (GVA) and employment base. This is despite a decline within national trends. This is due to the district being home to high end manufacturing and advanced engineering businesses that have a strong focus on research and development.

Furthermore, Stroud District is well connected to the surrounding areas, such as Cheltenham and Gloucester, presenting a strong supply chain network within the county.

The districts manufacturing and advanced engineering businesses are innovative and forward thinking. Many of our businesses have been awarded Innovate UK grants, accessed national pilot schemes and supported the Country with the manufacturing of essential medical equipment during the pandemic. The strength of innovation through advanced engineering and manufacturing sector, positions Stroud District strongly to be at the forefront of low carbon technologies in particular.

Our businesses within manufacturing and advanced engineering are dispersed across the district, with clusters found around the key employment sites at Quedgeley, at Stonehouse, along the Stroud Valleys, at Berkeley and at Kingswood/Wotton Under Edge. With businesses in a range of specialities, including medical tech, automotive engineering and aerospace engineering, the sector is not constrained to one focus.

We recognise the strength and concentration of the manufacturing and advanced engineering within the district. We must look at ways to support their growth and development, including identifying sites and premises and the infrastructure required to support them.

Proposed commitments

Stroud District Council has an important role to play in the economy's future. As a major employer and provider of services ourselves, we must become an **exemplar**, creating a circular economy through our own procurement practices, leading on key regeneration activities and supporting our staff to develop their careers through our internal skills agenda.

Through our policies and our work in partnership with other lead organisations and businesses we can **enable** entrepreneurs to start up, promote the district as a first choice for businesses and help to align public services to the needs of our businesses; and **encourage** innovation within the local business community, supporting key stakeholders to unlock new economic opportunities.

The following table sets out a series of high level commitments which the Council will make over the ten-year period of the ED Strategy, as exemplar, as an enabler and encourager, to achieve the economic objectives set out within our Vision.

The commitments set out how the Council will intervene within each of the priority areas to deliver each of the economic objectives.

Commitment Key

The Green Economy
Retail & Hospitality
Tourism & Visitor Economy
The Arts & Culture
Agriculture, Agritech & Rural Diversification
Manufacturing & Advanced Engineering

Key Economic Objectives	Proposed Commitments		
	Be an Exemplar in our own estates and practices by	Be an Enabler as a partner and policy maker by	Be an Encourager informing and incentivising locally led action by
Improve skills and opportunities and reduce inequality	Work towards the retrofitting of all Council owned properties and working with local education training providers to develop and pilot training schemes in this specialist area.	Work in partnership with the LEP, County Council and education providers to address the skills needs of our local workforce and develop green sector specialist courses.	Partner with Further and Higher Education facilities to support businesses gain access to research and development opportunities within the green sector.
	Take on apprentices and upskill staff within the Council owned hospitality trade through our recruitment methods and HR practices.	Continue to work with partners such as DWP to support residents to take up retraining and back to work opportunities within the retail and hospitality sectors.	Utilise websites focussed on careers and skills support such as the skills portal and careers hub, these sites offer support and information on next steps when considering careers change and retraining.
	The Council will allocate resources and recruit a Tourism Officer to bring skills into the district which will promote tourism across Stroud District.	Work with the districts education provision, delivery partners such as DWP and tourist businesses to ensure residents have access to skills within the sector across all levels.	Work with partners to disseminate information including the LEP skills portal and Growth Hub to increase skills and retention within the sector.
	Develop initiatives that extend the community reach of the Councils arts and culture assets to new audiences.	Work in partnership with parishes and arts and culture businesses to market the career opportunities available across the District.	Support the arts and culture businesses to encourage residents access their provision.
	Develop a local food partnership that prioritises skills in circular economy and food production.	We will continue to work with partners across the County who can support businesses in our rural hinterlands access a new workforce and skills.	Access training on offer across the district through the promotion of college events and the LEP's skills portal.
	Promote the higher skills requirements of the sector through events, job fairs and networking.	Work with education providers to increase uptake of courses that encourages innovative and prosperous ways of working for the	Take up apprenticeship opportunities at all levels in the sector, ensuring the Districts manufacturing an advanced

		sector and continues to see GVA increases.	engineering businesses have access to their required skills.
Create advanced and connected work spaces and communities	Deliver initiatives that enable Stroud District Council’s employees and visitors to use sustainable and active transport methods.	Develop opportunities for businesses and residents to make improvements to their connectivity that enable greener methods of work and travel.	Work with business groups to share best practices amongst local businesses, advocating carbon neutral changes to working practices.
	Create new procurement policies that enable Council owned food and beverage businesses to utilise local supply chain.	Continue to highlight the needs of businesses to partners to ensure all retail and food and beverage outlets have access to reliable and fast internet connectivity, giving them the chance to utilise modern payment methods.	Market best practice examples of businesses utilising net zero / carbon neutral delivery methods to customers.
	Continue to progress the restoration of Cotswolds Canal, connecting communities and increase visitor spend.	Work with partners to improve digital connectivity in rural locations, utilise marketing tools such as QR codes and virtual maps.	Utilise effective marketing that will encourage visitors to see the District as a year round destination.
	Review the Councils estate to find innovative ways to deliver fit for purpose commercial space for our arts and culture businesses.	Work with partners such as the County Council and broadband providers to develop opportunities for digital arts showcases.	Develop the community hubs in a way that promotes arts and culture provision, extending the reach and opportunities within the Districts.
	Continue to develop policies that increase the connectivity of our rural hinterlands, both physically and digitally, including the continued improvements to the canal corridor as an active commuting route.	Work with public transport providers and the County Council to develop better access for our hinterland locations.	Take up improved digital connectivity that will increase the reliability of the service to rural locations.
	Prioritise the marketing of Growth Hub activities for the sector and increase the uptake of support, particularly for our small and medium business base to ensure they	Plan for new business parks to meet the needs of the sector to be located in accessible areas through Local Plan policies, identifying and delivering major employment sites with key infrastructure.	Support the sectors accessibility of a local supply chain, encouraging a circular economy and retain spend within the District, evidencing we are an innovative and a forward thinking business destination.

	capitalise on opportunities currently available.		
Reduce carbon and ecological impacts	Ensure Stroud District estate are working towards becoming green work places through the use of and opportunities to store green energy and retrofit buildings.	Develop initiatives that encourage green working practices, positive changes to businesses ecological impact and prioritises the use of a circular economy.	Support businesses and local partners to consider green property ambitions, encouraging uptake of new energy methods and retrofitting to decrease carbon footprint.
	Initiate a programme of sustainable measures at Council owned public parking facilities at retail centres to support modal shift to active travel and public transport.	Enable the Districts hospitality businesses to reduce their ecological impact through increased local supply chains and improving their carbon food print and consider how they access community farms and orchards.	Support businesses to access food standards in environmental health and understand how they can reduce food waste.
	The Council will change the management of our estate to improve biodiversity and sequestration of our green spaces.	Create safe and accessible active travel routes from public transport hubs, creating effective last mile routes to tourism destinations.	Take up sustainable working practices by promoting the benefits and success stories of businesses within the district.
	All Council owned arts and culture assets will become net carbon zero and seek to make biodiversity enhancements, ensuring that the promotion of sustainable ways of working is done in a positive way.	Enable through working with the artistic and creative sectors to raise levels of engagement with the natural world and raise the profile of the climate and ecological emergency to have a positive impact.	
	Develop procurement policy and practices to support local food production and local supply chains.	Promote the funding initiatives to businesses in rural locations to make both sustainable improvements and encourage positive land use practices such as tree planting, re-wilding and natural flood management to the Districts eco-system to commercial properties.	Encourage businesses in rural locations to take up funding initiatives and business support that is available through partners including growth hubs to transition to sustainable practices.

	Support procurement from local businesses within the sector that can demonstrate development of low carbon goods and services.	Explore agri-tech opportunities for businesses and how they can be supported to create carbon neutral farms with improved access to technology.	Encourage the business base to consider modern practices that enable them to be greener through higher energy efficiency and low carbon production. We could do this through encouraging the shift to net zero practices through awards and accreditations.
Boost our market towns and rural vitality	Initiate a programme of measures at Council owned parking facilities to support modal shift to active travel and public transport and improve access to EV charging points.	Continue to work with transport bodies to develop better transport links that improve services between rural areas and local town centres.	Encourage businesses in the District to consider sustainable and active last mile deliver methods.
	Use Council land to support the regeneration proposals that will positively impact the retail and the night time economy.	Look to new ways of working within retail centres including “bank hubs” and maximise the opportunities for health hubs that bring back essential services for communities and businesses alike.	Develop an online presence for the Districts retail and hospitality businesses by disseminating best practice and sharing social media campaigns.
	The Council will facilitate better access to our market town centres through sustainable travel methods, including the regenerating canal corridor sites	Work in partnership with stakeholders to better promote the market towns as a tourist destination, sharing the positive experiences of visitors and creating an itinerary offer of events including the various farmer’s markets.	Identify ways extend the season and rethink the opportunities and visitor’s needs through the creation of a micro tourism offer
	Promote a programme of arts and culture events and festivals across the district that will increase attendance and economic impacts.	Facilitation of market town meetings and working with partners to understand needs through the creation of an effective network that establishes the unique needs of each area.	

	The Council will employ a dedicated resource to support the market towns vitality and connection to rural hinterland, seeking to support recovery through the delivery of unique initiatives to each location.	Develop and deliver Local Plan policies that will enable rural diversification.	Access and spend at local food markets where the districts businesses bring produce to market and encourage visitors to engage in the town.
	Investigate the opportunity for delivering start up units and shared working space for manufacturing and advanced engineering businesses, reducing their barriers to market.	Work with partners, from the private and public sectors to ensure advanced engineering and manufacturing businesses are well connected and are confident working from our rural locations with excellent access to business parks.	Invest in our well connected rural locations through effective marketing of the Districts hinterlands.
Support inward investment into the local economy	Continue to focus on how Stroud District Council develop sites and attract new, green businesses to the area.	Enable businesses in the District to access private sector investment through effective marketing of the Districts assets including our sustainable transport links, digital connectivity and green skills.	Encourage the creation of localised supply chains within the District to attract new businesses into the area.
	Continue to deliver support for the food and farmers markets through use of the land and effective marketing.	Support retail and hospitality businesses access sector specific support through key organisations such as the Growth Hub.	Encourage our retail and hospitality businesses to better promote their offers with access to increased skills of effective online marketing.
	Promote the Council's and districts assets through branded campaigns, both in partnership with Destination Management Organisations and as Stroud District Council.	Work with neighbouring authorities and Destination Management Organisations to create and coordinate accessible tourism information.	Encourage businesses to better promote themselves and increase the visibility of their businesses online including taking up support through partner and business support channels.
	Continue the Canal Corridor regeneration project, seeking to encourage visitors and localised tourists to access the canal as a key	Continue to work with partners to develop effective marketing material that enable inward investment from the private sector.	Take up opportunities of funding through the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Arts Council to deliver new programmes of work and

	area of interest and as a mode of travel.		increase the positive impacts of the sector.
	Promote best practice through our local food and drink production that will support to identify the District as a preferred place to do business.	Promote available Agri-tech courses at Higher and Further Education facilities to enable our businesses access development opportunities that offer improved productivity.	Encourage new ways of working and attendance of exhibitions for rural business owners to alter their work practices to ways that support inward investment.
	Support the website offer and one stop shop approach of the Councils support to businesses with a dedicated resource for the sector and promoting the district as a location for advanced engineering.	Work in partnership with LEP to develop funding bids for investment into local businesses and improving local infrastructure.	Encouraging the take up of existing support networks within the sector through the support available including the Growth Hub and national support on offer.

What the Strategy means for places

The profile of the current local economy means that economic activity and employment is not evenly distributed across the district. Sectors of the local economy have different locational requirements and reflect the availability of labour, access to key markets and key services and infrastructure. Equally this Strategy is focussing on key priority areas which are not currently evenly distributed across the district.

Whilst the Strategy will seek to support businesses' locational requirements, we will also seek to work with businesses, stakeholders and town and parish councils with the objective of spreading prosperity to all parts of the district, diversifying the local economy and providing resilience to local communities.

The delivery of specific physical projects will have particular regard to local development policies set out in the District Local Plan and neighbourhood development plans.

Agenda Item 5

Appendix 1

DELIVERY

Measuring success

We need to ensure that the ED Strategy delivers success for the district. If we aspire to a genuine 'green economy', in order to measure success, we therefore need to look beyond GDP and GVA. These are now being questioned as sufficient measures of success as their increases closely match the ongoing increases in CO2 emissions. We can no longer simply accept 'growth' as a measure of success alongside persisting inequality and the need to live within the finite resources of the planet. Our strategy will reflect more recent thinking on how to measure 'success' for which we can draw on some emerging tools being used by other localities.

The following table sets out the range of outcomes we believe will demonstrate the successful delivery of the ED Strategy for each of our economic objectives.

Key Economic Objectives	Proposed Outcomes
Improve skills and opportunities and reduce inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decrease in unemployment figures ▪ Reductions of NEET figures ▪ Increase in average residential gross weekly pay ▪ Increase in number of businesses accessing Growth Hub intervention and support ▪ Reduction of LSOA areas sitting in top 3 deprived areas ▪ More Living Wage Employers ▪ Increase in trade union membership ▪ Greater number of apprentices ▪ Reduced gender pay gap
Support advanced and connected work spaces and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Percentage increase of digital connectivity ▪ Improvement in rail facilities ▪ Amount of new commercial space completed ▪ Amount of brownfield sites bought forward for re-development ▪ Increase in business start-up and decrease of closure rates ▪ Number of businesses in the district ▪ Greater diversity of business models: cooperatives, social enterprises, community interest companies
Reduce carbon and ecological impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in businesses powered by clean energy ▪ Number of EV charging points ▪ Number of green tech sector businesses in the district ▪ Number of retrofitted commercial sites ▪ Increase in active travel for commuting
Boost our market towns and rural vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decrease in Town Centre vacancy rates ▪ Increased Town Centre footfall rates ▪ Increased employment in towns ▪ Increase in community shops and pubs ▪ Increased connectivity of hinterland locations ▪ Increase of businesses within market towns and rural locations
Support inward investment into the local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in number of day and overnight visitors ▪ Increase in tourist spend in the district ▪ Increase in GVA ▪ Increase of local businesses awarded procurement contracts ▪ Higher local spend by key anchor institutions

Developing an Action Plan

The ED Strategy sets out a vision, objectives and high level commitments for a ten-year period. We have worked up these commitments into an initial Short Term Action Plan to identify specific deliverable projects and programmes for the period to 2025. This is set out in Appendix 3. This will be subject to regular review to ensure actions keep pace with evolving issues and challenges. The vision of the Strategy to support a sustainable, inclusive and thriving economy is one owned by the whole Council, with teams working in partnership to maximise the opportunities and support available for the area's businesses and communities. Consequently, the Strategy incorporates commitments relating to existing and proposed projects derived from other Council strategies and plans. Our priorities and objectives are cross-cutting and owned by the whole Council, and many of the projects and activities will not be solely the responsibility of one service, but a number of services.

Working in partnership

We cannot do all of this alone. Much of the ED Strategy will be delivered by partners and stakeholders. Key partners that will support us meet the needs of the local economy are wide ranging and include:

- **Public bodies** such as the County Council, neighbouring local authorities and those within the Western Gateway and town and parish councils, have the ability to work together with Government agencies to unlock national and local funding support to deliver and facilitate positive change for local communities and the local economy.
- **Businesses** from all sectors and sizes are integral partners, working with public bodies to ensure their needs are understood and interventions are what they need to support them drive the local economy.
- **Business partnerships** including GFirstLEP, Western Gateway the Stroud Growth Hub, Federation of Small Businesses, Chambers of Trade and sector or area specific local partnerships have a powerful voice advocating on behalf of businesses to central and local government to ensure their needs are represented.
- **Community hubs and social enterprises** are well established, central points of contact into the community. They are places residents feels safe and are the grass roots networks across Stroud District. They provide a valuable means by which public bodies can understand the needs of our communities.

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Stroud District Council’s Economic Development Strategy

Short Term Action Plan (2022-2025)

Introduction











The Economic Development Strategy is a highly ambitious, ten-year document which seeks to drive forward the District’s economy in a positive and sustainable way. It highlights the priority areas for the Council and provides a succinct vision for the future. For the Strategy to be an effective document, actions must be developed which take this forward.

This initial Short Term Action Plan focusses on the next three years, 2022 – 2025, identifying projects that will deliver the proposed outcomes identified in the Strategy. There are many more vital projects being carried out by our partners across the District, which, whilst not noted in the plan, are as important for the economy as the Council owned projects.

The plan is a living document and will be reviewed annually; ensuring the projects are still relevant and identifying where further work needs to be undertaken. It is an exciting opportunity to continue shaping our work and delivering projects alongside our partners; ensuring that the economy sits at the forefront of our priorities.

Economic Development Priorities Key

The Green Economy	The Arts & Culture
Retail & Hospitality	Agriculture, Agritech & Rural Diversification
Tourism & Visitor Economy	Manufacturing & Advanced Engineering

Key Economic Objectives	Short Term Actions 2022 – 2025	Economic Development Priorities	Lead Officers	Timescale
Improve skills and opportunities and reduce inequalities	Work with partners to position Stroud District as a Retrofit Centre for Excellence which provides training and develops the skills needed to retrofit homes and businesses.		Leonie Lockwood Amy Beckett	2025
	Continue to build relationships with further and higher education providers in the area and support businesses to take up sector specific provision including land based, tourism, hospitality and advanced engineering skills.		Amy Beckett	Ongoing
	Develop a feasibility paper to consider a Good Employer Charter which will underpin businesses commitment to equality, fair pay, promoting local supply chains initiatives and supporting the District to become net zero.		Amy Beckett	2023
	Recruit a Tourism Officer and agree a work programme with a partnership steering group to include developing skills within the sector.		Amy Beckett	2022
	Develop a Cultural Strategy to support understand barriers to engagement and the sector’s role in equality, diversity and inclusion; this will also consider commercial space opportunities and identify ways the arts and culture sector can transition to net zero.		Kevin Ward	2024
	Work in partnership with Stroud Growth Hub to create networking groups with a sectoral focus that will highlight businesses needs such as skills and infrastructure needs.		Amy Beckett	Ongoing
	Scope out running an annual Jobs Fair in the District that will be accessible to all age groups and offer advice and support from a range of education providers and businesses.		Lucy Powell Amy Beckett	2023
	Work in partnership with social enterprises, charities etc. in the community to encourage residents to access training and job opportunities.		Emma Keating-Clark Amy Beckett	
Create advanced and connected work spaces and communities	Finalise a development strategy that minimises the need to travel and plans for public transport and active travel measures rather than the use of the private car.		Conrad Moore/ Simon Maher	2023
	Ensure low carbon transport is a priority in our procurement processes particularly in the tendering for large scale contracts such as waste and recycling collection.		Sarah Turner	Ongoing

	Develop and implement localised procurement policies that enable improved use of local supply chains that will offer improved social value for the District.						Sarah Turner	Ongoing	
	Continue to deliver Phase 1B of the Canal Project (Cotswold Canals Connected).						Chris Mitford-Slade	2025	
	Develop a Canals Strategy and implement an Action Plan that will support increased use of the improved infrastructure.						Mark Russell Chris Mitford-Slade	2022	
	Develop a Levelling Up Bid with key partners that will enhance cultural space offer and utilise Council land to support increased town centre footfall.						Leonie Lockwood Mark Russell	2022	
	Progress the Local Plan and policies for new development to adoption.						Mark Russell	2022	
	Support the delivery of strategic site allocations contained within the local plan and the key infrastructure required to support it						Mark Russell Geraldine LeCointe	Ongoing	
	Increase commercial space available for expansion and explore the use of land for low cost sites and start-ups, as well as protecting existing employment sites						Mark Russell Alison Fisk	Ongoing	
	Produce a pipeline of regeneration schemes progressing 'hard to develop' brownfield sites and long-term empty properties across the district, delivering quality local jobs and homes, while preserving and enhancing biodiversity						Leonie Lockwood Mark Russell	Ongoing	
	Continue to work with partners Gloucestershire County Council and Fastershire to promote digital connectivity needs across the District.						Amy Beckett	Ongoing	
	Work with Destination Management Organisations and social enterprises to pilot incentives that create active travel hubs in Market Town locations for residents and visitors.						Amy Beckett	Ongoing	
	Work with partners to continue two way conversations between the Council, councillors and officers, and the districts businesses to enable effective working relationships, such as the Market Towns Forum.						Amy Beckett	Ongoing	
Reduce carbon and ecological impacts	Agree a costed plan to retrofit all council homes and commercial assets that will support the use of green energy and consider ways to store green energy effectively.							Joe Gordon Alison Fisk	Ongoing
	Consider and review car parking facilities, focussing on how the space offers opportunities for the storage and hire of Bicycles, E-Bikes and E-Scooters to support create a modal shift in the District.						Mike Towson	2023	
	Work with the District's businesses and key partners to share success stories of green improvements that have been taken up and the positive impacts realised; encouraging other businesses to take up sustainable working practices.							Rachel Brain Amy Beckett	Ongoing

	Work with Gloucestershire County Council and Public Transport partners to develop pilots that will increase public transport take up to reduce the reliance of private vehicles in the District.					Conrad Moore	Ongoing
Boost our market towns and rural vitality	Work with partners to consider ways to support improvements to the night time economy, creating a positive impact on footfall and spend in Market Towns.					Leonie Lockwood Amy Beckett	2023
	Recruit a Tourism Officer and agree a work programme with a partnership steering group to include promotion of a programme of arts and culture events and pilot ways to improve year round vitality of the market towns.					Amy Beckett	2022
	Carry out feasibility study to consider the creation of start-up and flexible units in market towns as well as shared start-up and grow on space for the Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing sector.					Amy Beckett	2023
	Work in partnership with the District's businesses and social enterprises to pilot electric and active travel methods to improve wellbeing and reduce their carbon footprint.					Amy Beckett	
	Work with Parish Councils to support businesses to improve their online presence, including social media training that will enable greater click through rates, online spend and physical visits to market town businesses.					Amy Beckett	2023
Support inward investment into the local economy	Create a series of inward investment brochures that are targeted at different sectors and priorities, including regeneration of sites and increased uptake of commercial sites.					Mark Russell Amy Beckett	2022-2025
	Continue to work with Parish Councils, neighbouring Council's and Destination Management Organisations to market and promote the area as a visitor destination.					Amy Beckett	Ongoing
	Review the Council's website offer for businesses and update to deliver a one shop approach to business support offered through the Council and are key partners.					Amy Beckett	2022

Draft Economic Development Strategy

Consultation responses, March 2022

Below highlights the responses received through the consultation period and actions taken as a result.

Organisation	Responses	Actions taken
Stroud District Council Policy Team	<p>Identifying how the strategies Economic Objectives meet the requirements of the TOMs framework.</p> <p>Confirming where priority areas align with the social value priorities and changes to procurement practices of the Council.</p> <p>How will the strategy and action plan encourage innovation from businesses inc, creating local skills & employment and responsible businesses?</p>	<p>This is an ongoing piece of work that will be embedded within the action plan</p> <p>This is an ongoing piece of work that will be embedded within the action plan</p> <p>This is set out within action plan</p>
Resident Stonehouse	<p>How will the strategy tackle the issues of inequality, particularly health inequalities in the District?</p> <p>How will the strategy support young people and ensure they're engaged in a positive way?</p>	<p>Noted. This will be partnership work with community health and wellbeing team</p> <p>Noted. Young person support will be carried out through identified partnership work i.e., colleges, schools, GCC, community groups</p>
Resident	<p>Need for stronger visible support for culture and to create friendly places for residents to meet and enjoy arts and music.</p> <p>The District must consider nature in the high street</p>	<p>Noted. This is set out in action plan key economic objective "Boost our market towns and rural vitality"</p> <p>Noted. This sits within the sequestration ambitions.</p>
Cotswold District Council	<p>A positive response considering who priority areas we share and suggesting collaborative work moving forward. This is suggested in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism 	<p>Noted. No actions are required.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate change and the green economy - Agritech - Skills and Training <p>Other issues that could benefit from a joined up approach include being rural locations and the need to improve public transport offers, broadband provision and the vitality of town centres.</p>	
<p>Visit Glos</p>	<p>The strategy’s vision meets the needs of the District but we should outline how Stroud and the County work</p> <p>The objectives and commitments of the strategy are strong; a stronger focus should be given to the hospitality sector as well as highlighting work on a “Stroud marketing” – a place in its own right in the area.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>This is included in the Action Plan within the objectives “Boost our market towns and rural vitality” and “Support inward investment into the local economy”</p>
<p>Hawkins Watton Stroud Business</p>	<p>They did not feel all strategies and policies were highlighted that would have implications on the focus of the strategy, including the Employment Land Review. And stressed the need for the ELR to be reconsidered and critiqued.</p> <p>Further focus on the evaluation of measures, how do the District ensure these are focussed?</p> <p>Reference to the canal restoration should be greater – there is no reference to this in the strategy.</p> <p>Where is data sourced from, this should be included.</p> <p>The reference to grow on space is correct, how do we ensure there is delivery of this. Can affordable business space be funded in a similar way to affordable housing through 106 agreements.</p>	<p>ELR is part of planning, including in the Local Plan bullet point</p> <p>To be actioned. These will form part of the updates to committee and outcomes of the action plan</p> <p>This sits within the action plan</p> <p>Noted. Data sources have been included</p> <p>No specific way to tackle this considered in the strategy, this will be considered in the action plan.</p>

	<p>Being a rural location, development happening by the motorway does not support improvements to the other locations that sit in the AONB.</p> <p>Focus on events that occur outside of the District, such as Gatcombe and the Cheltenham races should be referenced with regards to Agriculture, Agritech and Rural Diversification.</p> <p>Map out the unaffordable homes in the district</p> <p>Consideration made to the AONB being extended and the District included within the National Park format.</p> <p>Tourism sector should reference the demise of Tourist Information Centres.</p> <p>Reference is made to the tourism and visitor economy, but the old town hall has been unoccupied for years.</p> <p>More detail including the Arts and Culture sector and potential for a heritage centre based upon Lyn Chadwick with a Sculpture Trail</p> <p>Why is there no reference to Festomain in the manufacturing and advanced engineering sector?</p> <p>Parking in market town locations should consider an awards programme to promote spend in local shops and, if chargeable, should consider being free after three like other districts in the county.</p>	<p>Considered already in the strategy: “commercial space that is fit for purpose”</p> <p>Noted. These are not included by name within the strategy to prevent it becoming an exhaustive list, but will be included as partnerships with neighbouring authorities highlighted at end of document.</p> <p>Noted. This is not a planning document and will not be included</p> <p>Noted. We understand AONB’s are going through a review, this can be included in Action plan when reviewed, if appropriate.</p> <p>Noted. This is looking back and not supportive of making strides to positive changes. New and modern ways to manage this expectation can be considered through tourism officer post</p> <p>Comment, no action needed.</p> <p>Noted. Looked for more information on this but could not find it. It can form part of the actions with appropriate town and parish councils</p> <p>As above – researched but found no reference</p> <p>This is considered within the action plan.</p>
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	<p>Supportive of the idea that a comprehensive programme of events should be on offer for the District.</p>	<p>Comment. No action needed.</p>
<p>Stonehouse Town Council</p>	<p>The draft strategy is welcome and economic objective and commitments are supported.</p> <p>The priority sectors for Stonehouse are welcome, but there re opportunities to develop other areas, such as tourism and visitor economy.</p> <p>The Cotswolds Canal Connected projects should have greater emphasis to bring tourism and visitors to settlements along the canal.</p>	<p>Comment. No action needed.</p> <p>Comment. No action needed.</p> <p>This will be focussed with the action plan</p>
<p>South Gloucestershire and Stroud College</p>	<p>The strategy reads well with lots of ambition.</p> <p>Focus should be given to both further and higher education provision, particularly the low carbon cluster at Berkeley, led by the College (an FE).</p> <p>There is focus on green property ambitions of the councils own estate but there should be more about the council encouraging local partners and businesses to do the same thing.</p> <p>We should not forget that there are great partnerships to be had outside of the County geography, i.e., South Glos, WECCA, Bristol – considering the make-up of the Western Gateway. Hard border can be a barrier to effective economic growth and securing inward investment.</p> <p>There is mention of reduced office occupant and potential co working space, but nothing around how to engage with the home working trend. Whilst lack of worker in the town centres is a threat, the opportunity is available for walking to local shops / cafes etc.</p>	<p>Comment. No action needed.</p> <p>Added</p> <p>Added</p> <p>Added</p> <p>Noted. This is a beneficial point and local areas are anecdotally benefitting from working from home footfall and spend, work needs to be done to understand the impact of working from home on local area spend and any risks on this impacting the sustainability of those businesses when workers return to offices.</p>

<p>Skills GFirst LEP</p>	<p>You've managed to strike a really good balance between keeping the wording general enough to deal with changing circumstances in the time period of the strategy and also giving some specifics about 'how' SDC will deliver/support these objectives and priorities. No mean achievement as I definitely know how tricky that is!</p> <p>Agree with EO: Improve skills and opportunities and reduce inequality. There are possible links for joint working with the employment and skills hub.</p> <p>Agree with EO: Reduce carbon and ecological impacts. There are possible links for joint working with other SW LEPS and SW Energy Hubs. This could combine well with the One Public Estate project.</p> <p>Agricultures, Agritech and Rural Diversification: agree there are opportunities that haven't been maximised with RAU and Hartpury College. There are possible links for joint working.</p> <p>All references to career, skills and training support: Agree with the approach being taken and recommend a closer relationship with the County to find suitable solutions.</p> <p>Not mentioned explicitly in the strategy but recommend consider how to support local employers recruit staff as competition intensifies. They will also need to attract a more diverse group of employees and those currently further from the labour market. This can be supported through the GFirst LEP Skills Strategy.</p>	<p>Comment. No action needed.</p> <p>Taken forward in action plan.</p> <p>Taken forward in action plan</p> <p>Taken forward in action plan</p> <p>Taken forward in action plan</p> <p>Taken forward in action plan</p>
<p>Vice Chancellor Hartpury University and College</p>	<p>Support the objectives and routes to deliver the vision - specifically within and through partnership with the Council around your priorities to; Improve skills and opportunities and address inequality.</p>	<p>Comment. No action needed.</p>

	<p>In terms of priority areas, Hartpury has recently significantly invested in Agri Technology facilities on the campus, with funding support through GfirstLEP and other funders for a range of economic focused projects.</p> <p>We acknowledge your ambition to connect with the County’s resources, at Hartpury we have capacity to support the Districts businesses with our range of specialist business support services and facilities that are available, including our Agri tech Centre and Business Accelerator.</p> <p>Our range of courses and programmes are within easy reach of your identified specialist cluster(s), such as the Gloucester fringe.</p> <p>We agree that Agri Technology has a significant role to play within Agriculture particularly the carbon agenda and working towards NetZero targets. Hartpury has specialist courses and in house expertise to partner and assist with the delivery of your proposed commitments.</p> <p>In the context of your proposed partnerships to deliver the action plan, we would highlight the importance of the education sector, through the raising of aspirations of individual’s whist at school and within compulsory education. The support and facilities available within the County’s Further and Higher Education Institutions are an important resource and we would suggest a key partner in delivery of you ambitions.</p> <p>Hartpury would welcome an opportunity to meet with Stroud District Council and discuss how we could progress a potential partnership.</p>	<p>Taken forward in action plan</p> <p>Taken forward in action plan</p> <p>Comment. No action needed.</p> <p>Taken forward in action plan</p> <p>Comment. No action needed.</p> <p>Taken forward already – included in action plan</p>
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<p>Dursley Town Council</p>	<p>The objectives and how we measure success should use the SMART approach.</p> <p>The baseline data/picture is important as it points to where the priorities should be and how outcomes can be effectively measured.</p> <p>The commitments could be stronger on local markets and rural diversification</p> <p>Recognise the importance of tourism and working together on this across market towns and the district is important (as we are just starting to see this develop).</p> <p>If priority areas are to be identified, then in respect of Dursley the selected priority 'Manufacturing and Advanced Engineering' should be replaced with 'Tourism and the Visitor Economy'.</p> <p>The importance of tourism to the town's local economy is highlighted in the Town Council's Strategic Plan and should therefore be clearly reflected in the District's Economic Development Strategy and page 19 as a priority.</p>	<p>Not yet changed, the action plan will be time specific. Focussing on increases / decreases etc. within the strategy could mean updates needed more regularly. Will include in Action Plan.</p> <p>Comment. No action needed.</p> <p>This has been included</p> <p>This is within the partnership section at end of the strategy already.</p> <p>Noted; the priority areas have now been removed.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
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<p>Gloucestershire County Council, Officer Comments</p>	<p><u>Transport Planning Comments:</u></p> <p>The strategy does not reference a number of county wider strategies: Draft LIS, Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan, Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Strategy 2039, Fastershire</p> <p>Transport Planning recognise the ambition to be carbon neutral; however, the strategy’s vision does not include a vision for transport infrastructure in line with making the transition to a low carbon economy.</p> <p>The links to economic objectives could be to support economic development. For example: The resourcing of smarter choices and transport mode shift by building on changing attitudes and opportunities for transport; Support for open source data, innovation and low carbon infrastructure such as Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVCP) mapping and secure e-bike parking; Investment in transformative new public transport infrastructure, multi-modal interchange and attractive cycle links; Effecting change on traffic dominated environments like the Wallbridge junction in Stroud; Maximising the potential of and access to rail across the district.</p> <p><u>Minerals and Waste Policy Comments</u></p> <p>Support the inclusion of the circular economy, as there has not yet been a transition or shift to a circular economy re-phrasing the strategy to better reflect this.</p>	<p>Only SDC strategies are mentioned in the strategy, all others in Appendix 1. LIS, already noted, Transport plan, a planning document and not referred to in this instance, Energy strategy, included. Fastershire, could not find a strategy document.</p> <p>Noted, however this strategy is not a planning document and holds one vision only.</p> <p>All comments considered within action plan.</p> <p>Noted and changed</p>
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	<p>To deliver a successful and sustainable economy, we need the ability to re-imagine inter-sectoral link and not focus on just farming, agriculture, hospitality etc.</p> <p><u>Ecology (biodiversity) Comments</u></p> <p>There is no reference to the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain in late 2023 for planning applications.</p> <p>There is no reference to the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS)</p> <p><u>Heritage and Archaeology Comments</u></p> <p>It would be valuable to reference the historic environment in the area and the obvious promotion of tourism opportunities with linkage to walks and cycle ways.</p> <p><u>Data and Evidence Comments</u></p> <p>Verification is needed on the proportion of businesses employed less than 10 people.</p> <p>GVA data – there is more up to date data available</p> <p>Timescales of datasets would be useful to understand if any data is inflated due to the pandemic.</p> <p><u>Inclusivity and Employment Comments</u></p> <p>Wider outcomes to support inclusivity than reduce NEET numbers, i.e., providing employment and skills opportunities to those who have complex needs or multiple barriers to employment such as</p>	<p>Within the strategy already.</p> <p>Noted, however this is not a planning document</p> <p>Noted. Included</p> <p>To be included in action plan</p> <p>Noted. Changed</p> <p>Noted. Changed</p> <p>Noted and timescales of datasets included.</p> <p>I couldn't find the data on ONS or NOMIS so have not made changes as it would be difficult to track.</p>
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	<p>people with disabilities, care leavers, BME groups, LGBTQ+ people.</p> <p><u>Economic Development Comments</u></p> <p>The strategy offers a lot of strategic fit, there are other county wider policies and plans relating to the economy that are not included. These can be found on our website.</p> <p>Useful to reference future funding streams, i.e., levelling up fund and UK shared prosperity fund.</p>	<p>Noted. Will include in Appendix 1</p> <p>Noted. This is already in action plan</p>
<p>The Grace Network</p>	<p>The strategy was well received with the following comments made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local business ownership is key to keeping wealth in the district. • A cross department way of working to meet the vision is key • Considering more than GVA for the strategies outcome is welcome • How do we know about businesses that are under the radar, i.e., work from home start ups? • Inclusive growth must support our low income residents • How do we plan to support the hard to reach businesses such as independent traders? • We need new employment spaces but in the right locations • Reducing the reliance on cars is needed • EO: Support inward investment – do not forget about this sector investment and charity money Wealth creation is not just money. 	<p>Noted. This is very important!</p> <p>Noted. Already mentioned within the strategy</p> <p>Comment. No action needed</p> <p>Unsure how to monitor this yet – but an important point</p> <p>Comment. In strategy already</p> <p>Noted. Will be included in our businesses engagement as a result of the action plan</p> <p>Noted – in strategy already</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>This is an inclusive statement. If we list one business type, we have to list all</p> <p>Very important! This strategy seeks to do that with colleagues internally and our key partners and stakeholder</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We must ensure we keep the district unique 	
<p>Resident Wotton-Under-Edge</p>	<p>Wotton is mentioned just once on page 19, and the Manufacturing and Advanced Engineering cluster should be ticked due to Renishaw and the agricultural box should be ticked also.</p> <p>There is no reference to the pressures and poor retail facilities on W-u-E due to neighbouring tourist using services. I.e., parking, availability of doctors, unmaintained roads and poor internet connectivity.</p> <p>Better transport connections are vital, particularly the new Charfield rail station and cycle corridor. These are far more relevant to the area than the canal corridor.</p> <p>The cultural sector is important to the area, but no reference to Prema.</p> <p>There is no reference to the growing energy and inflation crisis and the worsening need for food banks.</p>	<p>This is similar for all parish and towns. Noted – to be considered</p> <p>Noted – this is too specific for a district wide strategy and whilst needs focus must not be at the detriment of increasing visitors.</p> <p>In action plan for improvements to transport</p> <p>Noted. No changes made as the strategy doesn't want to be an exhaustive list of businesses from different sectors</p> <p>Noted. This is already in the strategy</p>

<p>Wotton-under-Edge</p>	<p>Concerns over SDC planning decision and loss of commercial space to residential.</p> <p>Concern that planning decisions reduce the buffer between villages and add pressure to resources and infrastructure.</p> <p>There should be more reference to agricultural diversification and the practical support needed for local traders.</p> <p>There should be digital support for businesses that links to the District, County and Tourism apps available. This should support improving footfall and place shaping.</p> <p>There has to be better broadband offers</p> <p>There needs to be ways to support businesses who are affected by Covid.</p> <p>More support from SDC for free and accessible parking and access to EV charging points as well as bike storage.</p> <p>Has there been a cost benefit analysis of the canals project carried out? The work doesn't positively impact W-U-E.</p> <p>Public transport needs improvements and reference should be made to the Greenway SUSTRANS project for cycling and walking.</p> <p>There should be more support of local promotions and more joined up working with neighbouring councils.</p> <p>Renishaw being the biggest employer in the parish is not mentioned.</p>	<p>Noted. However, this is not a planning document</p> <p>Noted. However, this is not a planning document</p> <p>Noted – will include in action plan</p> <p>Noted – this is an action – will be included in action plan</p> <p>This is already mentioned in the strategy and within the action plan Included in the action plan</p> <p>Included in action plan</p> <p>Noted. This is not the strategy to include this concern in.</p> <p>Improvements are set out within the action plan.</p> <p>Noted. This is already highlighted within the action plan</p> <p>Please note, no businesses are named in the strategy to stop it becoming an extensive list of businesses</p>
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	<p>Landlords can be a blocker to growth and are not mentioned.</p> <p>Priority areas highlighted are incorrect for Wotton and should be: The Green Economy, Retail & Hospitality; Tourism & Visitor Economy; The Arts & Culture; Agriculture, Agritech & Rural Diversification; Manufacturing & Advanced Engineering and include a new area; Community Hubs</p>	<p>Agree, however landlords are businesses too and should not be penalised. Will consider how to create actions to support this</p> <p>Priority areas removed from the strategy.</p>
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National and Local Policy

The Local Context

This Economic Development Strategy is set within a context of decisions made by Stroud District Council in recent years which relate to promoting fairer socio-economic development in the district, especially, **Community Wealth Building, Equality, Social Value and Wellbeing**. These decisions complement and strengthen the Council's Carbon Neutral by 2030 and Health and Wellbeing Strategies both adopted in 2021, both, with an economic focus.

Stroud District Council: The 2030 Strategy and Objectives

The 2030 Strategy has been developed to ensure the District Council fulfils its commitment to do everything possible for the district to become carbon neutral by 2030. The strategy outlines where the Council can become an exemplar through the use of its own estates and services, an enabler as both a partner and policy maker and an encourager, informing, supporting and incentivising locally led action. 'Economy' is one significant strand of the Strategy and its accompanying Master Plan.

Within the Economy strand, there are agreed stretch goals:

- *Climate and ecologically minded business practice is established in the district and promoted by council procurement processes and business support services*
- *The concept of 'green business' in the district is defined and encouraged. Green Business is an area of growth*
- *Starting with new build developments in council housing we will identify and support projects that provide apprenticeships and training and secure future skills for the young and unemployed*
- *Locally based employment and purchasing drives a circular economy that is ensuring we can deliver on our energy and transport challenges and to make a sustainable lifestyle affordable, attractive and accessible for us all.*
- *Local assets for innovation and skills development, underpin widely recognised success as a low carbon society.*

Link to strategy can be found [here](#)

Stroud District Council: Community Wealth Building and Social Value

Following on from the successful impact Community Wealth building has been shown to have on local economies, most notably within Preston City Council, a motion on Community Wealth Building was adopted by Council in October 2018:

"Despite the UK being one of the world's largest economies, wealth is not equally distributed between regions, communities and individuals, and the prevailing economic model relies on attracting inward investment in order to regenerate and grow local economies. As a result, much of the wealth generated in local areas 'leaks' away through for example profits to businesses which are not locally based. In the last decade, 'Local Wealth Building has emerged as a powerful alternative in which local economies are reorganised, so that wealth is not

extracted but broadly held and income is recirculated. These ideas are being applied by a growing number of businesses, social and public sector organisations across the UK'... Four key strategies lie at the heart of Local Wealth Building, focussing on local employment, equitable development of land and community assets, support for SMEs, cooperatives and local banks, and progressive procurement."

Link to strategy can be found [here](#)

Stroud District Council: Procurement and Social Value

As a result of this motion Stroud District Council revised its procurement policies and the Strategy & Resources Committee adopted a Social Value Policy in June 2019. This has had an impact, for example, in monitoring the Council's spend on local companies, and also in creating the Output Specifications for the Brimscombe Port Development. An updated Social Value Policy, including access to a new Social Value Portal so the social value of key council projects can be demonstrated, was adopted in November 2021.

Link to strategy can be found [here](#)

Stroud District Council: Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy, 2021-2041

Adopted in September 2021, this has the following Strategic Outcomes: Community Resilience and Wellbeing, Environment and Climate Changes, Housing and Homelessness, and **Economy, Market Towns and Rural Vitality.**

Link to strategy can be found [here](#)

Stroud District Council: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan, 2021-2025

Adopted by Council in October 2021 with three objectives, Community, Leadership and Organisational Development and Workforce and a commitment to working proactively to help reduce inequality in the district, gather data on this, and adopt Section one of the Equality Act, the Socio-Economic Duty, "to actively consider the way in which policies and strategic decisions can address inequalities."

Link to policy and action plan can be found [here](#)

Stroud District Council: Local Plan, 2015-2031

The Stroud District Local Plan seeks to support the local economy by ensuring there is sufficient employment land available to address the Districts commercial and retail needs to 2031. The Plan also protects a series of key employment areas and supports the regeneration of older premises for new mixed uses, including employment and environmental enhancements.

The Council is currently reviewing its Local Plan for the period to 2040, with proposals for supporting the delivery of a carbon neutral district by 2030, including bringing forward additional employment land and dwellings to meet future needs and delivering physical and digital infrastructures to support new development.

The Districts Local Plan is supported by an evidence base, which includes a number of various policies and strategies, which can be found [here](#).

Link to the Local Plan can be found [here](#)

Stroud District Council: The Council Plan, 2021-2026

The Council Plan outlines the ambitions and priorities of the District for the next five years. The plan has a focus on how to support the district's residents and businesses recover, rest and renew, following the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The plan outlines three main priorities:

1. Environment and Climate Change – Protecting our environment and leading the district to carbon neutrality in 2030
2. Community Resilience and Wellbeing – Supporting a thriving and resilient local economy
3. Economy, Recovery and Regeneration – Supporting a thriving and resilient local economy

Link to the plan can be found [here](#)

The Gloucestershire and Regional Context

Western Gateway: Propelling a greener, fairer, stronger Britain, 2020

A cross-border economic partnership, made up of Local Government, City Regions and Local Enterprise Partnerships within South Wales, South West of England. More than a regional powerhouse, the scale and collaboration of the partnership aims to achieve greater, wider economic impact than if tried alone.

The Prospectus outlines three ambitions:

Ambition 1 – Connectivity

Deliver world class physical and digital connectivity, boosting productivity, unlocking housing growth and leading our transition to a net zero future.

Ambition 2 – Global Gateway

Become Britain's gateway to global markets, increasing export and investment-led growth, marketing our industries and expertise to the world.

Ambition 3 – Innovation

Spark collaboration and innovation in our distinctive high-tech sectors, universities and R&D assets, making the most of the region's renewable and environmental assets.

Link to the strategy can be found [here](#)

Agenda Item 5

Appendix 4

GFirst LEP: Local Industrial Strategy

The draft Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), published in September 2019, aligns with the ambitions set out in the Governments national industrial strategy.

Focussing on economic development, the LIS looks at ways to become a magnet county, attracting and retaining young talent to shape the future of Gloucestershire. Cyber-tech, Agri-tech and the Green Economy are highlighted as areas for significant development. The LEPs are currently subject to a national review as to what their role will consist of.

Link to the strategy can be found [here](#)

Gloucestershire Vision: 2050

A county-wide conversation that considers how to shape the areas long-term future. With eight ambitions the vision seeks to:

- Magnet: retention of 18-40 year olds with high level qualifications to work and live
- Innovative: increase of businesses start and growing
- Skilled: increase of high level skills and high skilled jobs
- Prosperity: an increase in productivity and household income
- Inclusivity: shared effects of economic growth
- Healthy and Happy: improved health and wellbeing with a good work life balance
- Connected: improved transport links and digital connectivity
- Sustainable: increased efficiency of resources and sustainable alternatives

The vision can be found [here](#)

Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Strategy: 2039

A county-wide strategy sets out the ambition for sustainable energy, and how the area can support achieve these changes. It will enable businesses and residents to capture the economic and social benefits of doing so.

The strategy is designed to maximise Gloucestershire's strengths, creating opportunities to secure business advantages in relevant local, national and international markets. The strategy identifies weaknesses, that, if unaddressed could see the county lose opportunities.

Link to the strategy can be found [here](#)

The National Context

Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener

The Net Zero Strategy has ten-point plan. This looks at ways the Nation can be innovated to improve our steps towards net zero and outlines how they propose to support the needed transition happen through four key principles:

1. We will work with the grain of consumer choice: no one will be required to rip out their existing boiler or scrap their current car;
2. We will ensure the biggest polluters pay the most for the transition through fair carbon pricing;

3. We will ensure that the most vulnerable are protected through Government support in the form of energy bill discounts, energy efficiency upgrades, and more;
4. We will work with businesses to continue delivering deep cost reductions in low carbon tech through support for the latest state of the art kit to bring down costs for consumers and deliver benefits for businesses.

Link to the strategy can be found [here](#)

Build Back Better: Our plan for growth

The Build Back Better Strategy, 2021, supersedes the NIS, and has a focus on three pillars to support economic recovery:

- **Infrastructure:** supporting to boost economic growth, productivity and competitiveness
- **Skills:** increased access to technical skills and encouraging lifelong learning
- **Innovation:** R&D investment, boosting start-ups and supporting growing businesses

Link to the strategy can be found [here](#)

The National Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain Fit for the Future

The National Industrial Strategy (NIS) sets out the “Five Foundations” that are considered essential for a successful economy:

- Ideas: innovation, R&D
- People: skills and education
- Infrastructure: broadband, energy and transport
- Business environment: support for specific sectors, high growth businesses and SME’s
- Places: local industrial strategies, increasing local productivity

Through the Strategy, the Government is committed to the support of specific sectors, and to create partnerships between government and industry aiming to increase sector productivity. The Sector Deals have supported Life Sciences, Construction, Artificial Intelligence and the Automotive sectors.

Link to the strategy can be found [here](#)

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Opportunities and Challenges

Stroud District's SWOT Analysis

Stroud District has many opportunities and challenges to consider to fully support the economy continue to take positive steps. The SWOT analysis considers the information available from open data such as Office of National Statistics and highlights the key areas of focus to enable the council support with the longer term issues.

Strengths

- Attractive rural landscape and natural assets with parts of the District located in Cotswolds AONB, world-renowned tourist attractions, long distance walking and cycling routes, canal and industrial heritage;
- High levels of local innovation in private and community sectors;
- Stroud town voted best place to live, Sunday Times 2021;
- Good partnership with GFirst LEP;
- Strong Micro and Small business base, 98.4%;
- Successful companies including: Delphi, Renishaw and Sartorius;
- Highly skilled population, 51% residents qualified to a Level 4 or equivalent;
- Highly scored wellbeing and life satisfaction as evidenced through the Thriving Places Index and SDC annual residents survey;
- Low unemployment figures, 3% compared to 4.8% unemployed nationally;
- Strong advanced engineering and manufacturing sector;
- Good levels of patents registered to businesses in Stroud District;
- Strong Voluntary and Social Enterprise sector;
- Received 89 Innovate UK grants, totalling £24,184,659 since 2004.

Weaknesses

- Broadband and mobile coverage is poor in some areas;
- Limited public transport links connecting the Districts Towns and rural communities to each other and beyond to urban areas of employment;
- Lack of walking and cycling infrastructure;
- Lack of connected grow on space for businesses;
- Long term undeveloped Brownfield sites: Remote ownership of key sites not coming forward for development;
- Lack of required skills for roles within the District;
- Lack of capacity for retrofit and low carbon skills in local economy;
- High percentage of young people migrating out of area;
- Parts of the district in UK's top 10% of deprivation.

Agenda Item 5

Appendix 5

Opportunities

- Businesses taking pioneering steps forward in the Green Revolution;
- National reputation for innovation, attractions, and independent character;
- Potential for flexible workspace in market towns to complement the move from working and living in big towns;
- Build on Local Plan ambitions to retain businesses in the area with first class business space;
- Marketing opportunities for Stroud District's Tourist & Visitor economy;
- Current events and festivals could be developed to attract more visitors;
- High motivation from residents to spend more locally and support the local economy;
- Increased access to local, renewable energy to support local companies;
- Excellent partnership working internally with District and Parish Councils;
- Support the prosperity of key sectors including: Tourism, Culture and Leisure, Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing, Distribution, Agriculture and emerging Green Technologies;
- Encourage digital sectors to set up in the District through improved connectivity and access to skills.

Threats

- Reduction in office working will impact high street and hospitality;
- National planning reforms making it easier to convert commercial space to residential;
- Lack of access to labour and skills;
- Skilled recruitment harder into key sectors in public and private businesses;
- Implications to imports, exports and supply chain issues due to emerging trade agreements, recent freight route blockages and the coronavirus pandemic;
- Shift to online shopping, and continued lack of confidence to return to the high street post Coronavirus lockdown;
- Impact of VAT reductions ending for hospitality sector at end of 2021;
- Governments focus on Levelling Up and local authority prioritisation list, of which Stroud was not in the first round;
- An aging population, with ONS figures assuming 26% of the population will be 60+ by 2030;
- Large level of out-commuting patterns;
- Increase in house and land prices forcing families and young people to move away;
- Reduced short term certainty exporting to the EU as a result of Britain leaving the EU;
- Rising house prices reducing access to housing for young people and reduction in private rental sector.



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEMBER/OFFICER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Regeneration and Investment Board Levelling Up Task Force (key partners)
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	RIB: 1 February 2022 LUF Task Force: 26 January 2022 & 17 February 2022
BRIEF REPORT:	
<p>The Regeneration and Investment Board met on 1 February and considered the following main items:</p> <p>Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid. The board discussed the emerging 'round 2' bid to the Government's Levelling Up Fund. While detailed criteria and timetable for bid submission is awaited, progress across all areas of the bid – entitled Gateways, Landmarks and Access for All – is strong. A summary of the emerging bid can be found here: https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s4158/Stroud%20Bid%20-%20Gateways%20Landmarks%20and%20Access%20for%20All.pdf.</p> <p>Members of the Board and all partners involved understand the need to focus and prioritise the bid on those elements that are at a sufficiently advanced stage and most closely match the bid criteria, when published. Officers will make recommendations on this at the appropriate time, in advance of bid submission.</p> <p>The LUF Partners' Task Force has also met twice (26 Jan and 17 Feb) to review progress and take action as appropriate to support the preparation bid.</p> <p>Canal Strategy and Economic Development Strategy. The board noted that the Canal Strategy which had recently been approved as a draft by S&R Committee would shortly be going out for an 8 week period of consultation, prior to coming to Environment Committee for approval as a formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Similarly, the Economic Development Strategy which is currently being consulted upon will come back to S&R Committee for approval on 10 March 2022.</p> <p>Project Updates – The Board received updates and discussed progress on the One Public Estate (Zero Carbon) project, the Brimscombe Port Regeneration Project and the current situation with Tricorn House, where the Council continues to apply pressure on the owners to maintain the site and facilitate its redevelopment.</p>	
FUTURE MEETINGS	RIB: 5 April 2022 LUF Task Force: 24 March 2022
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Brendan Cleere, Strategic Director of Place
DATE	01/03/2022

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STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MEMBER/OFFICER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Stroud District Council
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	13 January 2022
BRIEF REPORT:	
<p>1 Introduction</p> <p>1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the current position with the redevelopment of Brimscombe Port following the last update to committee, which was provided in January 2022.</p> <p>2 Demolition contract</p> <p>2.1 Haywood Crushing Demolition Ltd (HCD) are continuing with demolition works whilst the Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) from the Environment Agency is underway. The statutory response date for the FRAP is 26 March, however some are issued before the statutory timeframe is reached.</p> <p>2.2 A separate FRAP has been submitted for the Port House, this was to reduce any potential delays for the rest of the site due to additional design information being required. A FRAP is required for any demolition works within 8 metres of the river.</p> <p>2.3 In line with ecological timeframes, the units that were deemed to have features suitable for roosting bats were checked by an ecologist prior to removing roofs.</p> <p>2.4 The demolition work is programmed to complete by April this year, however this may extend into May depending on when the FRAPs are issued by the Environment Agency.</p> <p>3 Procurement of a Developer</p> <p>3.1 Following evaluation of the Selection Questionnaires that were returned by a number of developers, three developers have been shortlisted and have now been officially invited to participate in the competitive dialogue stage of the procurement process.</p> <p>3.2 This involves discussions between the developers and the Council to help us establish the technical details of their proposals and to better understand how they see the project unfolding.</p>	



STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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- 3.3 All three developers have a strong track record in delivering projects of a similar nature and have demonstrated that they have the skills and experience to deliver the right solution for Brimscombe Port.
- 3.4 Discussions between the developers and the Council will now take place over the next couple of months.
- 3.5 Following advice from the Council's procurement and legal advisors, the identities of these developers will not be made public mainly due to the following reasons:
- a. To reduce the opportunity for collusion
 - b. To maintain commercial confidentiality of the tenderers
 - c. To prevent tenderers from dropping out due to the perceived level/attributes of the competition i.e. companies being intimidated by large providers or equally where contractors are considered to give excessively low prices
 - d. Which in turn maintains the value for money aspect of the procurement (the key reason for competitive dialogue) ensuring all bidders remain in and maintain a competitive approach and mind-set
 - e. The whole process can be open to challenge if it is not seen to be run in accordance with the procurement rules and there is any leakage of information about individual bidder's proposals.
- 3.6 Once the bids have been developed to sufficient detail, tenderers will be invited to submit competitive bids by providing responses to the Council's tender evaluation criteria.
- 3.7 These will be scored by officers with specialist knowledge in those topic areas together with the Council's consultants. This will result in a preferred bidder, the details of which will be presented to members for approval at the S&R Committee in July, subject to no additional competitive dialogue sessions being required.
- 3.8 The aim is to confirm the successful bidder in the summer. The developer will then consult with the local community and key stakeholders prior to submitting its planning application for the redevelopment early next year.



STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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4 Current Estimated Key Milestones

Activity	Estimated date
Demolition complete	Apr 2022
Approval to appoint developer	July 2022
Development Agreement completed	July 2022
Infrastructure can start	July 2022
Planning application submission	Jan 2023
Commencement of redevelopment	Oct 2023
Completion of redevelopment	Oct 2025

5 Community Engagement & Comms Plan

- 5.1 The Project Team continues to meet with the Parish Council to update them on progress and to focus on the delivery of the community facility within the development.
- 5.2 Regular letters continue to be posted to the local residents and the schools to update them on activity on the Port as the demolition works continue.
- 5.3 Updates are provided to those people who have signed up to be kept informed on progress with the project.
- 5.4 The Brimscombe Port page on the Council's website has recently been updated to make it easier to read and find the relevant information.

FUTURE MEETINGS	7 April 2022
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Celeste Dauncey
DATE	22 February 2022



STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MEMBER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	19 January 2022
BRIEF REPORT:	
<p>1) We received a presentation from Neil Hopwood of GFirstLEP on the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund, a revolving loan fund governed jointly by GFirstLEP and GCC, using capital originally awarded in 2012 under the “Growing Places Fund”. It has been used to move forward sites with a strong business case that are constrained or stalled, and where other sources of capital are not readily available.</p> <p>GIIF allows construction to proceed until an asset has been created, at which point the project promoter can usually re-finance the project through more conventional sources and hence repay the GIIF loan. The funding has been recycled several times (8 projects in total, bringing in £122m of private sector finance and securing 845 jobs). Current projects are Bakers Quay (Phase 2) re-generation and the new 270 climbing centre in Bentham, with more in the pipeline.</p> <p>2) We received an update from Mike Dawson on strategic planning in Gloucestershire, with a status update for each of the districts along with the Joint Core Strategy, the Statement of Common Ground and some of the key delivery projects across the county.</p> <p>3) Colin Chick, Executive Director of Economy, Environment & Infrastructure presented his usual update on economic growth issues in the county. In response to a member question, the ED spent some time outlining his concern at the growing proportion of development sites operating CIL rather than s106, the lack of CIL payments to GCC from the districts (Stroud being a notable exception), and therefore a potentially severe shortfall in funding for necessary infrastructure in the years to come, in the absence of system change.</p>	
FUTURE MEETINGS	16 March 2022 31 May 2022 22 September 2022
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Cllr Chloe Turner
DATE	11 February 2022

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STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

10 MARCH 2022

WORK PROGRAMME

Date of meeting	Matter to be considered	Reporting Member/Officer
07.04.22	Budget Monitoring Report 2021/22 Q3	Accountancy Manager
	Stroud Cemetery Chapel	Property Manager
	Member\Officer update reports:	
	a) Leadership Gloucestershire Update	Chair & Chief Executive
	b) Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC)	Chair & Chief Executive
	c) Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (GEGSC)	Councillor Turner
	d) Council Plan Progress Update Q4	Chief Executive
	e) Regeneration & Investment Board	Strategic Director of Place
	f) Brimscombe Port Board	Regeneration Delivery Lead
	Work Programme	

Items for Next Civic Year:

Date	Matter to be considered	Reporting Member/Officer
9 June 2022	Procurement Update	Senior Policy and Governance Officer
12 July 2022	Brimscombe Port Developer Partner	Head of Property Services
29 Sept 2022	TBC Outline Business Case – Stonehouse, Bristol Road Station	Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development
24 Nov 2022	Corporate Asset Management Strategy	Head of Property Services
	Performance Management Framework Review	Senior Policy and Governance Officer
	Canal Strategy Action Plan	Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development
2 Feb 2023		
9 Mar 2023		
20 Apr 2023		

Item for a future meeting (TBC)

- Kingshill House – Property Manager

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