



Public Document Pack STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

To all Members of Stroud District Council

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

You are hereby summoned to attend Meeting of **STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL** in the Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud on **THURSDAY, 21 JULY 2022** 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.

If you wish to attend this meeting, please contact democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk. This is to ensure adequate seating is available in the Council Chamber.

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**
To receive apologies for absence.
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
To receive declarations of interest.
3. **MINUTES (Pages 5 - 10)**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2022.
4. **APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND POSITIONS (Pages 11 - 14)**
To update the allocation of seats in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and appoint changes to membership of committees and appointments with effect from 21 July 2022.
5. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
To receive announcements from the Chair of Council, Leader of Council or Chief Executive.
6. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
The Chair of the relevant Committee will answer questions from members of the

Council
Thursday, 21 July 2022

Agenda Published: Wednesday, 13 July 2022

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public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures as set out in the [Constitution](#).

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS

Noon on Friday, 8 July 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

7. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (Pages 15 - 44)

This report sets out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel's review of the Members' Scheme of Allowances.

8. APPOINTMENT OF A MONITORING OFFICER (Pages 45 - 48)

To appoint a permanent Monitoring Officer.

9. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (Pages 49 - 80)

To consider the draft UKSPF Investment Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

10. RECOMMENDATION FROM STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

10a. ACQUISITION OF LAND AT BATH PLACE, STROUD (Pages 81 - 88)

To seek approval to the acquisition of a brownfield development site in Stroud.

11. RECOMMENDATION FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

11a. OUR SERVICE STANDARDS (Pages 89 - 102)

To consider Our Service Standards for approval and adoption.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

12a. ANNUAL REPORT ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2021/2022 (Pages 103 - 130)

To advise on the treasury management activities in 2021/2022, in accordance with the Council's Treasury Policy Statement. To report on actual 2021/2022 Prudential Indicators in accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code.

12a. AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 (Pages 131 - 144)

The Annual Report of the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee (the Committee) summarises the Committee's activities during 2021/22 and sets out its plans for the next twelve months.

This report provides independent assurance that the Council has in place:

- i. Adequate and effective governance, risk management and internal control frameworks;
- ii. Internal and External Audit services; and
- iii. Financial reporting arrangements that can be relied upon and which

contribute to the high corporate governance standards that this Council expects and maintains.

13. **MEMBER QUESTIONS**

See Agenda Item 6 deadlines for submissions.

14. **NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

14a. **MOTION REGARDING THE FORMER SHIP INN SITE, STONEHOUSE, IS PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR NICK HOUSDEN AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR STEPHEN DAVIES**

This Council Notes:

1. The former Ship Inn site is a canal-side piece of land adjacent to the A419 in Stonehouse.
2. The former pub (The Ship Inn) was demolished in 1997. Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) had planning permission refused for a pupil referral centre (2001) and then in 2002 GCC had planning refused for residential development by Stroud District Council (SDC) upheld after appeal.
3. In 2005, in response to Cotswold Canals request for additional financial support with the Canal Restoration, GCC donated this piece of land along with two others, as part of the County's agreement to contribute land which would benefit the Cotswold Canals project.
4. In 2016 this council took the decision to sell the Ship Inn site from the General Fund to the HRA, with the resulting receipt being used on the canal project In 2018 the plan for 9 dwellings (down from initial plans of 10) were discussed at an SDC DCC meeting and after much discussion, councillors voted against the development and the application was withdrawn.
5. Having watched the failed attempts to acquire planning permission twice on this site, Stonehouse Town Council in October 2021 conducted a survey, asking for residents' views on the site. The response rate from residents was substantial, in total 598 people from all over the town took part in the survey (all verified by officers) which equates to 9% of Stonehouse residents over working age. The overwhelming majority, 91%, did not want to see council-built housing on the site; with 95% wanting to see community facilities. A small minority wanted both. Stonehouse Town Council is now seeking further engagement with SDC.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

As landowners task officers with finding a suitable use for the former Ship Inn site in Stonehouse that:

1. Rules out Housing
2. Considers our Canal Strategy
3. Follows on from the good work conducted by Stonehouse Town Council noted above.

Following this work officers will then present their findings and recommendations to Council by the end of Spring 2023.

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COUNCIL

19 May 2022

7.00 - 7.48 pm

Council Chamber

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Steve Robinson (Chair)

Councillor Paula Baker
 Councillor Martin Baxendale
 Councillor Natalie Bennett
 Councillor Catherine Braun
 Councillor Chris Brine
 Councillor Martin Brown
 Councillor Doina Cornell
 Councillor Gordon Craig
 Councillor Laurie Davies
 Councillor Stephen Davies
 Councillor Katrina Davis
 Councillor Jonathan Edmunds
 Councillor Christopher Evans
 Councillor Helen Fenton
 Councillor Colin Fryer
 Councillor Victoria Gray
 Councillor Lindsey Green
 Councillor Jessie Hoskin
 Councillor Nicholas Housden
 Councillor Nick Hurst
 Councillor Steve Hynd
 Councillor Beki Aldam
 Councillor Kate Crews
 Councillor Haydn Sutton
 Councillor Ashley Smith

*= Absent

Councillor Trevor Hall (Vice-Chair)

Councillor George James
 Councillor Julie Job
 Councillor Christopher Jockel
 Councillor John Jones
 Councillor Haydn Jones
 Councillor Norman Kay
 Councillor Robin Drury-Layfield
 Councillor Jenny Miles
 Councillor Dave Mossman
 Councillor Gill Oxley
 Councillor Loraine Patrick
 Councillor Keith Pearson
 Councillor Nigel Prenter
 Councillor Mattie Ross
 Councillor Mark Ryder
 Councillor Lucas Schoemaker
 Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy
 Councillor Brian Tipper
 Councillor Ken Tucker
 Councillor Tricia Watson
 Councillor Rich Wilsher
 * Councillor Jason Bullingham *
 * Councillor Martin Percy *
 * Councillor Chloe Turner *

Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive
 Monitoring Officer
 Strategic Director of Resources

Senior Democratic Services & Elections
 Officer

CL.001 **Chair of Council**

Councillor Steve Robinson was nominated for the position of Chair of Council.

RESOLVED That Councillor Steve Robinson be elected Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2022-23.

CL.002 **Vice-Chair of Council**

Councillors Trevor Hall and Keith Pearson were nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of Council.

On being put to the Vote, Councillor Trevor Hall was appointed as Vice-Chair of Council with 26 votes in favour.

RESOLVED That Councillor Trevor Hall be elected Vice-Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2022-23.

CL.003 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aldam, Bullingham, Crews, Pearcy, Sutton, Turner, and Smith.

CL.004 **Declaration of Interests**

There were none.

CL.005 **Minutes**

An amended version of the minutes had been published with a correction to the results of the vote for the Appointment of Independent Persons where there were 37 votes in favour and one abstention. The hardcopies that were posted to Members contained this amendment and the website had also been updated.

Councillor Kay requested that the following was added to CL.052 'Councillor Kay was sorry that Members had focused on the blackboy statue and not at all on the anti-slavery arch of which we should be rightly proud'. The amendment was agreed.

Councillor Ryder requested that the full statement from Councillor Hall was included in the minutes as follows 'Islamophobia is rampant in our society and has been for a long time, so it needs to be challenged. And that's why we need to do it. There is a lot of prejudice against Islamophobia in this country and a lot of it I have to say has come from the Tory party as well.' The amendment was agreed.

Councillor Pearson asked for the following to be included in the minutes, 'Councillor Pearson believed that the cost and responsibility laid with Stroud Town Council and not the entire district'. The amendment was agreed.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2022, including the amendments outlined above, were approved as a correct record.

CL.006 Announcements

The Chair announced that he had presented a plaque to Forest Green Rovers on Sunday 8th May at an event at the Museum in the Park to celebrate their promotion to League One, he thanked all those who had supported the event.

The Leader, Councillor Cornell, advised that the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee had met and the joint bid with the South Gloucestershire College was granted for the Berkeley low carbon training centre. The leader thanked Officers, the College and Nailsworth Climate Action Network Group.

CL.007 Leader and Deputy Leader (Chair and Vice Chair of Strategy & Resources)

Councillor Doina Cornell was nominated for the position of Leader of Council.

Councillor Catherine Braun was nominated for the position of Deputy Leader of Council.

RESOLVED That Councillor Doina Cornell be elected Leader of Council and that Councillor Catherine Braun be elected Deputy Leader of Council for the Civic Year 2022-23.

CL.008 Appointment to Committees

The appointment to committees was agreed as set out below:

Audit and Standards Committee (9 Members)

Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy

Councillor Martin Percy

Councillor Paula Baker

Councillor Stephen Davies

Councillor Nick Hurst

Councillor Norman Kay

Councillor Keith Pearson

Councillor Steve Robinson

Councillor Rich Wilsher

Community Services and Licensing Committee (12 Members)

Councillor Chris Brine

Councillor Beki Aldam

Councillor Natalie Bennett

Councillor Gordon Craig

Councillor Kate Crews

Councillor Jonathan Edmunds

Councillor Jessie Hoskin

Councillor Julie Job

Councillor John Jones

Councillor Gill Oxley

Councillor Nigel Prenter

Councillor Ken Tucker

Development Control Committee (12 Members)

Councillor Martin Baxendale

Councillor Helen Fenton

Councillor Chris Brine

Councillor Martin Brown

Councillor Jason Bullingham

Councillor Victoria Gray

Councillor Haydn Jones

Councillor Jenny Miles

Councillor Loraine Patrick

Councillor Mark Ryder

Councillor Lucas Schoemaker

Councillor Ashley Smith

Environment Committee (13 Members)

Councillor Chloe Turner
Councillor Robin Layfield

Councillor Natalie Bennett
Councillor Martin Brown
Councillor Christopher Evans
Councillor George James
Councillor Haydn Jones

Councillor Norman Kay
Councillor David Mossman
Councillor Ashley Smith
Councillor Haydn Sutton
Councillor Brian Tipper
Councillor Tricia Watson

Housing Committee (12 Members)

Councillor Mattie Ross
Councillor Lucas Schoemaker

Councillor Paula Baker
Councillor Laurie Davies
Councillor Trina Davis
Councillor Colin Fryer

Councillor Lindsey Green
Councillor Nick Housden
Councillor Steve Hynd
Councillor Christopher Jockel
Councillor Jenny Miles
Councillor Loraine Patrick

Strategy and Resources Committee (13 Members)

Councillor Doina Cornell
Councillor Catherine Braun

Councillor Chris Brine
Councillor Gordon Craig
Councillor Stephen Davies
Councillor Trevor Hall
Councillor Nick Housden

Councillor Nick Hurst
Councillor Martin Percy
Councillor Keith Pearson
Councillor Mattie Ross
Councillor Ken Tucker
Councillor Chloe Turner

RESOLVED That Councillors be appointed to the Council's committees as set out in these minutes.

CL.009 Appointment of Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs

The following Councillors were nominated and voted into the positions of Chairs and Vice-Chairs on the Council's committees in 2022-23.

Audit and Standards Committee

Chair: Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy

Vice-Chair: Councillor Martin Percy

Community Services and Licensing Committee

Chair: Councillor Chris Brine

Vice-Chair: Councillor Beki Aldam

Development Control Committee

Chair: Councillor Martin Baxendale

Vice-Chair: Councillor Helen Fenton

Environment Committee

Chair: Councillor Chloe Turner

Vice-Chair: Councillor Robin Layfield

Housing Committee

Chair: Councillor Mattie Ross

Vice-Chair: Councillor Lucas Schoemaker

Strategy and Resources Committee

Chair: Leader of Council (Councillor Doina Cornell)

Vice-Chair: Deputy Leader of Council (Councillor Catherine Braun)

RESOLVED That Councillors be appointed as Chair and Vice-Chair to the Council's committees as set out in these minutes.

CL.010 Other Appointments

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Gloucestershire)

Councillor Helen Fenton (Lead)

Councillor Natalie Bennett (Substitute)

Police and Crime Panel (Gloucestershire)

Councillor Martin Percy (Lead)

Councillor Chris Brine (Substitute)

Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Chloe Turner (Lead)

Councillor Ashley Smith (Substitute)

Appointment of three Mental Health Champions

Councillors Victoria Gray, Natalie Bennett and Tricia Watson

Appointment of five Members to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

Councillors Gill Oxley, Robin Layfield, Natalie Bennett, Norman Kay, Jonathan Edmunds.

Appointment of three Members, one Parish Council Representative and one Independent Person to the Standards Sub-Committee

Chair of Audit and Standards Committee (Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy)

Vice-Chair of Audit and Standards Committee (Councillor Martin Percy)

Chair of Constitution Working Group (Councillor Keith Pearson)

Parish Council Representative (Muriel Bullock)

Independent Person (Phyllida Pyper)

The Gloucestershire Covid-19 Outbreak Engagement Board had been disbanded, no appointments were made.

RESOLVED That Councillors be appointed to other bodies as set out above.

CL.011 LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REVISIT FEEDBACK REPORT

The Leader, Councillor Cornell, highlighted key points including:

- A cross-party Member development group would be formed to provide training and information co-designed by Members and look at the Member Induction.
- Encouragement to progress work on community engagement in particular with Town and Parish Councils.
- A further report setting out the action plan would be taken to Strategy and Resources Committee on the 9 June 2022.

In response to a question from Councillor Davies regarding the speed at which payments for the Council Tax rebate had been paid the Leader advised that the Revenue and Benefits team had done their best to get the payments made as soon as possible but there had been issues with the software. She also highlighted other payments that the team had made recently and thanked them for their hard work.

Proposed by Councillor Cornell, seconded by Councillor Braun.

Councillor Braun highlighted the reference to the council having a growing national and regional profile and the development of its reputation in respect of climate change, regeneration and its proactive approach to tackling equality, diversity and inclusion and hoped that this work would be continued.

Councillor Green thanked the Peer Challenge team for the report, she was pleased to see acknowledgement of some issues and looked forward to progress being made on these areas such as Housing. She also expressed an interest in the Member Development Working Group that was due to be formed.

Councillor Haydn Jones noted that there was nothing regarding planning in the recommendations of the Peer Challenge. He stated that planning was really important to residents in the Stroud District and that work needed to be done to improve enforcement, response times and updates provided. He also stated that it should be a priority to work with the Town and Parish Councils and that the Council should be engaging and explaining.

Councillor Davies stated that it was good to have the input from the Peer Challenge and that the Council was doing good things. He also highlighted the improvements that could be made with engagement with Town and Parish Councils.

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

RESOLVED To welcome the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge feedback report. An action plan based on the recommendations will be considered by the Strategy & Resources Committee on 9 June 2022.

The meeting closed at 7.48 pm

Chair

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

21 JULY 2022

Report Title	APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND POSITIONS
Purpose of Report	To update the allocation of seats in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and appoint changes to membership of committees and appointments with effect from 21 July 2022.
Decision(s)	The Council RESOLVES to approve the changes to committee membership and positions as set out in the report and appendix.
Consultation and Feedback	The proposed appointments have been subject to consultation with the relevant Group Leaders.
Legal Implications	The Council is required to appoint Councillors to committees in accordance with the proportionality rules.
Report Author	Jenna Day, Senior Democratic Services & Elections Officer Email: jenna.day@stroud.gov.uk Hannah Emery, Corporate Policy & Governance Manager Email: hannah.emery@stroud.gov.uk
Options	Members may make alternative nominations to the places available on committees subject to compliance with the allocation rules.
Appendices	Appendix A – Tables showing changes to committee membership and appointments (Document To Follow)

1. Political Composition

The Council consists of a number of political groupings. The various groups comprise the following Members.

Conservative Group Councillors (19)		
Jason Bullingham	Nick Housden	Lorraine Patrick
Gordan Craig	Nick Hurst	Keith Pearson
Stephen Davies	Julie Job	Mark Ryder
Trina Davis	Haydn Jones	Haydn Sutton
Chris Evans	John Jones	Brian Tipper
Victoria Gray	David Mossman	
Lindsey Green	Gill Oxley	
Green Group Councillors (13)		
Beki Aldam	Jonathan Edmunds	Lucas Schoemaker
Martin Baxendale	Steve Hynd	Chloe Turner
Catherine Braun	Chris Jockel	Tricia Watson
Martin Brown	Norman Kay	
Kate Crews	Martin Percy	
Labour Group Councillors (11)		
Paula Baker	Helen Fenton	Steve Robinson
Natalie Bennett	Jessie Hoskin	Mattie Ross
Chris Brine	Jenny Miles	Ashley Smith
Laurie Davies	Nigel Prenter	

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Community Independent Group Councillors (4)		
Doina Cornell	Colin Fryer	Trevor Hall
Robin Layfield		
SDC Liberal Democrat Group Councillors (3)		
George James	Ken Tucker	Rich Wilsher

Note: In addition to the above, there is one Independent Member, namely, Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy (known as 'Conservative - No Group').

2. Committees

The committees which are subject to political balance requirements currently comprise the following.

Committee	No. of Members on the committee
Community Services & Licensing	12
Environment	13
Housing	12
Strategy and Resources	13
Audit & Standards	9
Development Control	12

3. Allocations to committees subject to political balance requirements

The seats on each committee must be allocated to each political group as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. On the basis of the existing committee structure, the changes to the political balance and following discussions with the relevant Group Leaders, the allocations are as set out below (changes have been highlighted in red).

Total no. of councillors 51	Conservative (19 Cllrs)	Green (13 Cllrs)	Labour (11 Cllrs)	Community Independents (4 Cllrs)	Liberal Democrats (3 Cllrs)	Total seats available
Community Services & Licensing	4	3	3	1	1	12
Environment	5	4	2	1	1	13
Development Control	5	3	4	0	0	12
Strategy & Resources	5	3	3	1	1	13
Housing	4	3	4	1	0	12
Audit & Standards	4	2	2	0	1	9
Seats to be allocated per Group	27	18	18	4	4	71

3.2 Committee Memberships were agreed at the Council Annual Meeting on 19 May 2022. The agreed nominations will be shown in the tables in Appendix A which will be published at a later date.

3.3 Due to the change to the political balance following the formation of a new political group, nominations received by Democratic Services from Group Leaders will be

reported in Appendix A or otherwise made at the Council Meeting. Appendix A will be circulated prior to the Council Meeting on the 21 July 2022.

4. Standards Sub-Committee

- 4.1 So far as the Standards Sub-Committee is concerned, due to the availability and other commitments of individuals on the Sub-Committee, it is proving difficult to identify a convenient time for the next meeting. As the Sub-Committee has a quasi-judicial function and it is necessary for there to be an Independent Person and a Town & Parish Council representative present, it is suggested that deputies for those members of the Sub-Committee be appointed.
- 4.2 Council is therefore asked to appoint deputies for the designated Independent Person and/or the Town & Parish Council representative on the Standards Sub-Committee in the event that they are not able to attend future meetings. On that basis, it is recommended that John Acton and Adrian Stratton be each appointed as deputies for Phyllida Pyper, and Steve Ponting be appointed as deputy for Muriel Bullock on the Standards Sub-Committee.

5. Military Covenant Member Champions

- 5.1 A report to Strategy and Resources Committee was taken on the 13 June 2019 to agree that a Councillor would be appointed to champion the military covenant. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Head of Housing Services was tasked with being the Council's officer champion the military covenant. At Council on the 18 July 2019 it was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council would undertake the Member Champion role as part of their civic duty.
- 5.2 The Vice-Chair of Council has asked to step back from this position and it is recommended that Cllr Loraine Patrick, who is herself a military veteran, takes up the role. Council is asked to consider appointing Cllr Loraine Patrick and the Chair of Council as Military Covenant Member Champions for the Civic Year 2022/23. Council is further recommended to confirm that the Strategic Director of Communities is appointed as the Councils Officer Champion.

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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

21 JULY 2022

Report Title	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (Members' Allowances) to Stroud District Council			
Purpose of Report	This report sets out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel's review of the Members' Scheme of Allowances.			
Decision(s)	Council RESOLVES: a) To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and approve the recommendations, summarised in section 4 of this report, and set out in full in the Panel's report (Appendix A); and b) To agree to make alternative provision for the Members' Scheme of Allowances taking account of the Independent Remuneration Panel's report.			
Consultation and Feedback	All members were invited to respond to a survey on the current Scheme of Allowances, responses to this survey and separate interviews held with several Members informed the Panel's recommendations.			
Report Author	Hannah Emery, Corporate Policy and Governance Manager Tel: 01453 754383 Email: Hannah.emery@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept all recommendations 2. Accept some but not all recommendations or amend them as appropriate 3. Not accept any of the recommendations 			
Background Papers	Current Members' Scheme of Allowances			
Appendices	Appendix A – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (Members' Allowances) to Stroud District Council			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	No

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1** In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the council is required to make a scheme for the payment of Allowances to Members. In doing so, the council must establish an Independent Remuneration Panel

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(IRP) to review the Members' Allowance Scheme and report its recommendations which the council must have regard to.

- 1.2 The aim of the IRP's review is to ensure that the Members' Allowance Scheme is fit for purpose and reduces financial barriers to being an elected Member while ensuring the remuneration and expenses received by elected Members represent value for money.
- 1.3 The last full review of the Stroud District Council Members' Allowance Scheme was in 2016 although the Panel did convene in 2020 to conduct a full review, this was postponed until now because of the impact of the pandemic and to allow newly elected councillors to settle into their role before providing feedback on the Scheme of Allowances. The Panel conducted an interim review in February 2021 and Council agreed to adopt the Panel's recommendation in relation to Members' ICT allowance.

2. PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 Members of the IRP have been appointed by Council and are shared with Gloucester City Council. The Panel comprises the following members:
 - Mr Graham Russell (Chair)
 - Mr Chris Markley
 - Ms Kim Hawkins
 - Mr John Morris
- 2.2 The Council wishes to thank the Panel members who are appointed on a voluntary basis, for giving up their time to conduct the review and produce their report and recommendations.

3. CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK

- 3.1 At the outset of the review, the Panel were provided with the current political make-up and political management arrangements of the council and benchmarking data on allowances paid by other councils with a committee system and a similar make up to Stroud District Council.
- 3.2 Throughout the process of the review, the Panel has sought feedback on the current scheme and invited councillors to discuss this with them. A survey was circulated to members in April 2022 and twenty two responses were received.
- 3.3 The Panel met with all members who indicated they would be happy to discuss their views with the Panel, other members holding particular positions were separately invited to an interview with the IRP. The IRP met with members of all political groups and interviewed 11 members, including the Leader, Deputy Leader and Committee Chairs.
- 3.4 The information reviewed by the Panel is available from Democratic Services.

4. PANEL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Panel's report, including its findings and recommendations is appended to this report at Appendix A. The Panel considered the overall level of allowances; the remuneration package as a whole; issues that were of concern to the Panel and any other issues that

had been drawn to their attention by councillors. The key principles of the review and review methodology are outlined within the report.

4.2 The Panel make a total of 30 recommendations which are set out in bold in the report and the main findings and recommendations of the Panel are:

- i) The Basic Allowance for 2022/23 be set at £5,976 with an incremental increase of £250 per year for the next three years so the Basic Allowance increases per year as follows:
 - a. 2023/24: £5,976 + £250 = £6,226
 - b. 2024/25: £6,226 + £250 = £6,476
 - c. 2025/26: £6,476 + £250 = £6,726The annual staff award is not applied to the Basic Allowance during this period and only the fixed increment is added;
- ii) A special responsibility allowance (SRA) for the Leader of Council be set at £11,952 (200% of the Basic Allowance)
- iii) A SRA is introduced for the Deputy Leader of the Council to be set at £5,976 (100% of the Basic Allowance)
- iv) The SRA for the Chairs of the Service Committees, Development Control Committee and Audit and Standards Committee be set at £6,574 (110% of the Basic Allowance);
- v) The SRA for the Vice Chairs of Service Committees, Development Control Committee and Audit and Standards Committee be set at £2,390 (40% of the Basic Allowance);
- vi) The SRA for the Chair of Council be set at £3,586 (60% of the Basic Allowance) and the SRA for the Vice Chair be set at £598 (10% of the Basic Allowance);
- vii) Group Leader allowances are calculated on the basis of both governance responsibility and group size and the criteria that a 5 member minimum size for a Group Leader to receive an allowance is removed;
- viii) The principle of only one SRA per member be continued;
- ix) Consideration should be given to how the functional lead role at member level could be developed the Chairs of Service Committees to make them more visibly accountable and engaged in leading and monitoring service development and delivery.
- x) A clear structural and constitutional framework for member champions is established;
- xi) No changes are made to travel allowances and a small uplift is made to subsistence allowances with a ceiling cap of £22 per day in line with HMRC practice.
- xii) Dependent care expenses are met on the basis of actual costs incurred; and
- xiii) Implementation of all recommendations with effect from 1st April, 2022.

4.3 The report of the IRP was written at a time when the political make up of the council was different to the current make up but this does not affect any of the recommendations made.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

The financial implications of the proposed changes are shown in the table at Paragraph 100 of Appendix A. The estimated additional cost is £28k for 2022/23.

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Inflation on Members Allowances of 2.5% was included in the Medium Term Financial Plan (approximately £9k). Therefore, an additional £19k will be added into the MTFP at its next consideration by members if this decision is approved.

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5.2 Legal Implications

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) England Regulations 2003 (as amended) require a local authority to review its members' allowances at least once every four years.

Before any changes are made to the scheme the Council must have regard to the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel and determine whether or not it should accept the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

One Legal
Tel: 01684 272691 Email: legal.services@onelegal.org.uk

5.3 Equality Implications

Public sector equality duties have been considered by the IRP as part of their recommendations. One of the purposes of reviewing the Scheme of Allowances is to ensure that the scheme in all its aspects does not serve to create or perpetuate barriers to any person entering public office or assuming a particular role on the Council.

5.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
(MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES) TO STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

JULY, 2022

Introduction

1. The Local Government Act, 2000 required local authorities to produce a Scheme in respect of councillors' allowances. Under the Local Government (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003, Councils have to set up an independent remuneration panel to make recommendations on members' allowances.
2. A review was started in 2020 but had to be halted because of the pandemic. A new Panel was recruited in 2021 to begin a new review and now comprises

Graham Russell, former Head of Democratic Services with Bath & North East Somerset Council (Chair of the Panel)
John Morris, former Squadron Leader RAF
Kim Hawkins, Administrator at Pangolin Editions, Fine Art Foundry
Chris Markley,
3. The Panel has explored many issues during its review and has made wide ranging demands upon its Officer advisers. We are extremely indebted to Hannah Emery, Policy and Governance Manager for her advice and support throughout the review period. We are also extremely grateful to Katie Kirton (nee Markwick) for her most efficient and creative administrative and service based support.
4. We wish to acknowledge the time given by elected Members who took part in our survey questionnaire or who took the time to have face to face/virtual meetings with the Panel. This direct evidence has proved extremely valuable in shaping our recommendations.

Context of the Review

5. In accordance with legal requirements, the Scheme of Allowances has to be reviewed every 4 years, particularly with regard to the indexing arrangements for the Basic Allowance to which all members are entitled. The present Scheme has been in place since 2016, with values updated in line with the agreed indexed link to the annual percentage pay increase given to Stroud District Council employees. The pandemic accounts for the delay in completing a full review of the Scheme.

6. The Panel has based its review on a number of key principles as follows:
 - recognising the core values of Stroud District Council as a service provider and as an employer;
 - recognising that under the Committee style of governance, all members play a part in the formulation, delivery and review of policy;
 - the need for recommendations that did not of themselves create or perpetuate barriers to people standing or returning as a local councillor *(The Panel recognised that the Council's internal working arrangements were also a strong influencing factor in this)*;
 - there should be a sound local basis for calculating the level of Basic Allowance for all councillors and an indexing method that was easily understood and applied;
 - the need for recommendations on Special Responsibility Allowances that clearly distinguished those member roles that involved sufficient special characteristics **(see para 31 below)** to justify an allowance over and above the Basic Allowance;
 - recognising that while there was very little prescription in the Regulations governing members' allowances, there was statutory guidance which should be followed – and an awareness of the public's perception if this was not the case;
 - recognising that the Panel was concerned to make recommendations that were supported by the evidence offered in the review; and finally
 - the overall financial implications of implementing our recommendations were a matter for the Council to consider, on advice from Officers.

Review Methodology

7. An important part of the evidence base for the Panel was to hear directly from elected councillors in Stroud. In designing our questionnaire we were mindful of balancing the effort expended by members in completing the survey with the value of the information obtained. The returns have given the Panel a valuable insight into the time and effort expended by councillors in their duties and responsibilities to the electorate and to the Council.
8. There were many individual comments made in the returns about many aspects of the allowances scheme and about how Council business was conducted. These have been extremely useful to the Panel and many are reflected in our recommendations.
9. We have also considered comparative statistics, particularly those relating to (a) the other Councils operating a new-style committee system of governance and (b) adjoining District Councils. As with all such information, the Panel has exercised caution in using comparator information as not all similar Councils necessarily have the same level of involvement of members.

The Basic Allowance

10. The Basic Allowance is to be made available to all councillors at the same level of remuneration. There is no flexibility to pay different amounts to members. Members may forego all or part of their allowance.
11. The present Basic Allowance is £5,726 which compares favourably with that awarded in other Councils which operate a committee-style of governance.
12. According to Government Guidance issued in 2003, the purpose of the Basic Allowance is to *"recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes"*.

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13. In the context of modern local government, the Panel believes this description does not offer enough of the clarity that councillors and officers require. Indeed, the Panel was specifically asked to clarify in more detail what they felt basic allowance was intended to cover. The Panel has identified the following as being the main aspects of a councillor's role recognised through the Basic Allowance and has used this to inform its recommendations:

- time and effort in conducting the local representation role;
- use of home as an office/work base;
- travel within the electoral ward (excluding travel to Parish/Town Council meetings – see Approved Duties appendix);
- recompense in part for the direct impact of the councillor role on the family;
- serving on such outside bodies to which the member may be appointed;
- membership of the full Council and its Committees/Sub Committees/Working Groups/Task and Finish Groups/Boards and reasonable attendance at meetings of these bodies to which the member has been appointed;
- performing a chairing or other lead role at such meetings where the time and effort involved does not equate to a chairing role for which a special responsibility is justified;
- attendance at political group meetings;
- making a contribution towards the effective governance, administration and performance review of the Council's strategies, policies and service delivery;
- attendance at a reasonable number of training and development events, including all mandatory training events;
- IT consumables (including printing, ink and paper) broadband and telephone.
- *(The Panel is aware and welcomes the recently developed arrangements to support members' IT needs, which are separate to the Basic Allowance and should continue)*

14. Some of the member responses to the questionnaire indicated dissatisfaction with the level of Basic Allowance which, it was claimed, did not adequately reflect the duties of a District Councillor in Stroud. Other members declared that the allowance was, for them, satisfactory, but recognised that it was less so for those councillors on lower incomes or with care responsibilities. Another factor was that self-employed councillors found it easier to balance their Council work with employment. For other councillors, there was potentially a significant career and financial impact in achieving the same balance, particularly when aspiring to SRA roles within the Council.

A fundamental issue for the Panel is to ensure that everything possible is done to ensure that the councillor body represents the widest sectors of the community, and that the allowances scheme does not in any way act as a barrier to this.

15. The Panel is mindful that the role of a councillor in a committee-style of governance requires a higher element of meeting attendance and direct involvement in decision making/policy review than is the case in an executive-style authority. This, balanced with the heavy workload of a Stroud councillor in community support and advocacy, needs to be recognised in a robust Basic Allowance.
16. The Panel is aware that members' allowances were never intended to meet all the costs of being a councillor. Indeed, the Government has always held the position that a proportion of the hours worked by elected councillors should be un-remunerated, to reflect the public service element of the role.
17. Within the present legal framework and financial parameters, the allowances Scheme alone will not fully resolve some of the concerns of councillors about creating diversity in the council chamber, resolving career disincentives, and achieving a better Council/ family life balance for councillors.

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18. In summary, the Panel wishes the Council to put in place a robust structure of allowances that recognises
- the heavy responsibilities and workload that Stroud councillors perform,
 - the difficulty and sensitivity for councillors in managing challenging service delivery;
 - the community's growing expectations of its councillors, and
 - the potential financial barrier to people from all sectors standing for the Council, if allowances remain as they are.
19. The previous Independent Remuneration Panel continued to use a calculation for the Basic Allowance based on the average salary of members' constituents in a formula which also factored in a calculation of the average hours per week on councillor related duties and which applied a public sector discount.
20. The formula used by that Panel was based on:
- 12 hours per week (624 per year) to fulfil Council duties
35% public sector discount (*ie the number of councillor hours that should be un-remunerated as public voluntary service*)
£13.32 per hour as the median gross hourly earnings in Stroud District.
21. This formulaic approach is seen as locally relevant and a sound defensible basis for calculating the Basic Allowance for all councillors. However, in our view, some of the elements of this formula are outdated and wholly unrepresentative of how councillors in modern local government operate. The evidence from the members' survey supports this view. Accordingly, the Panel has updated the formula as follows:
- The number of hours per week/year in the formula is inappropriately low and in our view (based on the members' survey) should be no less than **13.0 hours per week / 676 hours per year**
 - The public sector (unremunerated hours) discount percentage is too high and should be set at **30%**
 - The median gross hourly earnings calculation for March 2022 is now **£14.25**

This gives a calculation as follows:

$$676 \text{ hours (minus 30\%)} = 473 \text{ hours} \times (\text{£}14.25) \text{ per hour} = \text{£}6,740$$

22. The Panel recognises that a one-off increase of this order is unlikely to find support at a time of financial difficulty and challenging service delivery issues to the community. It therefore proposes that the Council moves incrementally (i.e. £250 per year) towards this aspirational figure, which in the Panel's view is a more sustainable level for the Basic Allowance.
23. Our proposals therefore would be as follows:
- 2022/23 - £5,726 + £250 = £5,976
2023/24 - £5,976 + £250 = £6,226
2024/25 - £6,226 + £250 = £6,476
2025/26 - £6,476+ £250 = £6,726
24. The Panel is aware that, up to the present, the allowances have been upgraded on a par with whatever annual award is made to staff. We believe that it is necessary to give some firm structure and certainty to the process of moving councillors' Basic Allowance in Stroud towards our aspirational figure. Consequently, we are proposing that the staff award is not applied to the Basic Allowance during this period and that only the fixed increment is added.
25. However, we recommend that, if in 2025/26 there is a significant shortfall for councillors in what they would have been awarded had the staff increments been applied instead, then any shortfall would be made up in that year.
26. The Panel is concerned that for some councillors, the payment of the Basic Allowance has a detrimental impact on their receipt of benefits, to such an extent that they may be significantly worse off than other councillors in terms of the support available through this allowance.
27. We have explored a number of avenues, including a benevolent fund and changes to the way basic allowance is paid. While we are not able at this time to recommend a solution, we are determined to keep this matter under review and have asked Officers to come back to us as soon as possible.
- 28. RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Basic Allowance for 2022/23 be set at £5,976, wef 1st April, 2022.**

29. **RECOMMENDATION 2: That the Basic Allowance be developed incrementally, as shown in para 23, in order to move it towards an aspirational figure that better reflects the roles of a Stroud District Councillor in modern local government.**
30. **RECOMMENDATION 3: That, if in 2025/26 there is a significant shortfall for councillors in what they would have been awarded had the staff increases been applied instead, the Panel be given an opportunity to recommend that any shortfall be made up in that year.**

Special Responsibility Allowances

31. These are the allowances that are awarded to members performing key roles within the Council which have specific and significant responsibilities and/or accountabilities and/or which demand significant time and effort.
32. The Panel has applied the following principles in determining its recommendations:
 - a. the Scheme currently provides for only one SRA to be claimed by a member, even if they hold more than one role that attracts a SRA – a principle that the Panel upholds and recommends should continue;
 - b. the Panel considers what the Council expects of the member role rather than any individual's approach to the role;
 - c. a councillor receiving a robust basic allowance should reasonably be expected to undertake specific roles within the Council that are not overly demanding of time or effort (e.g. the occasional chairing role).
 - d. to qualify for a SRA, the role should satisfy a number of the special characteristics shown at para 33 below;
 - e. the present figures quoted represent the 2021/22 uplift applied to SRAs.

33. In determining our recommendations on these allowances, we have looked at each member role in the context of its primary purpose, the activities related to that role (e.g. meeting officers, media management) and the special characteristics attaching to each as follows:
- Time commitment
 - Specialist skills set
 - Functional leadership (*i.e. agenda management, prioritisation of work; public interface; focus on corporate/Council objectives*)
 - Important decision making
 - Complexity of role
 - Identifiable accountability
 - Direct responsibility for important outcomes
 - Culpability in the role
 - Constitutional relevance
34. At present, special responsibility allowances are set as a percentage of the Leader's allowance or as a percentage relative to another allowance e.g. a vice chair having an allowance that is 50% of that of a chair.
35. The Panel believes that a clearer approach would be to make all special responsibility allowances a percentage of the basic allowance. This would mean that any annual adjustment of the basic allowance would automatically translate into the appropriate adjustment across all other allowances.
36. **RECOMMENDATION 4: That the principle that a member may only claim one SRA be continued.**
37. **RECOMMENDATION 5: That all SRAs be calculated in future as a percentage of the Basic Allowance.**
38. The following paragraphs reflect our consideration of the various member roles.

Leader of the Council

39. The Leader of the Council's role is pivotal in achieving the Authority's strategic objectives. The Leader chairs the Strategy and Resources Committee which has a central role in co-ordinating the work of all committees towards achieving Council objectives. The present SRA for the Leader is £11,095.72.

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40. The position of Leader satisfies all of the special characteristics shown above and should therefore command a significant allowance to reflect the pivotal role of strategic leadership on local, sub regional and regional levels.
41. The Stroud Leader's allowance compares reasonably favourably with that of Leaders of other benchmarked Councils. The mean of that group is £10,937. However, when compared to the allowances awarded to Leaders of other Gloucestershire-based District Councils, the Stroud Leader's allowance is well below the mean of that group which is £14,048. For this latter group however, it is important to remember that most of the other Leaders run executive-style authorities where they have personal responsibility for setting the scheme of delegations and are personally accountable. In making this point, we do not undervalue the role of the Leader in a committee-style of governance.
42. Responses to the members' survey offered proposed allowances ranging from the present level to £12,000, £14,000, £20,000 and £23,000.
43. Comparative statistics suggest that the mean Leaders' allowance is approximately 2.6 times the mean Basic Allowance of the listed Councils. Taking a balanced view regarding the absence of executive powers, but the strategic, regional and sub regional context of the Leader's role, the Stroud Leader's allowance should be calculated at 2 x Basic Allowance.
44. The Panel agrees with that approach and that it is appropriate, given all of the evidence, to propose to calculate the Leader's allowance on that basis.
45. **RECOMMENDATION 6: That the special responsibility allowance for the Leader of the Council be set at £11,952 i.e. 200% of Basic Allowance, effective from 1st April, 2022**

Deputy Leader of the Council

46. The Panel has been mindful of the political composition of the Council and its agreed governance arrangements involving a strategic alliance of the Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council. Within this alliance, the Leader of the Greens has taken on the roles of Deputy to the Leader of the Council and Vice Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

47. The role of Deputy Leader is now recognised within the Constitution of the Council but does not feature within the Scheme of Allowances. This needs to be corrected as the role is of relevance irrespective of the form of political administration.
48. The role is primarily responsible for (a) assisting the Leader to provide effective political leadership of the Council (b) assisting the Leader to give strategic direction to the Council, including the development of overall budgets, strategies and policies; (c) representing the Council as required and (d) deputising in the absence of the Leader in all aspects of the role as prescribed in the Constitution.
49. Given the nature of the alliance arrangement leading the Council, and the way the present Scheme of Allowances is structured, there is no provision for making special responsibility payments to Group Leaders, other than specifically to the main opposition Group Leader. This relates to previous administrative and governance arrangements within the Council. This is dealt with separately in our report, but is relevant here in the context of the Deputy Leader role because, in the current "alliance" arrangement, the holder of that role (which is likely always to be the Leader of one of the Groups in the alliance) will not be entitled to an SRA other than as the Vice Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee.
50. The Panel feels the role of Deputy Leader must be formally recognised in the Scheme of Allowances and that the allowance for this position should be robust enough to represent the strategic nature of the role both as a serving deputy and as a major influence in the strategic leadership of the Council.
51. **RECOMMENDATION 7: That the special responsibility allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council be set at £5,976 ie 100% of Basic Allowance, effective from 1st April, 2022.**

Chairs of Service Committees (Housing/ Environment & Community Services and Licensing)

52. These positions command a significant allowance under the present Scheme (£6,656.77). Using our list of special characteristics, it is clear that there is a significant time commitment required in managing a Committee's work programme.

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53. Fundamentally in our view, the Chairs need to act as the functional leaders for the remit of their committees and have some accountability to the Council for committee outcomes and processes and for the performance of services within their Committee's remit.
54. We are not wholly convinced that this functional lead role, described in para 33, is fully embedded in the culture of the Council. However, we believe this to be something that the Council could and should develop and in no way reflects on the actions of the present office-holders.
55. Direct comparison with other authorities is difficult as Councils operating the committee style of governance are few and the range of their committees varies.
56. Responses from the members' survey proposed allowances for these positions varying from £5,000, the present level, £7,000, £8,000 £9,000 and £12,000
57. We feel the present allowance is a fair reflection of the responsibilities of the Chairs, with a suitable adjustment to fit our overall allowance criteria of SRAs being a percentage of the Basic Allowance. However, this does represent a small reduction on the increase awarded for 2021/22.
58. **RECOMMENDATION 8: That the special responsibility allowance for the Chairs of Service Committees be set at £6,574 i.e. 110% of Basic Allowance, effective from 1st April, 2022;**
59. **RECOMMENDATION 9: That the Council be invited to consider how the functional lead role at member level could be developed through the Chairs of Service Committees, making them more visibly accountable to the Council and the public for the processes of their committees and engaged in leading/monitoring service development and delivery within their respective committee remits.**
60. **RECOMMENDATION 10: That the Council be invited to comment to the Panel in due course on the matter raised in Recommendation 9.**

Vice Chairs of Service Committees and the Development Control Committee

61. The present allowances to all Vice Chairs (£1,331.38/ £1,109.40) fall into the lowest bands of the Scheme. Ordinarily, the Panel would be considering whether the roles represented by those lower bands should attract allowances at all, or whether there was adequate recognition of these roles through a robust Basic Allowance. Furthermore, the Panel believes the differentials between the various Vice Chair roles in those lower bands needs addressing.
62. The role descriptions for the Vice Chairs is clear – the Council believes their role to be an important one and so does the Panel. Evidence from members confirms this. Vice Chairs are responsible for supporting the Chair with the effective management and running of the relevant Committee’s business. Also, they will take the lead in some areas of work, by arrangement with the Chair. They will be routinely consulted by Officers and are active participants in agenda planning and management.
63. We believe the Vice Chair roles carry a time and effort element (particularly attending meetings and briefings), have elements of functional leadership and have constitutional relevance (see para 33). All the Chairs that we engaged with spoke highly of the Vice Chair role, not in relation to the individuals involved but rather in the importance of the role in supporting the Chair and helping to deliver outcomes.
64. With regard to the Vice Chair of the Development Control Committee, this role carries a time and effort commitment and a degree of specialist knowledge in ensuring that the Committee adheres to lawful processes in determining planning matters – all of this in parallel with the Chair’s role.
65. The Panel believes it is important to recognise the special circumstances of Vice Chairs in a committee-style of governance and that the Council has set out in its role description a clear expectation of those holding these positions. The present level of allowances does not in our view reflect that importance. We are therefore minded to recommend a moderate increase and to apply that to all Vice Chairs of Committees (i.e Service Committees and the Development Control Committee).

66. **RECOMMENDATION 11: That the special responsibility allowance for the Vice Chairs of Service Committees and of the Development Control Committee be set at £2,390 i.e. 40% of Basic Allowance, effective from 1st April, 2022**

Chair of Development Control Committee

67. The role descriptions approved by the Council for member roles makes no distinction between the core functions of chairs of committees. However, while the Chairs of Service Committees have budget responsibility, this would not apply to the Chair of Development Control Committee.
68. However, the Panel recognises that the effective management of the development control function at member level is vital to ensure that the risk of challenge to the Council, and the prospect of financial penalty, is minimised. We feel this responsibility is not fully reflected within the Scheme. In our view, and in accordance with evidence offered to the Panel, the Chair of Development Control Committee has equivalent responsibilities to those Chairs with budget responsibilities and there is no justification for such a large differential in allowances.
69. **RECOMMENDATION 12: That the special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Development Control Committee be set at £6,574 i.e. 110% of Basic Allowance, effective from 1st April, 2022**

Chair of the Council and Vice Chair

70. The Chair of the Council is the civic head of the Council and in that capacity will represent the Council at a number of ceremonial and civic occasions and will chair full Council meetings. At times, the Vice Chair of the Council will be asked to deputise for the Chair either at Council meetings or at functions
71. The present allowances are £3,328.45 for the Chair and £664.95 for the Vice Chair. These allowances primarily reflect a time commitment with some recognition of the skill set required to represent the Council at civic and ceremonial engagements.

72. There is clear evidence of the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the number of events to which the Chair/Vice Chair has been invited or which are hosted by the Chair/Vice Chair. This represents a significant reduction in the time and effort required of the office-holders and, if this was a sustained position, we would be recommending an adjustment to the allowance both of the Chair and of the Vice Chair.
73. The Panel would like to keep this matter under review as the community and the Council come out of the limitations of the pandemic. In the meantime we are proposing to keep the allowances as they are, except for a minor adjustment to reflect our proposed linking of SRAs as a percentage of the Basic Allowance. This does however translate as a small reduction in the allowance for the Vice Chair.
74. **RECOMMENDATION 13: That the special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Council be set at £3,586 ie 60% of Basic Allowance, effective from 1st April, 2022**
75. **RECOMMENDATION 14: That the special responsibility allowance for the Vice Chair of the Council be set at £598 ie 10% of Basic Allowance, effective from 1st April, 2022**

Chair and Vice Chair of Audit & Standards Committee

76. The Audit and Standards Committee has a dual role as the name suggests. Primarily it is concerned with the sound financial governance of the Council, scrutinising the Council's financial management and ensuring that the Council's business is conducted within the law and the Council's constitution. This includes receiving reports from the Council's internal and external auditors.
77. A complementary role is related to the standards functions of local government – the good conduct of District, Town and Parish Councillors and applying/policing the Members' Code of Conduct. We understand that consideration is being given to a Standards Panel being established within the auspices of the parent Committee. In making our recommendations, we have assumed that this process will remain within the oversight of the substantive committee chair.

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78. This committee is the only place within the structure of the Council where any form of scrutiny takes place, with issues being raised by members and officers when some member level analysis is felt relevant.
79. Given the importance of this Committee in contributing to risk management, quality governance and sound standards of conduct, the Panel feels there is no justification for undervaluing the role and for the special responsibility allowances for the Chair and Vice Chair therefore to be any different from equivalent roles for other Committees.
80. In equalising the allowances for Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, we believe the Council will make clear that good governance and the management of risk are equally as important as good decision making on service policy and delivery.
81. **RECOMMENDATION 15: That the special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee be set at £6,574 i.e. 110% of Basic Allowance, effective from 1st April, 2022;**
82. **RECOMMENDATION 16: That the special responsibility for the Vice Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee be set at £2,390 i.e. 40% of Basic Allowance, effective from 1st April, 2022.**

Group Leaders

83. At present, the Scheme provides that the main Opposition Group Leader received an allowance of £5,214.52 and the "other opposition group leader" would receive an estimated allowance of £1,105.42. The Scheme contains a qualification that a group must comprise a minimum of 5 x members in order for a Group Leader to receive an allowance.
84. On the face of it, the Scheme's provisions do not cater for the form of strategic leadership currently operating in Stroud District Council. The Council has 3 x groups in a strategic alliance but the scheme does not recognise this nor the group management role of those leaders within the alliance. The Panel has noted that the leader of the largest group has regular engagement with the strategic group leaders on Council-wide matters.

85. The Panel explored the relevance of these allowances as presently structured. Of particular interest was the extent to which the Scheme might, or indeed should, acknowledge that all political group leaders, whether in administration or otherwise, have some responsibility for collective good governance as well as recognising the size and management of the group.
86. Another key piece of evidence was a view that organising political group members was a party political role and not one that should be remunerated through the allowances Scheme. The Panel does not wholly accept that view, recognising the reality of political group structures within local government and the legal status of group size in determining the proportionate allocation of committee places. The Panel believes there needs to be a more equitable representation of the Group Leader governance and political group management roles within the allowances Scheme.
87. Accordingly, we propose a dual level of allowance for group leaders, whether in administration or in opposition. It is a radical approach but one in our view that better reflects how Stroud is working at the moment, as well as meeting alternative forms of administration if and when required. However, if adopted, the Panel would wish to monitor this arrangement and review it if there is any significant change to the political control arrangements.
88. The following table illustrates our proposal and reflects the present leadership arrangements. The table can be adapted to reflect future changes. It should be remembered that there remains in place the "one SRA per member" rule, so not all of these allowances will be taken up.

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Group Leader <i>(current arrangements)</i>	Governance Element (25% BA)	75% + (38+ members) (100% BA)	51% - 74% (26-37 members) (75% BA)	25% - 50% (13 – 25 members) (50% BA)	5%-25% (3 – 12 members) (25% BA)	Less than 5% (0% BA)	Total
Leader of Labour group	£1,494			£2,988			£4,482*
Leader of Green group	£1,494			£2,988			£4,482*
Leader of Lib Dem group	£1,494				£1,494		£2,988
Leader of Conservative group	£1,494			£2,988			£4,482

***under the 1 x SRA per member rule, these allowances would not be taken up as the office holders would, under our proposals, receive other (higher) SRA payment.**

89. **RECOMMENDATION 17: That the Council endorse the approach to calculating group leader allowances on the basis of both governance responsibility and group size, using the parameters in the table at para 88 above;**
90. **RECOMMENDATION 18: That the special responsibility allowance for all Group Leaders be set at the rates shown in the table above, effective from 1st April, 2022;**
91. **RECOMMENDATION 19: To note the intention of the Panel to keep this arrangement under review.**
92. **RECOMMENDATION 20: That as a consequence of this arrangement, the Scheme be amended to delete the reference to a 5 x member minimum size for a group leader to receive an allowance.**

Member Champions

93. The Panel has noted that a number of members have been appointed as “Member Champions”. In particular, there are 3 champions for mental health and more recently a member appointed to champion the armed forces (as part of a Gloucestershire County-wide covenant).
94. What is unclear to the Panel is the extent to which the role of champions is to be embedded into the culture of the Council. From evidence received, the panel applauds the concept and has the following observations:
- there appears to be no consistency in how champions are appointed – in our view it should be part of a Council culture of support for the community;
 - clarity is needed about the rights, powers and responsibilities of member champions within the Council and in the community;
 - officers will need clarity about the expectations on them to support the member champions in their role in terms of information and guidance;
 - where these roles have developed elsewhere, they have covered such areas as disability, climate, older people and human rights and have structured support and in some cases special responsibility allowances;
 - there are different models of engagement and powers – we understand full guidance about the role is available from South West Councils.
95. Despite some member comments proposing an allowance for this role, the Panel does not feel in a position at this time to recommend any allowance for member champions but would urge the Council to consider adopting a clear framework within which these member roles can operate and hopefully develop.
96. **RECOMMENDATION 21: That the Council be invited to comment to the Panel on how it sees the role of member champions evolving in the future;**
97. **RECOMMENDATION 22: The Council be urged to consider establishing a clear structural and constitutional framework within which member champions can operate, in order to maximise their effectiveness;**

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98. **RECOMMENDATION 23: That no allowance be recommended at this time for member champions but that this matter be kept under review by the Panel in the light of any further information coming from the Council.**

Overall implications of our recommendations

99. The table below sets out how our recommended allowances compare with those at present, as upgraded in accordance with the 2021/22 award.
100. It should be noted that the Scheme will provide for only one SRA to be claimed per member, so not all of the listed allowances would be taken up.

Role	Present £ Rounded up/down	Present totals	Panel Recs £	New total £
Basic Allowance x 51	5,726	292,026	5,976	304,776
Leader x 1	11,096	11,096	11,952	11,952
Deputy Leader	0	0	5,976	5,976
Chair Service Cttees x 3	6,657	19,971	6,574 (x3)	19,722
Chair Dev Control Cttee	5,547	5,547	6,574	6,574
Chair Audit Cttee	5,547	5,547	6,574	6,574
Chair Council	3,328	3,328	3,586	3,586
Vice Chairs S+R/Service Cttees (x 4)	1,331	5,324	2,390 (x4)	9,560 ++
Vice Chairs DC/Audit (x2)	1,109	2,218	2,390 (x2)	4,780
Vice Chair Council	665	665	597	598
Group Leader Cons	5,215	5,215	4,482	4,482
Group Leader (Lib Dem)	0	0	2,988	2,988
Group Leader (Greens)	0	0	4,482	4,482 ++
Group Leader (Lab)	0	0	4,482	4,482 ++
Member champions	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		350,937		390,532
++ Amount deducted for allowances not taken up re 1 x SRA rule				11,354
			TOTAL	379,178

			Difference	28,241
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101. Our recommendations present a financial shortfall of £28,241 over the present members' allowances total figure. We make no apology for this. The largest elements of the increase are the start of the phased uplift in the Basic Allowance and the recognition in the Scheme of the role of Deputy Leader.
102. It is important in our view that the due diligence and heavy responsibilities placed on elected members running a significant and relatively unique Council like Stroud must be recognised with robust allowances. We also hope that the allowances Scheme as proposed will contribute in part to attracting high calibre people to stand for public office.
- 103.** The Panel has been greatly impressed with the calibre of councillors who have commented to us and who have addressed us personally. We have responded to the evidence provided about anomalies and other issues by offering this package of proposals.

Travel and Subsistence

104. The primary comments received about travelling and subsistence were about raising the rate per mile, principally for car usage but also for other modes of transport. Currently, the Scheme provides the following allowances:
- Cars and Vans – 45p per mile
 - Motorcycles – 24p per mile
 - Bicycles – 20p per mile
 - Passenger supplement – 5p per passenger
105. The Panel would always wish to encourage environmentally aware forms of transport with appropriate incentives to encourage public transport/bicycle usage and walking.
106. Given that there has been no change in the HMRC rates for travel that apply before a tax impact, we do not feel able to recommend any change at present. The Panel looks forward to these rates being upgraded to keep in line with the significant raise in transport costs.

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Appendix A

107. With regard to subsistence levels, there was no strong representation that these were inadequate, though some members felt they should more realistically represent the cost of meals and that the figures should be rounded up.
108. The Panel concurs with this view that the current allowances for expenses has not kept pace with food prices. The current subsistence expenses are as follows :
- Over 5 hours – 1 meal
Between 1 to 12 hours – 2 meals
More than 12 hours – 3 meals
- Breakfast £5.30
Lunch £7.20
Tea £2.80
Evening meal £9.10
109. Although these rates are not out of line with other bodies, the Panel feels they do not reflect the current cost of meals. We feel able to recommend a modest increase in the allowances to at least go some way to addressing the present situation.
110. **RECOMMENDATION 24: That no change be made to travel allowances but that the situation continue to be monitored;**
111. **RECOMMENDATION 25: That the following uplift in subsistence allowances be made:**
- Breakfast - £5.83**
Lunch - £7.20
Tea - £3.08
Evening meal - £10.01
- and that, in line with HMRC practice, a ceiling cap of £22 per day be confirmed.**

Dependent Carers' Allowance

112. There is little doubt that one of the difficulties faced by serving councillors is dealing with domestic care cover while attending Council and constituent business. Where there is not an available family member, the councillor will resort to other providers – whether voluntary or paid.
113. It is essential that the Scheme of Allowances makes robust provision for this. Even though the take up of Dependent Carers' Allowance is low, the Scheme must give clarity about councillors' rights in this regard. Some who offered evidence to the Panel stated that there was little awareness of the dependent carers' provisions and some training on what the provisions were and how to claim would be helpful.
114. The strongest criticism was levelled at the "Living Wage" provision in the Scheme. It was felt that the actual cost of providing basic and specialist care for dependents should be met. The Panel is strongly of this view also.
115. In addition, the Panel felt that the pandemic had demonstrated how many people had relied on the comfort of their pets. For some, enabling care for their pets while undertaking Council duties would be a helpful change to the present Scheme.
116. Again, we would recommend that actual costs incurred for engaging (for example) a dog walker be permitted under the scheme, subject to appropriate verification of costs incurred and nature of the care provided.
117. **RECOMMENDATION 26: That dependent care expenses be met on the basis of actual costs incurred, subject to appropriate verification as to the nature of the care provided, the qualification of the carer engaged and consideration of a reasonable maximum payment;**
118. **RECOMMENDATION 27: That the Scheme of Allowances be amended to include provision for meeting the expenses of essential pet care;**
119. **RECOMMENDATION 28: That officers of the Council devise appropriate wording amendments to the Scheme of Allowances to reflect these changes;**

120. **RECOMMENDATION 29: That the Council take steps to raise awareness among candidates and serving councillors about the provisions of the Dependent Carers' Allowance and of the circumstances under which it can be claimed.**

Approved Duties for the purpose of making Expenses Claims

121. The Panel has considered the approved duties against which travelling and subsistence and dependent care expenses can be claimed. The aim is to provide much greater clarity about this, including broadening the range of activities for legitimate claims.
122. Part of this proposal is to include greater provision for councillors to claim expenses for attending meetings as ward councillors and generally as observers. We would like the emphasis to be towards accommodating any reasonable attendance of the member rather than the expectation on the member to try to justify the claim. Of course, in recommending this, we would expect all reasonable auditing checks to remain to include a proportionate use of officers time.
123. Attached at an **Appendix A** is the proposed amended list of approved duties.
124. **RECOMMENDATION 30: That the revised list of approved duties for the purpose of claiming travel and subsistence and dependent carers' allowances, as set out in the Appendix be adopted.**

Graham Russell, Chair of Panel

LIST OF APPROVED DUTIES for the purpose of Travel and Subsistence and Dependent Carers' claims

	Attendance at:
1.	formal properly convened meetings of the Council, its Committees and Sub Committees and any other authorised meeting of these bodies or event organised by these bodies (including extraordinary meetings/joint committees) where the councillor (a) has been appointed by the Council as a member, a substitute or a representative; or (b) is exercising a constitutional right to attend and/or to speak; or (c) is a ward councillor; or (d) is otherwise attending in an observer capacity only.
2.	ad hoc formally constituted working groups/panels/task and finish groups/Boards where the councillor is (a) a named member of the body or (b) is formally invited to attend and/or participate.
3.	meetings of bodies to which the Council makes appointments and to which the councillor has been appointed, except where the body itself pays allowances. <i>(This relates to meetings of the body itself, its standing committees or sub committees but not to other activities of the body)</i>
4.	formal meetings convened by other authorities where the member has been appointed as the Council's representative. (This shall include attendance at 1 x meeting a month of each Parish Council within a member's ward)
5.	meetings of any local authority association of which the Council is a member where the councillor is the appointed representative or nominated substitute.
6.	any conference or other event of a similar nature (i.e. full day events), where prior approval of the [Chief Executive] has been given in writing.
7.	any Council premises, site or other agreed location, for a meeting agreed with either a member in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance or an Officer for the purpose of discussing matters relating to Council business in which it is reasonable to expect the councillor to have an interest.
8.	briefing meetings at the invitation of an Officer.
9.	briefing meetings preceding formally convened meetings of the Council, Committees, Sub Committees, Panels and Working Groups
10.	any training, member development or awareness raising event organised by the Council.
11.	a gathering of members to which candidates for senior Officer posts are asked to make presentations, where such attendance has been approved in writing by the [Chief Executive].

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Appendix A

12.	any civic or ceremonial event at the invitation of the Chair of the Council, or the [Chief Executive]
13.	site visits arranged on behalf of the Development Control Committee in pursuance of the business of that Committee.
14.	tender opening meeting where invited by an Officer to attend.
15.	appraisal meetings for senior Council staff, as an approved representative.
16.	<i>(by Chairs and/or Vice Chairs of Committees, Leader of the Council/Deputy Leader, Chair/Vice Chair of Council)</i> at formal and informal meetings and other events, not specifically referred to above, provided that such attendance is in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions.
17.	any other meeting, function or event approved in advance by the [Chief Executive] for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the Authority.
18.	any Political group meeting held on Council premises, to a maximum of 15 meetings in any financial year
	Performance of:
19.	duties not referred to above, and carried out by a member holding an office for which a Special Responsibility Allowance applies.
20.	any particular duty for which express authority is given by or on behalf of the Council in case of emergency.
21.	Such other duty, not otherwise referred to, for which prior approval has been given by the [Chief Executive] or other authorised Officer, in consultation with the Leader.

Members will qualify where they necessarily incur expenditure on travelling and subsistence or dependent care for the purpose of enabling them to perform an approved duty as defined above.

Where approval is required in writing, where possible it must be approved beforehand. The claim will clearly show the attendance event, member attending, date and time, associated costs and the authorising officer.

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

21 JULY 2022

Report Title	Appointment of a Monitoring Officer			
Purpose of Report	To appoint a permanent Monitoring Officer.			
Decision(s)	<p>The Council RESOLVES that:</p> <p>a. [INSERT NAME] be designated Monitoring Officer for the Council in accordance with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with effect from the date of their employment commencing with the Council</p> <p>b. The Chief Executive be authorised to sign a secondment agreement to second [INSERT NAME] for half of their employed time to Cheltenham Borough Council representing the shared monitoring officer arrangement.</p>			
Consultation and Feedback	All Group Leaders			
Report Author	Kathy O’Leary, Chief Executive Email: Kathy.oleary@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	The Council must have a Monitoring Officer so if this appointment is not made an alternative must be appointed.			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	None			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	No

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended) the Council has a duty to designate one of its officers as Monitoring Officer. The Act specifically excludes the Head of Paid Service and the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) from being the Monitoring Officer, although any other officer of the Council can be appointed.
- 1.2 The Monitoring Officer has a number of statutory duties and responsibilities which include ensuring that the Council act lawfully and to avoid any maladministration. This includes advising on the lawfulness of decision making, applying and maintaining the Council’s Constitution and arrangements for effective governance.

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- 1.3 The Monitoring Officer also has a number of responsibilities arising from the Localism Act 2011 relating to Councillor conduct (Council and Parish Councils). These responsibilities include dealing with complaints on the Code of Conduct, as well as providing training for Members thereon.
- 1.4 Stephen Taylor has been the designated Monitoring Officer since 30th September 2021.
- 1.5 At its meeting of October 2021 Council authorised the Chief Executive to begin the process of appointing a permanent Monitoring Officer. This was anticipated to be a role shared with another authority, as has been the case with the interim Monitoring Officers the Council has employed in recent times.

2. Interim Monitoring Officer Arrangements

- 2.1 Cheltenham Borough Council have previously indicated to SDC that they were both looking to recruit a new Monitoring Officer and to enter into arrangement whereby the Monitoring Officer could be shared across the two authorities. The experience at SDC of sharing Monitoring Officers has demonstrated that such an arrangement can work practically, and it also generates a financial saving which has already been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 2.2 It was agreed that the role would be directly employed by Stroud and then seconded back to Cheltenham for half of the working week.
- 2.3 A joint recruitment process has been undertaken which has been co-ordinated externally by Tile Hill recruitment agency. Decisions on Job Description, Person Specification and the practicalities of the recruitment process have been made jointly by the Chief Executives of both authorities.
- 2.4 At Stroud the successful candidates will have Strategic Director level responsibilities and pay level. They will also serve as the Council's Data Protection Officer. Half of the cost will be recharged to Cheltenham Borough Council on an ongoing basis where they will work at Executive Director level. This will be confirmed in a secondment agreement. The role will sit at the Strategic Leadership Team level of both Councils.
- 2.5 For the final shortlisted candidates a recruitment day was held on July 11th. This included an interview and a stakeholder panel. Officers and members from both Councils were involved and a number of different political groups were included.
- 2.6 Following this process an offer has been made to [INSERT NAME] which they have verbally accepted. Subject to satisfactory references they will begin work later in the year. The name of the successful candidate is not included in this report but, subject to receipt of written acceptance, it will be announced at the Council meeting.
- 2.7 Their role as Monitoring Officer will begin on the first day that they start work for the Council.
- 2.8 Stephen Taylor, who is currently serving as the Interim Monitoring Officer, will continue in that current role until the date the new Monitoring Officer starts.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Financial Implications

This post is contained fully within the budget. An annual saving of £45k has already been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan, representing the saving generated by sharing a Monitoring Officer with Cheltenham Borough Council.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources
Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk

3.2 Legal Implications

These are contained in the main body of the report.

One Legal
Email: legal.service@onelegal.org.uk

3.3 Equality Implications

An EIA is not required because there are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision

3.4 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications arising from this decision

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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

21 JULY 2022

Report Title	UK Shared Prosperity Funding, Investment Plan			
Purpose of Report	To consider the draft UKSPF Investment Plan.			
Decision(s)	<p>The Committee RESOLVES to:</p> <p>a. Approve the development of the UKSPF Investment Plan</p> <p>b. Approve the next steps and outlined plan prior to submission of the plan</p> <p>c. In consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, agree to the Strategic Director of Resources making minor amendments to the plan as required and then submitting the UKSPF Investment Plan bid by August 1st 2022.</p>			
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, business groups and Community Groups.			
Report Author	Amy Beckett, Senior Economic Development Specialist Email: Amy.Beckett@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	<p>Option 1: to do nothing. This is not recommended as it would lead to the District not being able to draw down its share of UK Shared Prosperity Funding.</p> <p>Option 2: to agree or make amendments to Stroud Districts Investment Plan and proposed interventions.</p>			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix A – UKSPF Investment Plan Appendix B – Priority Area’s proposed outcomes and interventions			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was launched by Government in April 2022, a non-competitive funding stream, replacing the European Funding that has been previously made available. The fund is available to all Local Authorities, with requirements for each

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area to develop an Investment Plan, offering high level details on how the fund will be utilised over the funding period of three years.

The ambition of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the country; the fund is split into three investment priority areas: Communities and Place, Supporting Local Businesses and; People and Skills (available in year 3 only).

Stroud District has been awarded £1,378,985.00 core UKSPF over the three-year funding period, with a further £2,742,440.00 awarded to Gloucestershire County Council for the Multiply programme. This is to support the take up of numeracy courses in innovative and new ways, encouraging an increase of skills levels within the County.

Government have announced the split of funding across the three years, for Stroud District this is outlined as follows:

Year 1 (2022-23): £167,353.00

Year 2 (2023-24): £344,705.00

Year 3 (2024-25): £876,927.00

Local Authorities have been advised all spend must be defrayed within the correct year, and Government will consider withholding the next years funding if we are not able to evidence credible spend plans for any underspend.

At the time of this paper being written, Stroud District's UK Shared Prosperity Funding Investment Plan is currently being developed. Partners from across the district and teams internally have been invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI's), the submission deadline was Friday 8th July.

2. ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTNERS

- 2.1 A major part of the Investment Plan development is how we engage with our partners and communities to ensure the UKSPF is being utilised effectively across the area. Partners from communities, businesses, parishes, neighbouring local authorities, public sector organisations and skills providers have been engaged with throughout the development of the investment plan. Partners have been met with on a one to one basis as well as in UKSPF working group meetings.
- 2.2 In addition to the external engagement, an officer group was formed, made up of colleagues across the UKSPF thematic areas, this included colleagues from the following areas: Leisure, Human Resources, Economic Development Planning Strategy, The Canal Team, The 2030 Team, The Museum Team, Community Health and Wellbeing, and Regeneration.
- 2.3 When meeting with partners, understanding their opinions on the needs of the district was essential, finding out which proposed interventions they feel meets this best and how they feel the funding should be utilised.
- 2.4 Further to the engagement sessions with partners, they have been invited to send an Expression of Interest (EOI) in. There was an excellent level of engagement across the Community and submitted bids totalled £3.9 million. An initial assessment has been carried out and this has allowed the formation of the broad split of the funding allocation, as shown

in the table later in this report. Final decisions have not yet been made on individual projects that is likely to be the case until the funding award is confirmed in the Autumn.

- 2.5 Senior Officers and Officer groups across the County's Local Authorities have been working in partnership to ensure joined up consideration is made on county wide schemes. There have been regular meetings taking place to support the development of these.
- 2.6 Both MPs within the District have had written briefings on the progress of SDC's investment plan. A copy of this report will also be sent directly to them.

3. THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS

- 3.1 Stroud has adopted a similar process to calls for projects as other Local Authorities in the County, this has been done to streamline the process and ensure when partners are bidding across areas they will not have to complete a variety of forms. As such, we have used the Expression of Interest (EOI) template and scoring matrix from the neighbouring Local Authority, Forest of Dean District Council.
- 3.2 The EOI asks for high level information on any potential projects, confirming they meet the needs of the district and the high level objectives of the funding and that the project can be delivered in the UKSPF timeframe (2022 – 2025).
- 3.3 To mitigate risk of underspend in each year, and ensure the annual budget is released in a timely manner from government, all potential project partner is asked to confirm projects completion and defrayal dates.
- 3.4 Following the submission deadline, all EOI's will be considered and scored, giving an understanding of which projects will deliver across objectives and offer the best value for money.

4. OUR PRIORITIES

- 4.1 When the Government first announced the UKSPF, the district undertook a mapping exercise to understand where the proposed interventions outlined met the already agreed priorities of the District. The following strategies mapped against the UKSPF proposed interventions were:
 - 4.1.1 SDC Council Plan;
 - 4.1.2 CN 2030 Strategy;
 - 4.1.3 Emerging Cultural Strategy;
 - 4.1.4 Canal Projects priorities;
 - 4.1.5 Economic Development Strategy;
 - 4.1.6 Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy;
 - 4.1.7 Museum in the Park Policies;
 - 4.1.8 Physical Activity Strategy
- 4.2 From this exercise the highlighted interventions outlined were then taken forward through stakeholder engagement to understand the thoughts of the partners.
- 4.3 With the current national landscape and cost of living crisis, consideration has been given to how the UKSPF can support communities and the cost of living crisis. Working with

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partners within the communities is essential to supporting residents with the current crisis and offering a wide breadth of support.

- 4.4 Further to the cost of living crisis is understanding the needs and pressures on our business community. As spend decreases and their supply chain and energy prices increase; they face fresh pressures, after only recently navigating the pandemic. Understanding the impact on our businesses, who are our communities and residents also, and ways that UKSPF can support them will offer a holistic and rounded approach to the management of the cost of living crisis.
- 4.5 Appendix B shows the proposed interventions and outcomes currently forming part of the draft Investment Plan.
- 4.6 Following on from assessing all proposed projects, via the EOI process, we have provisionally allocated the funding in the following split:

Priority Area	Percentage of Allocation
Communities & Places	62%
Supporting Local Businesses	33%
People & Skills (2024-25 only)	5%

- 4.7 Minor alterations in this split may be necessary as projects are further developed and administration costs are applied. The Council is permitted to retain a 4% portion of the fund to represent the administration cost of the scheme. There is no other funding to meet the costs and therefore the full 4% will be used.
- 4.8 The draft investment plan is shown at Appendix A. The necessities of the Council publications deadlines mean that there will still be additions and improvements before the August 1st deadline. This is the reason for the requested delegation to the Strategic Director of Resources to make, with appropriate consultation up to the amendment date.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Following on from this decision, there is time to ensure all the Investment Plan is fully completed before the submission deadline of 1st August 2022. As set out in the report there will be further amendments and improvements, subject to the member consultation outlined.
- 5.2 Following submission of the Investment Plan, government will approve the plans and award the first year's funding. Once approval of the plan has been received, the District Council will announce which projects have been selected. Approval of investment plans is expected Autumn 2022.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

This report sets out a draft investment plan seeking to acquire £1.378 million of Central Government funding for priority projects. If the Investment Plan is successful the money will be passed on to projects, less the 4% administration allowance to be retained by the Council.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources
Tel: 01453 754115 Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk

6.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications relating to this report but there will be in relation to each project chosen to form the Investment Plan. Advice should be sought from One Legal to determine the appropriate legal power to undertake the specific projects, to ensure compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and protect the council's interests when giving grants.

One Legal
Tel: 01684 272691 Email: legal.services@onelegal.org.uk

6.3 Equality Implications

Equality impact assessments have not been carried out at this stage as detailed projects do not form part of the Draft Investment Plan. The Investment Plan must set out how the Council has considered its Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the plan, and this will be completed before submission.

6.4 Environmental Implications

The Council's priorities of a Carbon Neutral District have been considered in every EOI as part of the scoring process. The proposed funding outcomes included in Appendix B include reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

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UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Investment Plan Drafting Template

Version 2
May 2022

Agenda Item 9

Appendix A

Your location

To be eligible for funding, you will need to be applying on behalf of a lead authority in one of the [delivery geographies](#).

Select the lead authority

For Scotland and Wales only: Who else is this investment plan being submitted on behalf of? Select all that apply

Your details

Name Amy Beckett
Email address Amy.Beckett@stroud.gov.uk
Phone number 01453 766321
Organisation name Stroud District Council

Local challenges and opportunities

In this section, we will ask you:

- If you've identified any challenges or opportunities, you intend to support
- Which of the UKSPF investment priorities these fall under

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

Stroud District is a largely rural one, served by the main town centres of Stroud, Dursley, Nailsworth, Stonehouse, and Wotton-Under-Edge and formed of a number of smaller parishes and villages. As experienced in each of the districts across Gloucestershire, there is a decline in the proportion of Stroud's population that is of working age, although this decline is the 2nd slowest in the county, behind Gloucester. A large proportion of Stroud's residents are affluent, however, there is a higher level of deprivation in some LSOAs around areas including: Cam, Stonehouse and Stroud town.

Stroud District is home to the second largest population in the County, and with the noted decline in working age population combined with a predicted increase in the older population, there is a need to prioritise that communities have access to support across all abilities and ages. Support available is currently delivered through the voluntary sector, NHS and Local Authorities. However, with a declining budget for support services, these communities are turning to the Voluntary and Community Sector and adding to the pressures these organisations face.

As a largely rural location delivering safe space for young people is essential across all areas of the District; improvements to destinations such as play areas and activity pitches for example, hockey or football pitches to deliver a positive engagement for young people is essential. The impact of youth provision is a positive one and supports with positive outcomes such as developing social skills, emotional and intellectual capabilities as well as being linked to supporting the transition to adulthood.

Whilst the district is generally affluent, with pockets of deprivation, much needs to be done over the coming months to support residents with the cost of living crisis. There is an urgent priority as to how communities are supported to navigate the increase costs on foods, fuels and bills. The pockets of deprivation across the district are made up from the rural and built up areas, with the built up locations sitting in close proximity to our towns and high streets.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

Stroud District has a wide variety of communities with unique challenges, meaning one size does not fit all across the parishes that make up the district. The District and Parish Councils work closely with the communities to understand the challenges they face and how to support them. This partnership grew over the last three years whilst the District worked collaboratively to navigate the Coronavirus pandemic. Offering continued support to the Parishes through the funding will offer the ability to continue to develop locally led initiatives in partnership with one another.

Whilst the relationship between communities and the Council has vastly improved over recent years, the issues the communities face were heightened during the pandemic, with many of these remaining. The latest Thriving Places index, a collation of open source data, draws attention to a lower than average score within mental health, housing, local environment, employment opportunities and public transport accessibility; evidencing the need to work alongside our communities to create a sense of pride and cohesion across the District.

The District has an excellent community spirit, with hubs across the parishes who are focussed on improving the local area for residents, and a desire to set up hubs in more areas, ensuring a greater reach across the district. Whilst the district is home to a range of community organisations and hubs, there is the opportunity to better support hubs at grass roots levels, giving them confidence to bid for various funding streams to managing their internal processes more effectively.

Further to supporting our communities, there is an opportunity to support residents consider ways to reduce their need to use energy and their dependency on fossil fuels through retrofitting and energy education programmes. Being able to offer support and advice to the District residents on how they can retrofit their homes and safeguard against the cost of living crisis encourages a reduction our overall carbon footprint. Further to this, making improvements to footpaths and cycle ways as well as making access the pedal and E-Bikes more accessible can both improve the health and wellbeing of our district and reduce the reliance on fossil fuels also.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

Stroud has a large amount of business activity, hosting 20% of the county's businesses – the second highest share. The vast majority of businesses are small with 98.8% employing less than 10 employees and only 0.2% of businesses exceeding 250 employees.

The type of business is very varied, but the largest number are classed as within the Professional, Scientific and Technical sector, followed by Construction and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. However, the sector with the greatest number of employees is Manufacturing which employs 20% of the workforce. This could be significant if the forecast loss of jobs in this sector is realised.

One concern with Stroud's economy is that there is a low business start-up rates in comparison with the rest of the county. This is coupled with the second largest decline in business births between 2015 and 2020; a 16% decline compared to the national (7%) and regional (5%) levels. There is a need to work more closely with business support provision, seeking to reduce barriers to entry and increase entrepreneurship activity locally.

The weekly earning by residence and workplace are both lower than the UK average, with the levels of productivity and Gross Value Added (GVA) at £47,262 per filled job, ONS, 2019. Support is required to support businesses become more productive, and work toward the district becoming a top performing entrepreneurial location in the South West. Further to low productivity levels, businesses struggle with recruitment and staff retention and the district is faced with a skills drain to the larger towns and nearby cities.

Uptake of business support within are Agriculture businesses is low. Land based businesses are one of the top three sectors in the District, with an excess of 400 farming and land owners, they do not currently get the same support and interventions as other sectors. Being able to deliver specific

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Appendix A

business support, enabling increased productivity and decrease of the sectors carbon footprint is critical for the sector. This is critical as the landscape post Brexit is still uncertain for the sector.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT?

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

The District is home to one of the sites under consideration for the UK's STEP project to generate electricity through a fusion energy plant. The project is expected to play a key role in low-carbon energy, create thousands of high-skill jobs and attract billions of pounds in investment. The Severn Edge site has been promoted under Nuclear South West and the Western Gateway and is to involve sites at Berkeley and at Oldbury-on-Severn in South Gloucestershire. The opportunity to be considered for the STEP scheme works alongside the districts focus on green sectors; with the opportunity to focus on research and development into green tech and how we stimulate the growth of the green sector.

The District is well-positioned to take advantage of the increase in 'staycations' and positive impact this has on the tourism and visitor economy. Connected to this, the district's town centres, which have suffered from reduced footfall since the start of the pandemic, are to be marketed as destinations in their own right. Encouraging increased footfall to our market towns by working with our parishes and business community on localised initiatives including improved accessibility and access points and improving local facilities

Whilst a challenge for the district, supporting our businesses to thrive offers the opportunity to deliver positive impacts on the communities of our district, with many micro and small businesses who were started by residents. These businesses, like all, will be feeling the impact of the cost of living at home and at work. Furthermore, access to supply chains and gaps in the market as a repercussion of the pandemic, shipping price increase and Ukrainian war offer multiple and sometimes complex issues.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL CHALLENGES YOU FACE WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these challenges, give evidence where possible

The Indices of Deprivation, IOD, measures levels of deprivation across 7 different areas, one of which is within skills. The District has 19 wards that sit in the 50% of the most deprived areas, and one ward within the District in the top 10%. This means there is lower skills attainment levels in these areas than average.

Whilst the district has low unemployment rates, the rates are higher than before the pandemic; businesses are also reporting issues with recruitment of staff, particularly within the sectors that were most impacted by the lockdowns such as retail and hospitality.

Stroud District is home to South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, based in close proximity to Stroud Town Centre, however, the take up of adult education provision is lower than expected. This is due to various factors including, poor public transport links and anecdotally, reluctance to attend classes in a college with young people.

ARE THERE ANY LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY THAT YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT? (In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland this should also include challenges relating to Multiply)

(If yes) Describe these opportunities, give evidence where possible

The district is home to a number of advanced manufacturing and medical based businesses, whose requirements are for high skilled staff, and access to higher apprenticeships within these businesses. Further to this, there is a need for lower skills staff within these sectors; and sustainable employment should offer opportunities across all levels.

Although there is good levels of employment, with low numbers of economically inactive residents, we need to ensure when people are furthest away from the labour market they have access to

support and training that will encourage them back into work and increase their confidence to find work and aspiration levels also.

There is opportunity to work with our employers in the district to create a vibrant local economy through employing people from the local community, increasing diversity across the workforce and through holistic support, address other issues such as homelessness and poverty. Creating sustainable employment opportunities takes a multi-agency approach and could offer first class support to our residents if realised.

Interventions

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Interventions you've chosen for each year of funding
- Outcomes you want to deliver
- Any interventions that are not listed here
- How these interventions fall under the UKSPF investment priorities, and your rationale for them
- Interventions not included in our list will be assessed before being approved, where you will need to show a clear rationale, how the intervention is value for money, what outcomes it will deliver and how you will monitor and evaluate the intervention. This may include a theory of change or logic chain.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome	Tick if applicable
Jobs created	√
Jobs safeguarded	√
Increased footfall	√
Increased visitor numbers	√
Reduced vacancy rates	
Greenhouse gas reductions	√
Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	√
Improved perception of facilities/amenities	√
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	
Increased users of facilities / amenities	√
Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project	√
Increased use of cycleways or paths	√
Increase in Biodiversity	
Increased affordability of events/entry	
Improved perception of safety	
Reduction in neighbourhood crime	
Improved engagement numbers	√
Improved perception of events	
Increased number of web searches for a place	√
Volunteering numbers as a result of support	√
Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support	√
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	√
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	

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None of the above	
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SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.

E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.

E7: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area.

E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.

E10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together.

E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.

E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

N/A

Explain how each intervention meets the Communities and Place investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

Each intervention that has been chosen to support the Communities and Place priority area and the needs of the District. Each intervention will support all areas of the District and will encourage our residents to take up community-led projects that seek to improve the sense of pride and belonging in Stroud District.

Developing interventions that support community-led organisations and offer the opportunity to deliver locally led initiatives is key to supporting our communities become more resilient and future proofing the work they deliver. This will be achieved through intervention “E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups” Focussing on how we work with community hubs and voluntary sector organisations to safeguard them against the future, making them more robust and confident in their abilities.

Supporting E11 will offer excellent value for money due to the legacy this work will leave on the community hubs supported as well as meeting the following outcomes: jobs created; jobs safeguarded; improved perception of facilities / amenities; increased users of facilities / amenities; improved engagement numbers; volunteering numbers as a result of support.

Being able to work alongside the district community organisations, offering them autonomy to deliver interventions which will offer real change at a local level is a priority of the funding; these will encourage local community organisations to develop initiatives that create quality places for residents to live, work, play and learn in. This will be achieved through interventions “E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces” “E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places”, “E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change” and “E10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together”. Offering access to community spaces that are both out and inside and will encourage positive change across the district.

Each intervention will be delivered across a number of parishes in the district, delivering value for money to the reach and amount of residents supported. These interventions will seek to achieve the following outcomes: jobs created; jobs safeguarded; increased visitor numbers; Improved perceived/experienced accessibility; Improved perception of facilities/amenities; Increased users of facilities / amenities; Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project; Improved engagement numbers; Volunteering numbers as a result of support; Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support; and Increased use of cycleways or paths.

As with all parts of the UK, residents are faced with increased cost of living crisis, impacting on the quality of life our residents have. The funding will support residents with needed measures to reduce the cost of living, including community cafes, food banks and access to training. Through the UKSPF we will also seek to support residents to utilise support to reduce their carbon footprint whilst also positively impacting on the cost of living. Furthermore, supporting residents and workers to improve their health and wellbeing whilst reducing the reliance on the private vehicle would not only support reduce the cost of living due to fuel prices, but improve the pinch points on our road network. This will be achieved through the following interventions *“E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change”* and *“E7: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area”*

Realising the benefit of these interventions will support the district positively in both practical and holistic ways. This will be supporting wide reaching projects and offer good value for money due to the communities supported and the outcomes delivered against; which include: jobs created; increased footfall; increased visitor numbers; greenhouse gas reduction; increased users of facilities / amenities; improved perception of facility / infrastructure project; increased use of cycle ways or paths; improved engagement numbers; increased take up of energy efficiency measures and volunteering umbers as a result of support.

Supporting our market towns and high streets to develop, offering the ability to improve facilities, access to high streets and consider ways to redevelop the public space will positively impact both communities and businesses. The ambition is this will increase footfall and drive up visitor numbers, extending the tourism season through improved micro-tourism numbers (an increase in local visitors). This will be met through the intervention *“E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs”*. Offering opportunities to improve the market towns will deliver value for money as a way to bring projects forward, this would seek to achieve the following outcomes: increased footfall; increased visitor numbers; greenhouse gas reduction; improved perceived / experienced accessibility; improved perception of facilities / amenities.

Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention’s planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

Recipient’s will not be receiving an economic benefit.
The UKSPF will not distort or harm competition, trade or investment.

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Communities and Place investment priority and the location of the proposed project.

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<p>Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.</p>	
	No
<p>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</p>	
<p>Recipient's will not be receiving an economic benefit The UKSPF will not distort or harm competition, trade or investment</p>	

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.	
Outcome	Tick if applicable
Jobs created	√
Jobs safeguarded	√
Increased footfall	√
Increased visitor numbers	√
Reduced vacancy rates	
Greenhouse gas reductions	√
Number of new businesses created	√
Improved perception of markets	
Increased business sustainability	√
Increased number of businesses supported	√
Increased amount of investment	
Improved perception of attractions	
Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm	√
Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity	√
Number of premises with improved digital connectivity	
Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	√
Number of new to market products	
Number of R&D active businesses	
Increased number of innovation active SMEs	
Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services	√
Increased number of innovation plans developed	
Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support	√
Number of businesses engaged in new markets	√
Number of businesses engaged in new markets	
Number of businesses increasing their export capability	
Increased amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed	√
Number of businesses with improved productivity	√
Increased number of projects arising from funded feasibility studies	
Increased number of properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion	
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.
<p>Intervention <i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i></p>
<p>E18: Supporting Made Smarter Adoption: Providing tailored expert advice, matched grants and leadership training to enable manufacturing SMEs to adopt industrial digital technology solutions including artificial intelligence; robotics and autonomous systems; additive manufacturing;</p>

industrial internet of things; virtual reality; data analytics. The support is proven to leverage high levels of private investment into technologies that drive growth, productivity, efficiency and resilience in manufacturing.
E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
E24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.
E26: Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.
E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

N/A

Explain how each intervention meets the Supporting Local Business investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

Understanding the needs of our local businesses is essential to deliver effective support and will in turn enable the UKSPF to boost the business community through making them more productive, supporting to create and safeguard jobs as well as ensuring businesses have access to networking opportunities. Ensuring our businesses have access to the required expertise will stimulate economic growth and offer space for businesses to consider innovative ways to work.

Developing opportunities that allow our businesses to consider new technologies and become more productive whilst also reducing their carbon footprint is a priority for the district. As a high percentage of the District business base is made up of micro and small businesses, owners are often embedded in the daily running of their company and cannot always offer time to considering strategic initiatives and new ways of working. Offering support to enable this would be done through intervention *“E18: Supporting Made Smarter Adoption: Providing tailored expert advice, matched grants and leadership training to enable manufacturing SMEs to adopt industrial digital technology solutions including artificial intelligence; robotics and autonomous systems; additive manufacturing; industrial internet of things; virtual reality; data analytics. The support is proven to leverage high levels of private investment into technologies that drive growth, productivity, efficiency and resilience in manufacturing.”*

This support can be offered to all sectors and to businesses across all parts of the District; offering the ability to increase the district GVA. The support can be as advice or as access to knowledge from experts. The anticipated outcomes are: Jobs safeguarded; greenhouse gas reductions; Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm; Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity; Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services; and Number of businesses with improved productivity.

Ensuring companies have access to impartial and effective business support provision and expertise is crucial to ensuring they continue to grow. Further to this, having access to provision that will guide a new or developing commercial idea will encourage the business start-up rates increase for the district. Any business support provision that is offered in the district needs to have knowledge that different sectors will require varying support; understanding that our manufacturing businesses and local social enterprises will face different challenges is key to success in the

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district. We will look to support this through the following interventions “E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.”, “E24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, ‘incubators’ and ‘accelerators’ for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.”, “E26: Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises” and “E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment.”

Looking to deliver a wide range of support to businesses through specific, tailor made projects will ensure a wide reach and increased engagement with businesses, offering value for money and a good number of outcomes such as: Jobs created; Jobs safeguarded; Greenhouse gas reductions; New businesses created; Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity; Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services; Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support; Number of businesses with improved productivity; Number of businesses engaged in new markets; and increased amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed.

Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention’s planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

Recipient’s will not be receiving an economic benefit

The UKSPF will not distort or harm competition, trade or investment

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Describe these projects, including how they fall under the Supporting Local Business investment priority and the location of the proposed project.

Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

No

Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

Recipient’s will not be receiving an economic benefit

The UKSPF will not distort or harm competition, trade or investment

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO DELIVER UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Outcome

Tick if applicable

Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support

✓

Increased active or sustained participants of UKSPF beneficiaries in community groups [and/or] increased employability through development of interpersonal skills	
Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	√
Number of people in supported employment [and] number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services	
Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services	√
Number of people engaged in job-searching following support	√
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	√
Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months	√
Increased employment, skills and/or UKSPF objectives incorporated into local area corporate governance	
Number of people in education/training	√
Increased number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	√
Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	√
Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace	√
Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	√
Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	√
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences, and skills	
Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education, and training.	√
Number of people engaged in life skills support following interventions	√
Number of people with proficiency in pre-employment and interpersonal skills (relationship, organisational and anger-management, interviewing, CV and job application writing)	
Multiply only - Increased number of adults achieving maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2.	
Multiply only - Increased number of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to, and including, Level 2.	
None of the above	

SELECT THE INTERVENTIONS YOU INTEND TO USE WHICH MEET THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY. YOU CAN SELECT AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

Intervention

A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.

E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps.

E34: Courses including basic skills (digital, English, maths (via Multiply) and ESOL), and life skills and career skills** provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget or wrap around support detailed above. Supplemented by financial support for learners to enrol onto courses and complete qualifications.

E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing.

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E36: Intervention to increase levels of digital inclusion, with a focus on essential digital skills, communicating the benefits of getting (safely) online, and in-community support to provide users with the confidence and trust to stay online.

E37: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early.

DO YOU PLAN TO USE ANY INTERVENTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS LIST?

State the name of each of these additional interventions and a brief description of each of these

N/A

Explain how each intervention meets the People and Skills investment priority. Give evidence where possible, including why it is value money and the outcomes you want to deliver.

Ensuring our residents continue to have access to support provision which offers the opportunity to improve their skills base and grow in confidence to find work is essential. By delivering a bespoke programme of work that meets the needs of our residents and continues to reduce economy inactivity whilst increase skills levels for those far from the labour market will build pride in place and meet the ambitions of government to see people successfully complete skills training.

Delivering projects that seek to increase the skills levels, whilst raising confidence and aspiration levels in residents will benefit the district in many ways, decreasing the amount of residents who are economically inactive, or looking to further their career path will increase the areas GDP and reduce the number of residents who seeking support from additional services or living within poverty. The needs of individuals are unique and they will require skills in different areas; ensuring the support can be tailor made is crucial to the success. This will be delivered through a number of interventions including: *“E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps.”*, *“E34: Courses including basic skills (digital, English, maths (via Multiply) and ESOL), and life skills and career skills** provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget or wrap around support detailed above. Supplemented by financial support for learners to enrol onto courses and complete qualifications.”*, *“E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing.”*, *“E36: Intervention to increase levels of digital inclusion, with a focus on essential digital skills, communicating the benefits of getting (safely) online, and in-community support to provide users with the confidence and trust to stay online.”* and *“E37: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early.”*

These interventions will enable effective change in communities across the district and through partnership work with offer access to different services, increasing the reach of the support, ensuring the needs of the individual are met whilst value for money is obtained. Anticipated outcomes include: Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL; Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services; Number of people engaged in job-searching following support; Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support; Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months; Number of people in education / training; Increased number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL); Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision; Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace; Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision; Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support; Number of people gaining qualifications, licences, and skills; Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education, and training; Number of people engaged in life skills support following interventions

<p>Do you consider that any of these interventions may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the intervention’s planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.</p>
No
<p>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the intervention is a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</p>
<p>Recipient’s will not be receiving an economic benefit The UKSPF will not distort or harm competition, trade or investment</p>

<p>ENGLAND ONLY: People and Skills interventions can only be used in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 if you have identified a local voluntary and community provision, previously supported by the European Social Fund, at risk of closure. If you have not identified a suitable provision, you will not be able to select interventions for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 and your investment plan will not be approved.</p>			
<p>HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS for 2024-2025 WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?</p>			
Yes			
<p>Describe the projects for 2024-25, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.</p>			
<p>Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.</p>			
No			
<p>Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.</p>			
<p>Recipient’s will not be receiving an economic benefit The UKSPF will not distort or harm competition, trade or investment</p>			
<p>HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A LOCAL VOLUNTARY PROVISION AT RISK AS PART OF YOUR PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?</p>			
Yes			
<p>(If Yes) Describe the local voluntary provision at risk and your rationale for supporting it.</p>			
<p>Provide the European Social Fund Project Names and Project References for this voluntary and community provision at risk.</p>			
<p>What year do you intend to fund these projects? Select all that apply.</p>			
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 33%;">2022-2023</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 33%;">2023-2024</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 33%;">2024-2025</td> </tr> </table>	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	
<p>Describe the projects for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.</p>			
N/A			
<p>Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity? All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as set out in the guidance.</p>			
No			

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Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

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SCOTLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND ONLY

HAVE YOU ALREADY IDENTIFIED ANY PROJECTS WHICH FALL UNDER THE PEOPLE AND SKILLS INVESTMENT PRIORITY?

Yes	No
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Describe the projects, including how they fall under the People and Skills investment priority and the location of the proposed project.

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Do you consider these projects may provide a subsidy to potential recipients of the funding under the proposed planned activity?

All bids must also consider how they will deliver in line with subsidy control as [set out in the guidance](#).

Yes	No
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Detail the assessment you undertook to consider whether the proposed projects constitute a subsidy and any specific measures you will take to make sure the subsidy is permitted.

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Approach to delivery and governance

In this section, we will ask you about:

- Structures you have in place to support delivery
- Support you have from stakeholders and the local community
- How you've engaged with MPs as part of your investment plan
- Opportunities you have identified to work with other places

Places need to show how MPs that cover the lead local authority have been engaged on the investment plan and whether they support it. More detail on the role of MPs can be found [here](#).

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Have you engaged with any of the following as part of your investment plan? Select all that apply.

Public sector organisations - Yes	Private sector organisations - Yes	Civil society organisations - Yes
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Describe how you have engaged with any of these organisations. Give examples where possible.	
<p>One to one meetings with partners in all three sectors to discuss UKSPF, the priorities for the district and the needs of the local areas.</p> <p>Regular joint public sector meetings to discuss the UKSPF spend in the County as a whole, understanding joint requirements and best value for money</p> <p>Stakeholder meetings, focussed on UKSPF to discuss priorities and understand where interventions are needed.</p> <p>Attendance at stakeholder meetings to discuss the local priorities and needs for specific interventions.</p> <p>Emails out to all partners to offer opportunity for projects to bid for funding through UKSPF.</p>	
Summarise the governance structures you have in place, including how any advisory panels or associated partnership groups are made up	
<p>Governance of partnership groups has taken place within a number of groups, ensuring the District Council was able to engage with a range of partners from different areas of the communities. These included the following groups and meetings:</p> <p>Officer Meeting Market Towns Forum Business Forums Community Hub Meeting group</p>	
Confirm all MPs covering your lead local authority have been invited to join the local partnership group.	
Yes	
Are there MPs who are not supportive of your investment plan?	
Yes	No
(If Yes) Who are the MPs that are not supportive and outline their reasons why.	
<p>The district's MP' Siobhan Baillie and Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown have been invited to meet with Stroud District Council to discuss how the UKSPF will be used in the District. Following on from a number of emails to invite them to join this discussion, the district's draft Investment Plan has been shared with them both for comment prior to submission also.</p>	

PROJECT SELECTION	
Are you intending to select projects in any way other than by competition for funding?	
	No
(If Yes) Describe your approach to selecting projects, and why you intend to do it this way.	
N/A	

DO YOU INTEND TO WORK WITH OTHER PLACES ON ANY OF THE INTERVENTIONS WHICH FALL UNDER THE COMMUNITIES AND PLACE INVESTMENT PRIORITY?	
Which interventions do you intend to collaborate on? Select all that apply.	
Intervention	Tick if applicable
<i>A full list of nation-specific interventions is available in the relevant annex to the Prospectus.</i>	
N/A	

Describe any interventions not included in this list?
N/A
Who are the places you intend to collaborate with?

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY
How have you considered your public sector equality duty in the design of your investment plan?
How will you consider your public sector equality duty when implementing your investment plan, including in the selection of projects?

RISKS		
Have you identified any key risks that could affect delivery, for example lack of staff or expertise?		
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Yes</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">No</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No
Yes	No	
(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.		
Have you identified any key fraud risks that could affect UKSPF delivery?		
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Yes</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">No</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No
Yes	No	
(If Yes) Describe these risks or issues, including the contingency measures you have in place to mitigate them.		

Capacity and capability

In this section, we will ask you about:

- The capacity and capability of your team to manage funding
- The resources you have in place for work related to UKSPF

Your answers here will help us know how to support you with delivery. They will not affect the amount of funding you will get.

Answer as honestly as possible.

TEAM RESOURCE
How many people (FTE) will be put in place to work with UKSPF funding?

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Appendix A

Describe what role these people will have, including any seniority and experience.

- Strong capability: Has extensive experience and/or a proven track record of delivery in this area.
- Strong capacity: High degree of confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Some capability: Has previous experience of delivery in this area.
- Some capacity: Confident that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area.
- Limited capability: Does not have previous experience and/or no track record of delivery in this area.
- Limited capacity: Limited confidence that there is enough staffing/resource to manage funding in this area. Additional resource may be needed to support delivery.

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
How would you describe your team's current experience of delivering funding and managing growth funds?		
Very experienced		
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?		
Strong capability		
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for procurement?		
Strong capability		
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for procurement?		
Strong capacity		
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for subsidies?		
Strong capability		
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for subsidies?		
Strong capacity		

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Communities and Place interventions you have select?		
Yes		
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?		
Strong capability		
Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		

Describe what further support would help address these challenges.
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Communities and Place interventions?
Strong capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Communities and Place interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the Supporting Local Business interventions you have select?		
Yes	No	
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		

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Appendix A

How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for Supporting Local Business interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering Supporting Local Business interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		

PEOPLE AND SKILLS CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY		
Does your local authority have any previous experience of delivering the People and Skills interventions you have select?		
Yes	No	
How would you describe your team's current capability to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capability challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		
Describe what further support would help address these challenges.		
How would you describe your team's current capacity to manage funding for People and Skills interventions?		
Strong capability	Some capability	Limited capability
Describe the key capacity challenges (if you have any) for delivering People and Skills interventions. This may include challenges within your local authority and/or your local/regional delivery system.		

Describe what further support would help address these challenges.

SUPPORT TO DELIVERY UKSPF	
All lead authorities can use up to 4% of their UKSPF allocation to support the delivery of their chosen interventions but by exception, lead authorities will be able to use more than 4%. Are you planning to use more than 4%?	
	No
(If Yes) Explain why you wish to use more than 4%.	

Approvals

Before submitting your investment plan, you should have approval from your:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Section 151 Officer
- Leader of your lead authority

Do you have approval from your Chief Executive Officer for this investment plan?

- Yes
- No

Do you have approval from your Section 151 Officer for this investment plan?

- Yes
- No

Do you have approval from the leader of your lead authority for this investment plan?

- Yes
- No

If you do not have approval from any of these people, please explain why this is:

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Appendix A

Additional documents

You will have received an email giving you access to a folder where you will need to upload supporting evidence to your investment plan. All applicants must complete and upload the following spreadsheet to the folder prior to submitting their investment plan:

- UKSPF Expenditure Profile spreadsheet
- UKSPF Indicative Deliverables spreadsheet

Your investment plan submission will be considered incomplete without the required documents.

Have you completed and uploaded the two spreadsheets to the SharePoint folder as requested?

- Yes
- No

Appendix B

UK Shared Prosperity Funding

Stroud District Councils Draft Proposed Outcomes

UKSPF Priority Area	Proposed Outcomes
Communities and Place	Jobs created
	Jobs safeguarded
	Increased footfall
	Increased visitor numbers
	Greenhouse gas reductions
	Improved perceived/experienced accessibility
	Improved perception of facilities/amenities
	Increased users of facilities / amenities
	Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project
	Increased use of cycleways or paths
	Improved engagement numbers
	Increased number of web searches for a place
	Volunteering numbers as a result of support
	Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	
Supporting Local Businesses	Jobs created
	Jobs safeguarded
	Increased footfall
	Increased visitor numbers
	Greenhouse gas reductions
	Number of new businesses created
	Number of businesses introducing new products to the firm
	Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity
	Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes
	Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services
	Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support
	Number of businesses engaged in new markets
	Increased amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed
	Number of businesses with improved productivity
People and Skills	Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)

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Appendix B

	Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services
	Number of people engaged in job-searching following support
	Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support
	Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months
	Number of people in education/training
	Increased number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)
	Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision
	Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace
	Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision
	Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support
	Number of people gaining qualifications, licences, and skills
	Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education, and training.
	Number of people engaged in life skills support following interventions

Stroud District Councils Draft Proposed Interventions

UKSPF Priority Area	Proposed Intervention
Communities and Place	E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.
	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.
	E7: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area.
	E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.
	E10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together.
	E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.
	E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.
Supporting Local Businesses	E18: Supporting Made Smarter Adoption: Providing tailored expert advice, matched grants and leadership training to enable manufacturing SMEs to adopt industrial digital technology solutions including artificial intelligence; robotics and autonomous systems; additive manufacturing; industrial internet of things; virtual reality; data analytics. The support is

	<p>proven to leverage high levels of private investment into technologies that drive growth, productivity, efficiency and resilience in manufacturing.</p>
	<p>E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.</p>
	<p>E24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, ‘incubators’ and ‘accelerators’ for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.</p>
	<p>E26: Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.</p>
	<p>E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment.</p>
<p>People and Skills *Year 3 only</p>	<p><i>Supporting economically inactive people to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support including access to basic skills</i> E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills (digital, English, maths* and ESOL) support where there are local provision gaps.</p>
	<p><i>Supporting people furthest from the labour market through access to basic skills</i> E34: Courses including basic skills (digital, English, maths (via Multiply) and ESOL), and life skills and career skills** provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget or wrap around support detailed above. Supplemented by financial support for learners to enrol onto courses and complete qualifications.</p>
	<p>E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing.</p>
	<p>E36: Intervention to increase levels of digital inclusion, with a focus on essential digital skills, communicating the benefits of getting (safely) online, and in-community support to provide users with the confidence and trust to stay online.</p>
	<p><i>Skills to progress in work and to fund local skills needs</i> E37: Tailored support to help people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early.</p>

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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

21 JULY 2022

Report Title	Acquisition of Land at Bath Place, Stroud			
Purpose of Report	To seek approval to the acquisition of a brownfield development site in Stroud.			
Decision(s)	<p>Council RESOLVES that:</p> <p>i. the Council purchases the site shown at Appendix A to this report and delegates authority to the Head of Property Services to take all necessary steps and undertake necessary procedures, including entering into any legal documents for, and associated with, the purchase of the site as may be required to complete the purchase.</p> <p>ii. that a budget of £1.535million is added to the Council's Capital Programme for the brownfield site acquisition.</p>			
Consultation and Feedback	The Levelling Up Fund stakeholder's group supported the area to be included in the bid and the acquisition of a brownfield site as part of the bid			
Report Author	<p>Alison Fisk, Head of Property Services Email: alison.fisk@stroud.gov.uk</p> <p>Leonie Lockwood, Regeneration Delivery Lead Email: leonie.lockwood@stroud.gov.uk</p>			
Options	The Council could choose not to proceed with the acquisition of this site and remove it from the LUF bid			
Appendices	Appendix A – Site Plan			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	No

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council has submitted its bid to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) in Round 2 and a report to Strategy and Resources Committee on the 9th June set out the size and scope of the bid and was approved.
- 1.2 Included within the proposed bid is the purchase of a brownfield site, plus associated costs, in a strategically important location for a sum of £1.535 million. This report sets out the details of the proposed purchase of the site, which is known as Bath Place, Cheapside and is currently owned by Newland Homes (See Appendix A).

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1.3 The acquisition and regeneration of brownfield sites is stated under the investment theme of 'Regeneration and Town Centre Investment' in the LUF Prospectus as the type of project that the Fund would support.

1.4 One of the three projects within the Council's proposed package bid is:

Gateway Spaces –the rejuvenation and transformation of key spaces into attractive destinations to increase vitality and prosperity for residents, visitors, shoppers and businesses. Places for people to spend time and feel a sense of pride in the town.

This site connects the two key gateways of Wallbridge and the station and is a strategically important site for the long-term vision of this part of Stroud as set out in the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

1.5 The site also links with the work associated with the successful bid to OPE for the Zero Carbon One Public Estate project, where one of the elements of this project includes funding towards the master planning of the car parks at Cheapside. The Council is proposing to enter into a 12-month Memorandum of Understanding with Network Rail and London Continental Railways (LCR) who are a government owned body with the remit of exploring mixed used development around the railway network. This site is within the red line boundary of exploration and would enable a comprehensive master plan to be prepared for the whole area.

1.6 This site appears on the Council's brownfield sites register and was granted planning permission in April 2021 for 47 two bed apartments and 2 retail units. As part of the council's ongoing work to bring forward stalled regeneration sites (a key activity in the Council Plan (ER2)), officers contacted the owner of this site (Newland Homes Ltd) to ascertain what its plans were and whether there was anything the council could do to help bring it forward for development.

1.7 It became evident that the site had stalled due to its more complex ground conditions and topography and that Newland Homes was willing to consider a 1:1 disposal direct to the council.

1.8 The site's importance to this gateway to the town centre was already apparent and as the Levelling Up Fund bid work started to gain momentum, it was clear that a redesign of the site could improve connectivity between the canal and the town centre, the housing type and tenure of site could also be improved (current scheme only provides 2 bed accommodation) and affordable housing introduced if it were owned by the council.

2.0 SITE DETAILS

The site is in central Stroud and comprises a steeply sloping, canal-side site with the benefit of planning permission. The site area is 0.87 acres (0.35 hectares) and includes the redevelopment of an existing (fire damaged) Grade II listed former canal warehouse.

Planning

2.1 The permitted development for the site under planning permission S.20/0684/FUL is for the construction of 4 new build blocks and the redevelopment of the listed warehouse. It

is proposed that there will be a total of 47 two-bed residential apartments and 2 retail units with associated landscaping, to include private balconies and allocated parking, green space, and public access to the retail units. There is no requirement for any affordable housing provision, nor any CIL requirements.

- 2.2 The site also has Listed Building Consent for alterations to facilitate the conversion of the former canal warehouse S.20/0685/LBC.

3.0 Due Diligence

- 3.1 To properly consider the value of the site and risks associated with its development Newland Homes' topographical surveys and ground condition report have been shared with the council and a Structural and Civil Engineer and Quantity Surveyor have been appointed to review the relevant reports, the existing and proposed site levels and to confirm at a high level, that there are ground engineering, foundation and retaining wall solution/s which have then been used for pricing estimates. These and the associated advice have been incorporated into an independent valuation.

- 3.2. An internal valuation has been undertaken and Carter Jonas have also been appointed to provide market valuations of the site which have provided a range of values which are discussed below.

- 3.3 One Legal are in the process of providing a Title report for the property.

4.0 Appraisals and Market Value

The independent valuations and internal appraisals show a range of values with the major difference arising from different percentage rates used for professional fees, developer's profit, and small difference in constructions costs. Carter Jonas has provided a sensitivity analysis at various purchase prices and profit levels which range from £1m to £1.3m. The profit level at £1.3m is estimated at 8% on construction costs, about 50% of the rate a developer would expect, although the market is currently more competitive, and some are having to accept less to secure sites. Clearly the council's interest in the site is not purely a financial one

- 4.1 Newland Homes have advised us that they have had unsolicited approaches from other developers this year, interested in acquiring the site. They had intimated that they preferred to agree a deal with the council and would settle somewhere in the region of £1.3m.

- 4.2 Our lower offers have been declined immediately, the independent valuations do support a consideration of £1.3m for the council, showing a profit of £1m on the consented scheme and we are aware of other interest in the site. There are also the social and economic benefits to consider that would be realised if the council owned the site and potential improved energy efficiency and other environmental improvements that can be realised if the council has greater control over the design and development.

5.0 Proposed Heads of Terms

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Property	Land at Bath Place, Stroud as shown outlined in red on the attached plan at Appendix A
Tenure	Freehold Interest
Purchase Price	£1,285,000 (One million, two hundred and eighty-five thousand pounds)
Legal costs	Each party will meet their own legal costs in this matter
Target date for legal exchange of contracts	Lawyers to progress to exchange contracts during August 2022 with completion by the 16th of December.
Conditions	Subject to the necessary legal due diligence, the land will be transferred with vacant possession, acceptable access arrangements and without restriction or onerous covenant.
	Subject to an overage clause. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term 3 years • 50/50 split on gain in value over £1,300,000 • triggered by a disposal of the site. <p>This is not intended to restrict the council's ability to revise the planning or deliver the site.</p>
	Subject to contract

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The opportunity to acquire this site by private treaty (on a one-to-one basis) is time-limited, with Newland Homes, advising that it will be marketing the site if the council is unable to proceed by the end of July. In order to be included in the LUF bid, terms needed to have been agreed; with the inclusion of the site benefitting the bid by strengthening the economic case, improving land value uplift, and creating construction jobs.
- 6.2 If the LUF bid is successful, the council will have more flexibility to deal with the site, improving the layout, types, and tenures (including introducing affordable units) of the residential units and its linkages between the canal and the town centre with its financial risks significantly mitigated. It can ensure delivery of the development, with its higher building costs, due to the need to reprofile the slope and include significant retaining structures.
- 6.3 Whilst there is a need to complete the sale before the outcome of the LUF bid is known, this site still represents a strategic opportunity purchase for the council, enabling it to achieve a revised planning permission and introduce affordable units into the scheme. There is still a strong business case for acquiring the site, which includes alignment with Council Plan key objectives and to bid for other funding (e.g., One Public Estate Brownfield

Land Release Fund)/ Homes England Funding) to ensure the site is viable and is developed out.

- 6.4 In either scenario, consideration will have to be given as to how the council wishes to achieve the development of the site and its risk appetite in doing so. The development route, proposals for changes to the consented scheme and financial appraisals will all be brought back to committee for approval.
- 6.5 At its meeting on the 9th June Strategy and Resources approved the recommendation that Council proceeds with the acquisition of this site and that the capital budget is provided for the purchase price of £1,285,000 plus £250,000 for associated costs and the redesign of the scheme (including the applicable Stamp Duty Land Tax and costs for legal, professional, planning and architects' fees), making the total sum of £1.535 million.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial Implications

This report sets out the acquisition of a brownfield site for £1.285million, which including all associated costs means a capital budget request of £1.535million. It is hoped that this initial purchase will be funded from the Levelling Up Fund, but this funding is not guaranteed. If the bid is unsuccessful the Council would need to fund this spend through borrowing.

This borrowing and associated interest, along with any subsequent costs of developing the site or engaging a development partner, would need to be recovered from sales from the site, once developed.

Independent valuations commissioned by SDC show that the site is financially viable and so it can be expected that any costs incurred by SDC could be recovered once the site is developed. However, the primary reason for acquiring the site is not financial and by changing the scheme layout the Council would be able to improve deliverability of the Council Plan objectives, such as affordable and energy efficient housing, and also have control over a strategically important site in Stroud town centre. These changes would likely lead to increased costs, and there is currently no expectation of financial profit (or loss) from this site. A successful LUF bid and/or any other grant funding would allow for additional social and economic benefits whilst maintaining a neutral financial position.

A decision on the overall site plan, with consideration of the contribution to the Council Plan objectives and wider benefits alongside the financial position will be subject to a later member decision, with its own financial implications.

It is not expected that all housing would be held by the Council for its own stock and therefore this will be purchased as a General Fund asset, rather than through the Housing Revenue Account. There would be an option for the HRA to 'purchase' any affordable housing units, subject to assessment.

Lucy Clothier, Accountancy Manager

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

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7.2 Legal Implications

Whilst there is a general power to acquire land and property under Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Authority may also rely on section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 where the purchase relates to regeneration and economic/social benefits in the council's area.

The Authority has a general duty to act prudently when purchasing land. To this end, in addition to valuations, appropriate title checks, and searches will take place before the Authority is committed to purchase the property, in order to ensure that the title the Authority acquires is good and marketable.

Stamp Duty Land Tax will be payable on completion of the purchase. As this date is in the future, it is impossible to say with certainty what this figure will be.

Any concerns on the title will be reported to the Head of Property Services for further instruction. Ambiguities in, for example, in any occupational lease, may result in unanticipated expenditure by the Authority in the future.

One Legal

Tel no: 01684 272691 Email: legal.services@onelegal.org.uk

7.3 Equality Implications

There are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this category. A decision on the overall site plan, with consideration of the contribution to the Council Plan objectives and wider benefits will be subject to a later member decision, with its own equality implications.

7.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category. A decision on the overall site plan, with consideration of the contribution to the Council Plan objectives and wider benefits will be subject to a later member decision, with its own environmental implications.

APPENDIX A

SITE PLAN



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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**COUNCIL****THURSDAY, 21 JULY 2022**

Report Title	OUR SERVICE STANDARDS			
Purpose of Report	To consider Our Service Standards for approval and adoption.			
Decision(s)	Council RESOLVES to endorse the decision made by the Community Services and Licensing Committee to: a) Adopt ‘Our Service Standards b) Report performance data annually to Audit and Standards Committee and Community Services and Licensing Committee; and c) Approve any future amendments to the standards at Community Services and Licensing Committee and amend the terms of reference of the Community Services and Licensing committee in Article 8 of the Constitution accordingly.			
Consultation and Feedback	Consultation has been outlined in Section 2 of this report.			
Report Author	Liz Shellam, Community Access & Engagement Manager Tel: 01453 754234 Email: liz.shellam@stroud.gov.uk			
Options				
Background Papers	N/A			
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Our Service Standards			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

1 INTRODUCTION

On the 23rd June 2022, Community Services and Licensing Committee approved the Corporate Care Standards to be recommended for adoption at Council. The decision was passed unanimously with an amendment that performance data is reported annually to both Audit and Standards Committee and Community Services and Licensing Committee. The proposal to rename the standards to Our Service Standards was accepted and will be referred to as such moving forward.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Following the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in 2019, work commenced to develop our over-arching vision and strategies to take us on our journey from a “good” council to an

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“exemplar leader in place”. In the preceding months we saw the emerging signs of a global pandemic and in March 2020 saw our lives change overnight with a national lockdown announced.

- 1.2 As an organisation we took swift and necessary action to ensure access to our services were maintained and we were able to support our community through what we now know to be a long and difficult time for everyone.
- 1.3 The success of our response to the pandemic was evidenced in the Council’s Customer Survey 2021 with *68% residents stating they strongly agree/ agree that SDC has supported the community during the pandemic*.
- 1.4 As we emerge from the pandemic, we know we have a lot more to do to ensure we learn from our experiences during this time and invest in improving our services to the benefit of all our customers.
- 1.5 This is defined within our Council Plan where we commit to putting our communities at the heart of our decision making, how we design our services and listen and engage with our communities. This is reflected in the following objectives:
- 1.6 **(CW 3.1)** - Develop a Community Engagement Strategy, which incorporates the Council’s Hear by Right Commitment for young person’s involvement and ensures the voice of the community and key stakeholders is at the heart of council priorities.
- 1.7 **(CW 3.2)** - Improve customer service for residents by procuring a Digital Platform that provides for centralised first contact ensuring an easier access to services and that provides additional support for those with complex needs
- 1.8 Our Fit for the Future modernisation programme is leading on many of our improvement initiatives and progress is well underway. However, feedback from our communities and elected members pointed out some inconsistencies in the service received when contacting differing service areas across the organisation.
- 1.9 It was identified that we needed to develop a set of corporate standards that reflect what our communities should expect when they access our services, including response times.
- 1.10 The importance of publishing these standards is to ensure our communities are informed and we are working as One Council towards a clear set of standards that reflect our current contact channels.
- 1.11 As we move forward with the implementation of our modernisation programme, we will have an opportunity to reflect, review and improve on the standards in line with our Council Plan.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

- 2.1 In November 2021 a cross party working group was formed with following objective: Develop and implement corporate standards that reflect our current contact channels, including what our customer should expect from us and response times and allow us to

develop these as we introduce new and improved contact channels for our community as part of our 'Fit for the Future' programme. The member group included:

- Cllr Gordon Craig
- Cllr Colin Fryer
- Cllr Norman Kaye
- Cllr Loraine Patrick
- Cllr Mattie Ross
- Cllr Ken Tucker

2.2 Working with the council officer project team a draft set of standards were developed and consultations were held with the following groups:

- Strategic Leadership Team
- Leadership & Management Team
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion working group
- Tenant representatives
- Alliance Leadership Team

2.3 A full member survey was launched on 20th May 2022 asking for feedback and comments on the final draft of the standards.

2.4 A full member briefing was held on 7th June 2022 to discuss feedback received during the consultation period and the additions and amendments made to the standards as a result:

The following feedback was received, and changes noted below:

General Comments:
<p>Very comprehensive Overall, I like the tone Nicely readable I very much like the look of the document Very happy with the content and layout. All the things I would like to see in the Standards has been captured but would recommend that the document is reviewed annually to ensure it stays fresh and fit for purpose.</p>

You said:	We will:
Corporate Care Standards – could be deemed jargon	Change to Our Service Standards
Some of the language could be deemed jargon/ difficult to read	Once adopted produce an “Easy read” version of Our Service Standards.
The response time is unacceptably long	Report to Audit & Standards on an annual basis. With the implementation of the digital platform, we will have more meaningful data to be able to report performance against these response times.

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3 OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

3.1 The proposed service standards (**Appendix 1**) set out our commitment to our communities and outline what they should expect from their experience with us.

3.2 Our Service Standards will be adopted and embraced across the Council and will help us focus on providing an excellent and consistent customer experience for all. The standards include the following:

1) Customer care principals, these are:

- Helpful
- Fair and honest
- Friendly and understanding
- Accessible to all

2) Response times for all our contact channels, this informs our community what they can expect from us when they:

- Phone us
- Email us
- Send us a letter
- Make an enquiry online
- Contact us via social media
- Visit us or we visit them
- Give us feedback
- Submit a request for information

3.3 These standards provide all service areas with a framework to follow and ensure we are all working as one council when our communities contact us.

3.4 Response times for all contact channels provide a maximum timeframe. We will always endeavour to respond as soon as possible and keep these timeframes under review.

3.5 As with other published documents, Our Service Standards will be produced in English and can be translated to other languages on request.

4 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

4.1 Once adopted by Full Council the standards will be rolled out to all existing staff and new staff as part of their induction programme. The future re-set of Customer Services as recommended in the recent LGA Corporate Peer Review feedback report will embed a culture of customer focus across all services and introduce a customer service training programme for all front-line staff.

4.2 In addition, we will utilise the feedback we receive from our communities, telephony data and the monitoring of complaints to ensure we are continually improving on the service we are providing.

- 4.3** It is an ambition of the Fit for the Future Programme with the implementation of the digital platform to improve access to our services by increasing channels and introducing automated acknowledgements, so customers know their requests have been received and are kept up to date with the status of their updates. The Digital Platform will enable us to have better visibility of the service requests received and the time it takes to resolve the enquiry.

The digital platform will allow us to implement a more robust reporting system to provide increased visibility, understanding and oversight into service performance to enable us to make improvements, support demand planning and resource management.

5 PERFORMANCE REPORTING

- 5.1** We will be developing performance reports for managers to ensure they are aware of how their teams are performing and if necessary, take action or provide explanation.
- 5.2** Performance data will be presented to Audit and Standards Committee and Community Services and Licensing Committee on an annual basis.

6 IMPLICATION

6.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.

Actions taken will be subject to proper financial evaluation and reported to Committee as appropriate.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
Tel: 01453 754115 Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk.

6.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from the content of this report or its recommendations.

One Legal
Tel: 01684 272012 Email: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

6.3 Equality Implications

There are no equality implications arising from the report itself. The equality implications of actions taken will be considered by Committee as appropriate.

6.4 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications arising from the report itself.

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Our Service Standards



Our commitment to you:

Everyone who contacts Stroud District Council should receive excellent service.

We will ensure we put you at the heart of everything we do, learning from the feedback you provide us, to help us continuously improve and shape the future delivery of our services.

Whenever and however you contact us, we will aim to ensure you receive the highest standards of service.

This document sets out what you can expect from us.





Our customer care principles:



Helpful

We will:

- aim to get it right first time.
- try to achieve what we said we would and keep you updated until your enquiry is resolved.
- explain our decisions and the reasons for them using easy to read and jargon-free language.
- listen to and act on your feedback to improve our services.



Fair and honest

We will:

- treat you fairly and with respect.
- apologise if we get things wrong, do our best to put them right and learn from any mistakes.
- protect your privacy and confidentiality by handling your information sensitively and securely.



Friendly and understanding

We will:

- be polite and attentive.
- ensure you feel confident that we've listened to you, understood your needs and take the necessary action.
- be positive and proactive, demonstrating through our actions that your issues matter to us.



Accessible to everyone

We will:

- provide clear and up to date information about our services and provide help accessing them if you need assistance.
- make sure Council services are available to all and information is provided in an accessible format, including different languages, audio, braille and easy to read. Our accessibility statement for our website is available [here](#).

In return we ask you to:

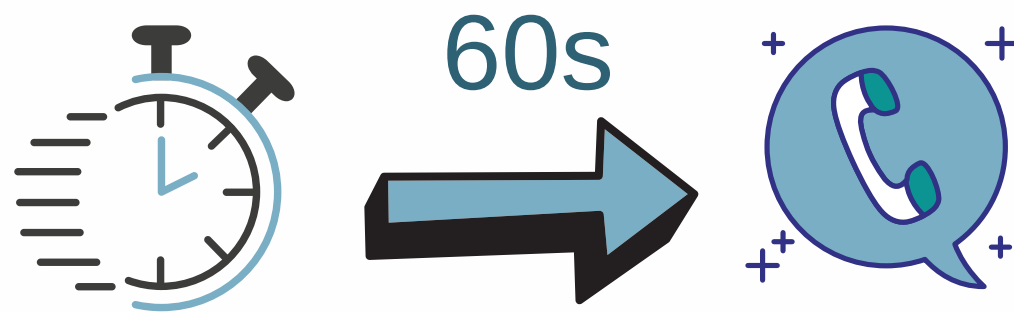
- provide us with the correct information at the right time and let us know if anything changes.
- tell us as soon as possible if things go wrong, so we are able to take action.
- let us know in good time if you can't make an appointment.
- treat everyone using or providing our services politely and with respect and understand that we will not accept offensive, or discriminatory language, or threatening behaviour.
- let us know if you have any feedback on the services we provide.





When you call us:

- Our telephone lines are open during office hours Monday to Thursday 8.45 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and Friday 8.45 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.
- When calling our main SDC phone number, once a service area has been selected, we aim to answer all calls within 60 seconds. There may be times when we cannot achieve this due to demand.
- We will introduce ourselves in a professional manner, clearly stating our first name and team so that you know who you are speaking to.
- If we need to transfer your call to someone else we will pass on your details with your permission so you don't have to repeat yourself.
- At the end of our conversation with you, we will ask you if there is anything else we can help you with and explain what will happen next if further contact is required.
- Where an officer is not available to accept a transferred call, we will offer you the choice to either leave a voicemail message or arrange a call-back.
- Voicemail messages will be responded to by the end of the next working day. If an officer is not available, a voicemail message will provide an alternative number or email address for you to contact.
- When we leave you a message, we will tell you our name, department and what number to contact us on.



@ When you email us:

- We will acknowledge all email enquiries:
 - ➔ If you email a service area mailbox (for example a generic mailbox, such as planning@stroud.gov.uk), you will receive an automatic acknowledgement, so you know this has been received.
 - ➔ If you email a member of staff directly, you will receive an acknowledgement as soon as possible, and no longer than 3 working days.
 - ➔ If a member of staff is absent, you will receive an automatic reply which will provide their return date, and alternative contact details.
- We will respond to all email enquiries as soon as possible, and no longer than 10 working days. In most cases this will be a full response. If the enquiry will take longer to resolve, we will tell you the reason for the delay and when we will be able to respond.



✉ When you you send us a letter.



Response time

We will respond as soon as possible, and no longer than 10 working days. In most cases this will be a full response. If the issue will take longer to resolve we will tell you the reason for the delay and when we will be able to respond.



Contact details

The reply will give the name and title of the person dealing with your enquiry, along with the relevant contact details.



Accessible format

We will make arrangements for leaflets, letters or other information to be available in an alternative accessible format, upon request.

📶 Making an enquiry online:



Available 24 hours

You can access a full range of information and complete transactions on our website, 24 hours a day, including applying for services, submitting enquiries and making payments.



Response time

Your enquiry will be directed to the relevant service area and a response, if needed, will be provided as soon as possible, and no longer than 10 working days.



Online contact form

If you are unsure which service you need to contact, you can use our customer service **online contact form**.

Contacting us via social media:

- We read all of the messages and comments we receive. Though we may not reply to every comment, we will always listen to what you have said, and act as appropriate.
- General comments on our posts will not receive a response.
- We will aim to provide a response to a direct question as soon as possible, and within 5 working days.
- Repeated questions about a particular subject matter will not receive a response where we consider we have already provided a response.
- If we feel your enquiry would be better handled by a service area, we will direct you to the appropriate area.
- Depending on the nature of the enquiry, we may ask you to send us a direct private message with further details.
- We will never ask you to share your personal details publicly over our social media channels.



When you visit us:

- Our offices will be clean, safe, and accessible to all.
- If you have made an appointment you will be met at that time, but if there is a delay, we will keep you updated and provide an explanation.
- If you do not have an appointment, an officer will aim to see you within 15 minutes of your arrival. If an officer is not available, we will book an appointment for you to see someone within 5 working days.
- Private space will be provided to discuss confidential issues.
- We will always do our best to accommodate everyone's needs. Please let us know what assistance might be needed when you book so we can ensure we have the appropriate facilities in place.



When we visit you:

- If we have agreed a time and place with you in advance, we will arrive on time or let you know if we are delayed. If we need to rearrange an appointment, we will contact you using the details you have given us.
- If you are out we will let you know we have visited and tell you how to contact us by leaving a calling card or contact you directly using the details you have given us.
- We will always treat your home or other premises with respect.
- We will always identify ourselves as being from Stroud District Council by wearing and showing you our identity card.
- We will explain the reason for the visit.

When you give us feedback:

- We welcome feedback from you and we will use it to shape and improve the future delivery of our services.

- We will acknowledge any complaints we receive, in writing, as soon as possible, and no longer than 3 working days.



- All complaints will be treated with respect and in confidence. A copy of our policy can be found [here](#).



- We will provide a full response as soon as possible and no longer than 10 working days. If your complaint requires significant investigation, then we will let you know and agree a response date.

When you submit a request for information:

- Before you submit any request, you should check our **Freedom of Information register** to see if the information you require is already published.
- You can submit your request for information via email or letter.
- We will acknowledge your Freedom of Information request within 3 working days and provide you with a full response within 20 working days.
- We will acknowledge your Subject Access Request within 3 working days and respond within 1 month of receipt, except in exceptional circumstances.



SDC Councillors' enquiries:

When an enquiry is received from a SDC Councillor, we will:

- acknowledge receipt as soon as possible, and no longer than 3 working days.
- provide Councillors with a dedicated telephone number for general council enquiries and an alternative number for contacting Democratic Services.
- respond as soon as possible, and no longer than 10 working days. In most cases this will be a full response but if the issue will take longer to resolve we will tell you the reason for the delay and when we will be able to respond.



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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

21 JULY 2022

Report Title	ANNUAL REPORT ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2021/2022			
Purpose of Report	To advise on the treasury management activities in 2021/2022, in accordance with the Council's Treasury Policy Statement. To report on actual 2021/2022 Prudential Indicators in accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code.			
Decision(s)	Council RESOLVES to approve the treasury management activity annual report for 2021/2022 and the actual Prudential Indicators as recommended by Audit and Standards Committee.			
Consultation and Feedback	Link Asset Services (LAS).			
Report Author	Graham Bailey, Principal Accountant Tel: 01453 754133 Email: graham.bailey@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	None			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	A – Temporary Investments 2021/2022 B – Actual Prudential Indicators 2021/2022 C – Explanation of the Prudential indicators D – The economy and interest rates 2021/2022 E – Borrowing and investment rates in 2021/2022			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

At its meeting on the 19th of July 2022, the Audit & Standards Committee will consider a report in relation to treasury management activity and actual prudential indicators. Given that the final approval has to be given by Council, it is necessary to place this matter on the Council agenda pending the decision of Audit & Standards Committee.

Background

1. This Council fully complies with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
2. For the financial year 2021/2022 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Council should receive the following reports:
 - Annual treasury strategy (Council 25/02/2021)
 - Half year treasury management report (Audit & Standards 30/11/2021)
 - Annual treasury review (this report)

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3. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body, which in this Council is the Audit & Standards Committee.

Treasury Activity

4. A summary of treasury management activity for 2021/2022 is shown below:

Treasury Activity 2021-22				
	April 2021	Increase	Decrease	March 2022
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Debt				
Borrowing:				
Long-term	-102,717	-	-	-102,717
Short-term	-	-	-	-
Total debt	-102,717	-	-	-102,717
Investments				
Externally managed	-	-	-	-
Internally managed - Long term	9,870	884	-	10,754
Internally managed - Short term	48,013	10,886	-	58,899
Total investments	57,883	11,770	-	69,653
Net debt	-44,834	11,770	-	-33,064

Investment Strategy

5. Investment strategy for 2021/2022 was to give primary importance to security of capital and liquidity. This was achieved through having regard to government 'Guidance on Local Government Investment' issued in March 2004, and our own investment policy which set out permitted specified and non-specified investments. In addition, the Council received and followed weekly investment advice from Link Asset Services detailing counterparty credit ratings, which were also subjected to a credit default swap overlay. This was supplemented by daily update emails from Link Asset Services, economic briefings and monitoring the financial press.
6. The Council's Investment Strategy, set out in the report to Council in February 2021, stated that in 2021/2022 the Council would seek to improve average returns to help the Council's financial sustainability. Investment strategy was to broaden the range of longer term investments.
7. The expectation for interest rates within the strategy for 2021/2022 was for Bank Rate to remain at 0.1%. In actual fact, the rate has increased to 0.25% on 16 December 2021, 0.5% on 3 February 2022 and 0.75% on 17 March 2022.
8. The Council has £10m of property fund and multi-asset fund investments comprised of Lothbury property fund £4m, Hermes property fund £2m, Royal London Multi-Asset fund £3m

and CCLA £1m. These are non-specified investments and they are intended to be long-term. Capital values are subject to change.

9. **Appendix A** has a summary of all investments during the year.

Borrowing Outturn for 2021/2022

10. The Council had total borrowing of £102.717m as at 31 March 2022. No new loans were taken out and no loans matured during the year. With a Capital Financing Requirement of £117.058m as at 31 March 2022, the Council has continued and extended an element of internal borrowing during the year to help offset low investment returns. As at 31 March 2022 there is internal borrowing of £14.341m (2020-21 £8.613m).

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Lender	Principal	Type	Interest Rate	Years to Maturity	Maturity Date	New 20-21
PWLB	£2m	Fixed Interest Rate	1.93%	1 years	11/02/2023	
PWLB	£6m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.32%	10 years	31/03/2032	
PWLB	£10m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.45%	15 years	31/03/2037	
PWLB	£7m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.51%	20 years	31/03/2042	
PWLB	£7m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.51%	20 years	31/03/2042	
PWLB	£7m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.53%	25 years	31/03/2047	
PWLB	£7m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.53%	25 years	31/03/2047	
PWLB	£7m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.52%	30 years	31/03/2052	
PWLB	£7m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.52%	30 years	31/03/2052	
PWLB	£7m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.51%	35 years	31/03/2057	
PWLB	£7m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.51%	35 years	31/03/2057	
PWLB	£10m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.48%	39 years	31/03/2061	
PWLB	£9.717m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.48%	39 years	31/03/2061	
PWLB	£1m	Fixed Interest Rate	2.51%	41 years	21/06/2063	
PWLB	£2m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.16%	41 years	20/08/2063	
PWLB	£1m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.55%	43 years	28/11/2064	
PWLB	£2m	Fixed Interest Rate	3.20%	43 years	18/08/2065	
PWLB	£2m	Fixed Interest Rate	2.96%	44 years	11/02/2066	
PWLB	£1m	Fixed Interest Rate	2.65%	44 years	14/06/2066	
Total Loans	£102.717m					

The Economy and Interest Rates

- An analysis of UK economic performance and interest rates and the world economic context during 2021/2022 is in **Appendix D**.

Performance Measurement

- Appendix A** has details of the investments made during the year. All of these were 'approved investments' with counterparties included on the Council's lending list, and within permitted limits as regards time and amount, except for the Barclays 95-day notice account which exceeded the £8m limit by £2k for a period of time due to automatically re-invested interest.

13. The average level of internally managed investments held was £57.944 million and the average return on these investments was 0.22%. The interest earned was £129k.
14. The average invested in Property and Multi-Asset Funds was £10 million and the average return on these investments was 2.79%. Interest earned was £279k. Capital values had increased as during 2021/2022 by £0.893m. A statutory override for the accounting treatment for local authorities means the change in capital value is taken to the balance sheet, rather than the 2021/2022 revenue account. The Council has an earmarked investment risk reserve of £0.310m set aside.
15. Interest earned in 2021/2022 on specified and non-specified investments was £408k compared with a budget of £398k.

	Average Investment	Rate of Return
Internally Managed Specified	£57,944,055	0.22%
Property Fund / Multi-Asset	£10,000,000	2.79%
Externally Managed	N/A	N/A

16. Stroud is a member of a Link Asset Services Benchmarking group. The group is comprised of North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Rugby Borough Council, Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council, West Midlands Combined Authority, Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest District Council. A primary aim of the group is to evaluate and compare return on investment taking into account the level of risk for the investment portfolio. During 2021/2022 Stroud has again compared well with the benchmark group in terms of return achieved, whilst maintaining a predominantly low risk portfolio.
17. In line with the budget strategy and the 2021/2022 Treasury and Investment Strategies approved by Council in February 2021 the Council is continuing to target an increase the return on investments through an increased risk appetite and permitting a wider range of investments.

Prudential Indicators and Compliance with Borrowing Limits

18. The Council is required by the Prudential Code to report actual prudential indicators after the year end. These are shown in **Appendix B**.
19. The Council had maximum loans totalling £102.717m during 2021/2022. This amount of borrowing was well within both the authorised and operational borrowing limits of £143m and £138m respectively.

Borrowing limits 2021/2022	Approved Limit	Actual
Authorised limit for external debt	£143m	£102.7m
Operational boundary for external debt	£138m	£102.7m

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Member Training

20. Training for members was provided by Link on 17 January 2022, when members were also consulted on the draft Ethical Investment Policy. Further training for Members will be scheduled later in 2022/2023.

21. IMPLICATIONS

21.1 Financial Implications

The report sets out the financial results of the Council's Treasury management activities in 2021/22.

The Council has an investment risk reserve of £310k to cover any fall in value of the long term funds from their original investment of £10m. As the report sets out the funds are currently significantly above that level. However, the reserve will be held in place as a measure of caution against market uncertainty in the current financial year.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources

andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk

21.2 Legal Implications

There are no significant legal implications in respect of the recommendations in this report. Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services, the ODPM Local Government Investment Guidance provides assurance that investments are, and will continue to be, within its legal powers.

One Legal

Tel: 01684 272012 Email: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

21.3 Equality Implications

An EIA is not required because there are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision

21.4 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications from the decisions in this report.

Council has agreed an ethical investments policy which applies from the 2022/23 onwards. Future Treasury Management reports will incorporate reporting against that policy, including on environmental criteria.

Temporary Investments - Summary Activity 2021/2022				
Borrower	Type	Average Principal Invested £	Interest £	Average Rate
Aberdeen	MMF	2,995,588.05	1,753.49	0.06%
Deutsche	MMF	207,391.78	100.32	0.05%
Federated Prime	MMF	2,726,631.96	1,243.67	0.05%
Goldman Sachs	MMF	792,301.91	199.70	0.03%
Dudley Metropolitan Council	FD	1,000,000.00	14,500.00	1.45%
National Bank of Canada	FD	5,479.45	33.97	0.62%
North Lanarkshire Council	FD	1,898,630.14	3,987.12	0.21%
Qatar National Bank	FD	756,164.38	1,814.79	0.24%
Stirling Council	FD	224,657.53	112.33	0.05%
Barclays	Call	171,365.41	17.14	0.01%
Barclays 95	Notice	7,773,979.26	18,886.01	0.24%
Barclays Total		7,945,344.67	18,903.14	0.24%
Bayerische Landesbank	FD	564,383.56	790.14	0.14%
Bayerische Landesbank	FD	317,808.22	921.64	0.29%
Bayerische Landesbank	FD	10,958.90	69.04	0.63%
Bayerische LB Total		893,150.68	1,780.82	0.20%
Coventry B S	FD	4,076,712.33	2,038.37	0.05%
Coventry B S	FD	279,452.05	167.67	0.06%
Coventry B S	FD	153,424.66	184.11	0.12%
Coventry B S	FD	944,109.59	1,321.76	0.14%
Coventry B S	FD	167,671.23	519.79	0.31%
Coventry B S	FD	21,917.81	111.78	0.51%
Coventry B S Total		5,643,287.67	4,343.48	0.08%
DMO	FD	242,487.67	24.25	0.01%
DMO	FD	38,356.16	84.38	0.22%
DMO	FD	95,890.41	287.67	0.30%
DMO	FD	109,589.04	509.59	0.47%
DMO	FD	117,808.22	647.94	0.55%
DMO Total		604,131.51	1,553.83	0.26%
Goldman Sachs	FD	991,780.82	1,289.32	0.13%
Goldman Sachs	FD	564,383.56	846.58	0.15%
Goldman Sachs	FD	1,260,273.97	2,016.43	0.16%
Goldman Sachs	FD	953,424.66	2,002.19	0.21%
Goldman Sachs	FD	997,260.27	2,692.60	0.27%
Goldman Sachs Total		4,767,123.29	8,847.12	0.19%
Lloyds 32	Notice	1,870,311.91	561.09	0.03%
Lloyds 95	Notice	2,048,936.09	985.16	0.05%
Lloyds Total		3,919,248.00	1,546.26	0.04%

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Appendix A

Temporary Investments

National Counties B S	FD	701,369.86	1,332.60	0.19%
National Counties B S	FD	295,890.41	591.78	0.20%
National Counties B S Total		997,260.27	1,924.38	0.19%
NW RFB	FD	1,849,315.07	3,513.70	0.19%
NW RFB	CD	1,150,684.93	2,876.71	0.25%
NW RFB	CD	421,917.81	3,459.73	0.82%
NW TR	Call	456,919.08	45.69	0.01%
RBS TR	Call	2,978.40	0.30	0.01%
NW RFB Total		3,881,815.29	9,896.13	0.25%
Principality B S	FD	679,452.05	611.51	0.09%
Principality B S	FD	263,013.70	447.12	0.17%
Principality B S Total		942,465.75	1,058.63	0.11%
Svenska	Call	694,885.00	578.76	0.08%
Svenska 35	Notice	13,000.00	7.85	0.06%
Svenska Total		707,885.00	586.60	0.08%
Standard Chartered	FD	2,136,986.30	1,709.59	0.08%
Standard Chartered	FD	997,260.27	1,096.99	0.11%
Standard Chartered	FD	93,150.68	326.03	0.35%
Standard Chartered	FD	60,273.97	488.22	0.81%
Standard Chartered	FD	5,479.45	61.37	1.12%
S Chart 95	Notice	2,000,000.00	8,992.65	0.45%
Standard Chartered Total		5,293,150.68	12,674.85	0.24%
Santander 95	Notice	7,997,086.67	33,653.96	0.42%
Santander 180	Notice	54.97	0.33	0.59%
Santander Total		7,997,141.63	33,654.28	0.42%
Toronto Dominion	CD	2,147,945.21	4,295.89	0.20%
Toronto Dominion	CD	73,972.60	1,405.48	1.90%
Toronto Dominion Total		2,221,917.81	5,701.37	0.26%
Thurrock District Council	FD	750,684.93	1,126.03	0.15%
Thurrock District Council	FD	772,602.74	1,931.51	0.25%
Thurrock D C Total		1,523,287.67	3,057.53	0.20%
Grand Total		57,944,055.14	129,273.82	0.22%

Types of investment

Call - account with current day access to funds invested. Interest rates are fixed.

CD - Certificate of Deposit which are tradeable financial investments.

DMO - Investment with the government's Debt Management Office. Interest rate fixed.

FIBCA - Fixed Interest Bearing Current Account

Fixed - fixed term investments at fixed interest rates.

MMF - Money Market Funds are AAA-rated current day access accounts. Interest rates can change daily.

Notice - account with withdrawal subject to minimum specified notice. Interest rates are fixed.

Long Term Investments - Summary Activity 2021/2022

Investment	Type	Initial Investment £	Capital Value as at 31 March 2021	Capital Value as at 31 March 2022	2021/2022 Gain/Loss (-)	Income £	Return %
Lothbury	Property	4,000,000	3,841,020	4,400,550	559,530	108,548	2.71%
Hermes	Property	2,000,000	1,954,353	2,285,285	330,932	72,298	3.61%
Royal London	Multi-Asset	3,000,000	3,065,472	3,011,810	-53,662	73,118	2.44%
CCLA	Multi-Asset	1,000,000	1,009,816	1,056,613	56,613	25,232	2.52%
Long term investment Total		10,000,000	9,870,661	10,754,258	893,413	279,196	2.79%

Types of investment

Property - purchase of units in a property fund.

Multi-Asset - purchase of units in a fund that invests in a range of financial assets.

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ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2021/2022

	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Prudential Indicators	actual	original	actual
	outturn	indicator	outturn
Capital Expenditure			
General Fund	5,513	23,359	14,817
HRA	7,171	10,448	9,333
TOTAL	£12,684	£33,807	£24,150
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream			
Non- HRA	-2.14%	-1.95%	-2.01%
HRA	15.80%	14.69%	15.52%
Net borrowing requirement			
brought forward 1 April	110,014	111,821	111,330
carried forward 31 March	111,330	121,834	117,058
in year borrowing requirement	£1,316	£10,013	£5,728
In-year Capital Financing Requirement			
General Fund	555	262	1,861
HRA	761	9,751	3,867
TOTAL	£1,316	£10,013	£5,728
Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 March			
General Fund	15,202	17,270	17,063
HRA	96,128	104,564	99,995
TOTAL	£111,330	£121,834	£117,058
Authorised limit for external debt			
borrowing	102,717	143,000	102,717
other long term liabilities	-	-	-
TOTAL	102,717	143,000	102,717
Operational boundary for external debt			
borrowing	102,717	138,000	102,717
other long term liabilities	-	-	-
TOTAL	102,717	138,000	102,717
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 365 days	11,000	15,000	10,000

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EXPLANATION OF THE PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**Explanation of prudential indicators**

Central Government control of borrowing was ended and replaced with Prudential borrowing by the Local Government Act 2003. Prudential borrowing permitted local government organisations to borrow to fund capital spending plans provided they could demonstrate their affordability. Prudential indicators are the means to demonstrate affordability.

Capital expenditure – compares the 2021/2022 original capital estimates with the actual outturn. Actual 2020/2021 outturn is shown for comparison.

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – this indicator shows the effect of HRA self-financing debt, with the cost of servicing debt accounting for 15.52% of rental income. Interest on reserves and balances still make a small positive contribution to General Fund finances.

Net borrowing requirement – this demonstrates borrowing needed to fund capital spending.

In year capital financing requirement – this shows that in 2021/2022 there was a net additional borrowing (internal or external) of £5.728m because Minimum Revenue Provision and Voluntary Revenue Provision of £1.020m was less than capital expenditure of £6.748m financed by borrowing. Capital spend during the year was financed by the Council's capital resources such as grants, capital receipts and revenue contributions. The comparative figure for 2020/2021 was a net additional borrowing of £1.316m.

Capital financing requirement (CFR) as at 31 March – the capital financing requirement shows the underlying need of the Council to borrow for capital purposes as determined from the balance sheet. The overall positive CFR of £117.058m provides the Council with the opportunity to borrow if appropriate. The Council has £102.717m in long term borrowing. This indicates Council is internally borrowing £14.341m.

Authorised limit for external debt - this is the “affordable borrowing limit” for external temporary borrowing. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003. This limit is set to allow sufficient headroom for day to day operational management of cash flows. The Council does not have the power to borrow above this level. The Authorised Limit was set at £143m in February 2021.

Operational boundary for external debt – this is set as the more likely amount required for day to day cash flow purposes. It is acceptable to be above or below this level as long as the Authorised Limit is not breached. The Operational Boundary was set at £138m in February 2021.

Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 365 days – the amount of £15m is what it is considered can be prudently invested for a period in excess of a year. In 2021/2022 £10m was invested in property and multi-asset funds (2020/2021 £11m – including £1m invested with another Council).

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The Economy and Interest Rates 2021-2022

UK. Economy. Over the last two years, the coronavirus outbreak has done huge economic damage to the UK and to economies around the world. After the Bank of England took emergency action in March 2020 to cut Bank Rate to 0.10%, it left Bank Rate unchanged at its subsequent meetings until raising it to 0.25% at its meeting on 16th December 2021, 0.50% at its meeting of 4th February 2022 and then to 0.75% in March 2022.

The UK economy has endured several false dawns through 2021/22, but with most of the economy now opened up and nearly back to business-as-usual, the GDP numbers have been robust (9% y/y Q1 2022) and sufficient for the MPC to focus on tackling the second-round effects of inflation, now that the CPI measure has already risen to 6.2% and is likely to exceed 8% in April.

Gilt yields fell towards the back end of 2021, but despite the war in Ukraine gilt yields have shot higher in early 2022. At 1.38%, 2-year yields remain close to their recent 11-year high and 10-year yields of 1.65% are close to their recent six-year high. These rises have been part of a global trend as central banks have suggested they will continue to raise interest rates to contain inflation.

Historically, a further rise in US Treasury yields will probably drag UK gilt yields higher. There is a strong correlation between the two factors. However, the squeeze on real household disposable incomes arising from the 54% leap in April utilities prices as well as rises in council tax, water prices and many phone contract prices, are strong headwinds for any economy to deal with. In addition, from 1st April 2022, employees also pay 1.25% more in National Insurance tax. Consequently, inflation will be a bigger drag on real incomes in 2022 than in any year since records began in 1955.

Average inflation targeting. This was the major change in 2020/21 adopted by the Bank of England in terms of implementing its inflation target of 2%. The key addition to the Bank's forward guidance in August 2020 was a new phrase in the policy statement, namely that "it does not intend to tighten monetary policy until there is clear evidence that significant progress is being made in eliminating spare capacity and *achieving the 2% target sustainably*". That mantra now seems very dated. Inflation is the "genie" that has escaped the bottle, and a perfect storm of supply side shortages, labour shortages, commodity price inflation, the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and subsequent Western sanctions all point to inflation being at elevated levels until well into 2023.

USA. The flurry of comments from Fed officials following the mid-March FOMC meeting – including from Chair Jerome Powell himself – hammering home the hawkish message from the mid-March meeting, has had markets pricing in a further 225bps of interest rate increases in 2022 on top of the initial move to an interest rate range of 0.25% - 0.5%.

In addition, the Fed is expected to start to run down its balance sheet. Powell noted that the rundown could come as soon as the next meeting in May.

The upward pressure on inflation from higher oil prices and potential knock-on impacts on supply chains all argue for tighter policy (CPI is estimated at 7.8% across Q1), but the hit to real disposable incomes and the additional uncertainty points in the opposite direction.

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Appendix D

More recently, the inversion of the 10y-2y Treasury yield spread at the end of March led to predictable speculation that the Fed's interest rate hikes would quickly push the US economy into recession. Q1 GDP growth is likely to be only between 1.0% and 1.5% annualised (down from 7% in Q4 2021). But, on a positive note, the economy created more than 550,000 jobs per month in Q1, a number unchanged from the post-pandemic 2021 average. Unemployment is only 3.8%.

EU. With euro-zone inflation having jumped to 7.5% in March it seems increasingly likely that the ECB will accelerate its plans to tighten monetary policy. It is likely to end net asset purchases in June – i.e., earlier than the Q3 date which the ECB targeted in March. And the market is now anticipating possibly three 25bp rate hikes later this year followed by more in 2023. Policymakers have also hinted strongly that they would re-start asset purchases if required. In a recent speech, Christine Lagarde said “we can design and deploy new instruments to secure monetary policy transmission as we move along the path of policy normalisation.”

While inflation has hit the headlines recently, the risk of recession has also been rising. Among the bigger countries, Germany is most likely to experience a “technical” recession because its GDP contracted in Q4 2021, and its performance has been subdued in Q1 2022. However, overall, Q1 2022 growth for the Eurozone is expected to be 0.3% q/q with the y/y figure posting a healthy 5.2% gain. Finishing on a bright note, unemployment fell to only 6.8% in February.

China. After a concerted effort to get on top of the virus outbreak in Q1 of 2020, economic recovery was strong in the rest of the year; however, 2021 has seen the economy negatively impacted by political policies that have focussed on constraining digital services, restricting individual freedoms, and re-establishing the power of the One-Party state. With the recent outbreak of Covid-19 in large cities, such as Shanghai, near-term economic performance is likely to be subdued. Official GDP numbers suggest growth of c4% y/y, but other data measures suggest this may be an overstatement.

Japan. The Japanese economic performance through 2021/22 is best described as tepid. With a succession of local lockdowns throughout the course of the year, GDP is expected to have risen only 0.5% y/y with Q4 seeing a minor contraction. The policy rate has remained at -0.1%, unemployment is currently only 2.7% and inflation is sub 1%, although cost pressures are mounting.

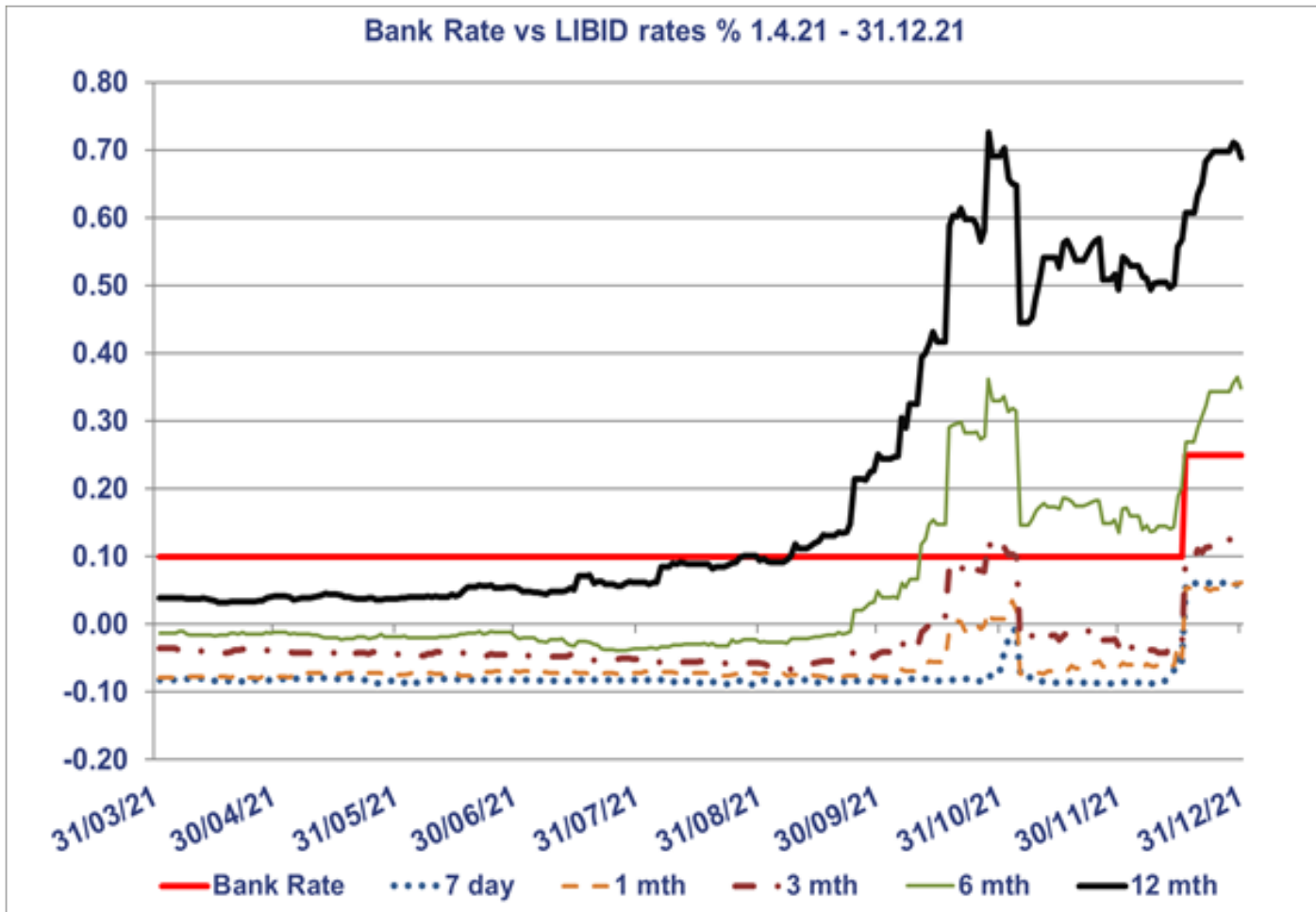
World growth. World growth is estimated to have expanded 8.9% in 2021/22 following a contraction of 6.6% in 2020/21.

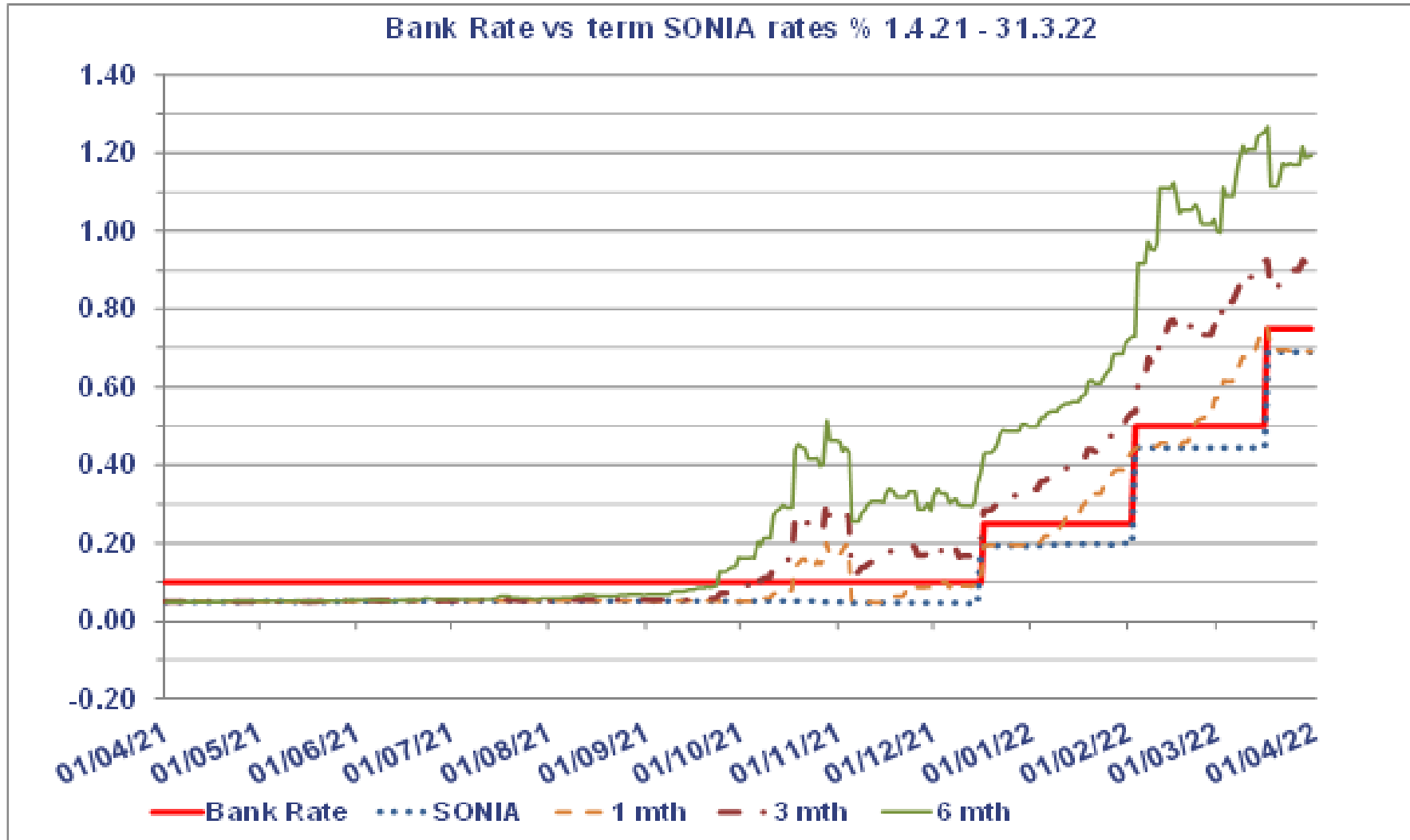
Deglobalisation. Until recent years, world growth has been boosted by increasing globalisation i.e. countries specialising in producing goods and commodities in which they have an economic advantage and which they then trade with the rest of the world. This has boosted worldwide productivity and growth, and, by lowering costs, has also depressed inflation. However, the rise of China as an economic superpower over the last 30 years, which now accounts for 18% of total world GDP (the USA accounts for 24%), and Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine, has unbalanced the world economy. In addition, after the pandemic exposed how frail extended supply lines were around the world, both factors are now likely to lead to a sharp retrenchment of economies into two blocs of western democracies v. autocracies. It is, therefore, likely that we are heading into a period where there will be a reversal of world globalisation and a decoupling of western countries from dependence on China (and to a much lesser extent Russia) to supply products and vice versa. This is likely to reduce world growth rates.

Central banks' monetary policy. During the pandemic, the governments of western countries have provided massive fiscal support to their economies which has resulted in a big increase in total government debt in each country. It is therefore very important that bond yields stay low while debt to GDP ratios slowly subside under the impact of economic growth. This provides governments with a good reason to amend the mandates given to central banks to allow higher average levels of inflation than we have generally seen over the last couple of decades. Both the Fed and Bank of England have already changed their policy towards implementing their existing mandates on inflation, (and full employment), to hitting an average level of inflation. Greater emphasis could also be placed on hitting subsidiary targets e.g. full employment before raising rates. Higher average rates of inflation would also help to erode the real value of government debt more quickly.

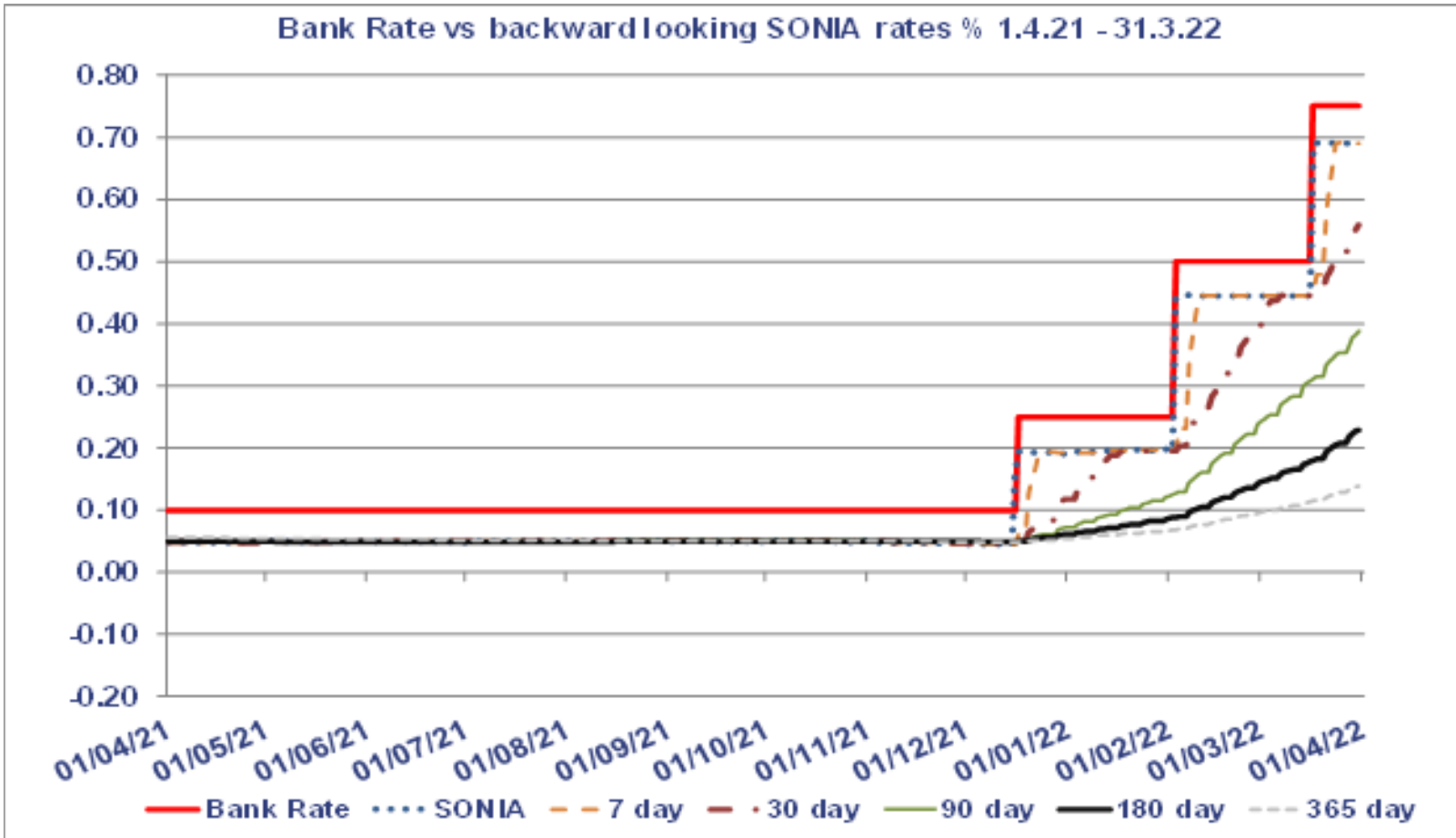
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INVESTMENT AND BORROWING RATES 2021-2022





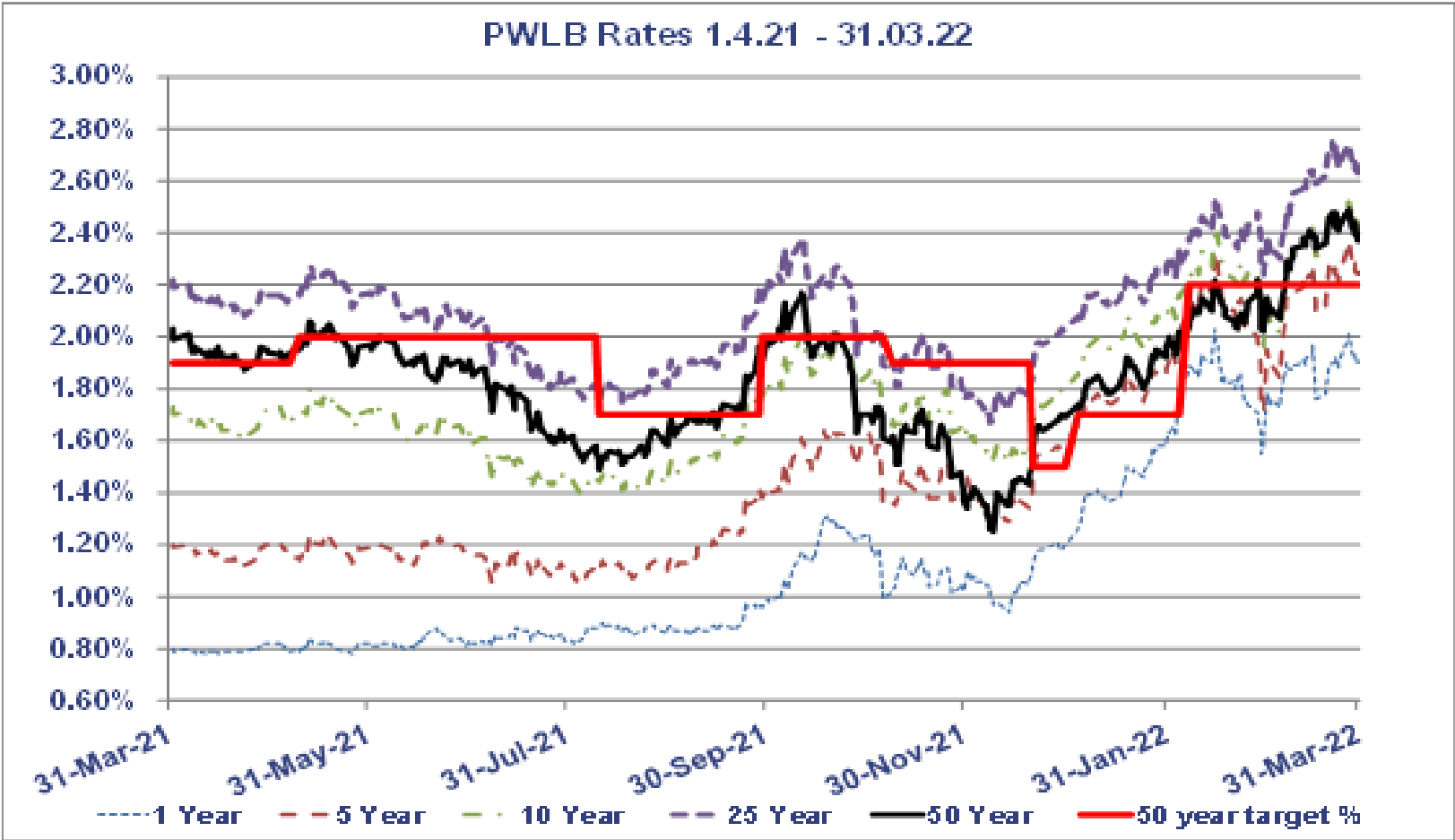
	Bank Rate	SONIA	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth
High	0.75	0.69	0.75	0.93	1.27
High Date	17/03/2022	18/03/2022	16/03/2022	28/03/2022	17/03/2022
Low	0.10	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Low Date	01/04/2021	15/12/2021	10/11/2021	14/04/2021	09/04/2021
Average	0.19	0.14	0.17	0.24	0.34
Spread	0.65	0.65	0.71	0.88	1.22



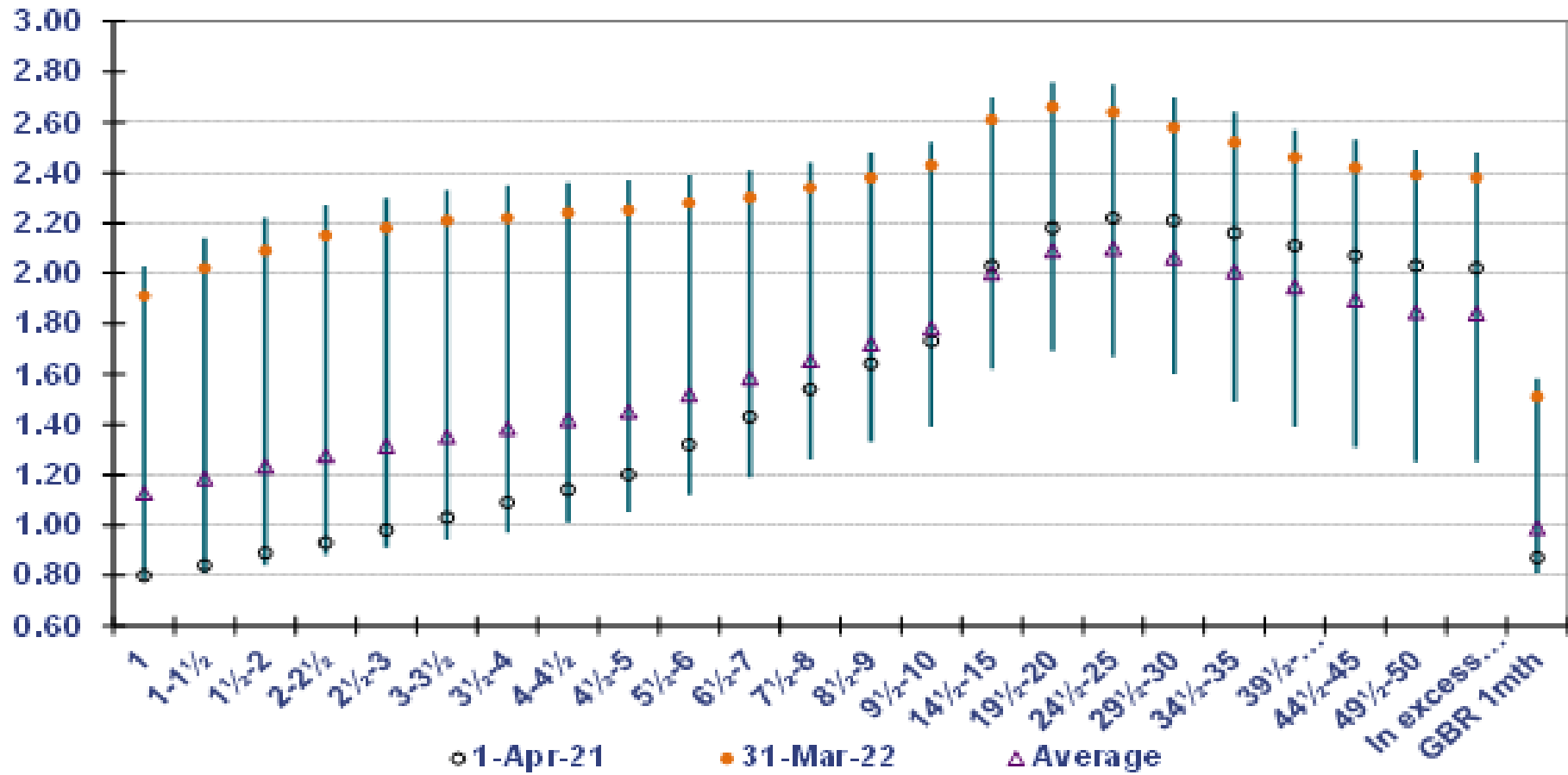
	Bank Rate	SONIA	7 day	30 day	90 day	180 day	365 day
High	0.75	0.69	0.69	0.56	0.39	0.23	0.14
High Date	17/03/2022	18/03/2022	25/03/2022	31/03/2022	31/03/2022	31/03/2022	31/03/2022
Low	0.10	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Low Date	01/04/2021	15/12/2021	16/12/2021	16/12/2021	16/12/2021	07/06/2021	13/12/2021
Average	0.19	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.09	0.07	0.06
Spread	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.51	0.34	0.18	0.09

PWL B RATES 2021-2022

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
01/04/2021	0.80%	1.20%	1.73%	2.22%	2.03%
31/03/2022	1.91%	2.25%	2.43%	2.64%	2.39%
Low	0.78%	1.05%	1.39%	1.67%	1.25%
Low date	08/04/2021	08/07/2021	05/08/2021	08/12/2021	09/12/2021
High	2.03%	2.37%	2.52%	2.75%	2.49%
High date	15/02/2022	28/03/2022	28/03/2022	23/03/2022	28/03/2022
Average	1.13%	1.45%	1.78%	2.10%	1.85%
Spread	1.25%	1.32%	1.13%	1.08%	1.24%



PWLB Certainty Rate Variations 1.4.21 to 31.3.2022



Money market investment rates 2021/22

	Bank Rate	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
High	0.25	0.06	0.06	0.14	0.36	0.73
High Date	17/12/2021	29/12/2021	31/12/2021	31/12/2021	30/12/2021	28/10/2021
Low	0.10	-0.09	-0.08	-0.07	-0.04	0.04
Low Date	01/07/2021	27/08/2021	17/09/2021	08/09/2021	27/07/2021	08/07/2021
Average	0.11	-0.07	-0.05	-0.01	0.09	0.31
Spread	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.20	0.40	0.68

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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**COUNCIL****21 JULY 2022**

Report Title	ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2021/22			
Purpose of Report	<p>The Annual Report of the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee (the Committee) summarises the Committee's activities during 2021/22 and sets out its plans for the next twelve months.</p> <p>This report provides independent assurance that the Council has in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Adequate and effective governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; II. Internal and External Audit services; and III. Financial reporting arrangements that can be relied upon and which contribute to the high corporate governance standards that this Council expects and maintains. 			
Decision(s)	Council RESOLVES to approve the Annual Report of the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee 2021/22 as recommended by Audit and Standards Committee.			
Consultation and Feedback	Audit and Standards Committee have been consulted on the report content.			
Report Author	Piyush Fatania Head of Audit Risk Assurance (ARA) Tel: 01452 328883 Email: piyush.fatania@gloucestershire.gov.uk			
Options	Consideration has been given to not producing an Annual Report. However this has been discounted due to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) requirements, as confirmed below.			
Background Papers	Relevant public reports presented to the Audit and Standards Committee during 2021/22 and minutes of those meetings can be found via the following link .			
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Annual Report of the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee 2021/22			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

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At its meeting on the 19 July 2022, the Audit & Standards Committee will consider the annual report of the Chair. Given that the final approval has to be made by Council, it is necessary to place this matter on the Council agenda pending the decision of Audit & Standards Committee.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Stroud District Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards; and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place the proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs.
- 1.2 A sound corporate governance framework involves accountability to service users, stakeholders and the wider community. Within this, the Council takes decisions and leads and controls its functions to achieve stated objectives and priorities. It thereby provides an opportunity to demonstrate the positive elements of the Council's business and to promote public confidence.
- 1.3 Audit committees are widely recognised as a core component of effective governance. Their key role is independently overseeing and assessing the internal control environment (comprising governance, risk management and control) and advising the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.
- 1.4 The Stroud District Council Audit and Standards Committee was established in September 2009 in line with guidance issued by CIPFA. The guidance recommends that audit committees should prepare an annual report to the full Council, which sets out the Committee's work on how they have discharged their responsibilities.
- 1.5 The Annual Report of the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee 2021/22 fulfils the above requirement.

2.0 MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 The Audit and Standards Committee undertake a substantial range of activities. The group work closely with the Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer and both the Internal and External Auditors, in achieving the Council's aims and objectives.
- 2.2 The Committee has developed and implemented a work programme for the year to enable key tasks to be considered, undertaken and delivered. Through the 2021/22 work programme, the Committee has:
 - I. Provided independent assurance on the adequacy of the Council's governance, risk management framework and associated control environment;
 - II. Provided independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment; and
 - III. Overseen the statutory financial reporting process.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Audit and Standards Committee has had a successful year in providing the Council with assurance on the strength of its governance and stewardship arrangements and in challenging those arrangements.
- 3.2 The Committee's work programme is dynamic. The programme will continue to be reviewed to ensure the Committee maximise its contribution to the governance and control framework, while managing agendas to ensure that all meetings are focused on the Council's key risks and issues.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources

Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk

Risk Assessment:

Failure to deliver effective governance will negatively impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives and priorities.

4.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Contact: One Legal

Email: legal.services@onelegal.org.uk

Tel: 01684 272691

4.3 Equality Implications

There are no equality implications as a result of the recommendations made within this report.

4.4 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications as a result of the recommendations made within this report.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE – DRAFT 2021-22

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Foreword

As Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee, I am pleased to present this report on our contribution to the Council's oversight of risk and governance for 2021-22.

Effective management and governance are important to ensure that the Council successfully delivers crucial services to our community, improves performance and reduces the risk of not achieving our objectives.

The Audit and Standards Committee (the Committee) is a core component of effective governance. Our role is to independently oversee and assess the internal control, governance and risk management environment and to constructively advise the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

The Committee considers and monitors internal and external reports and recommends actions to the Council to address any deficiencies.

We undertake a substantial range of activities and work closely with the Strategic Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer), the Monitoring Officer, Internal and External Audit.

Our work programme is structured around the Committee's main areas of responsibility. It is reviewed and agreed at each meeting to enable key tasks to be considered and delivered.

Through our work programme, we have provided independent assurance on the adequacy of the governance, risk management and control environment. This includes assurance on the Council's performance where this affects exposure to risk and weakens the control environment. We have also overseen the statutory financial reporting process.

Members have requested additional detailed reports from officers on particular areas where we felt this to be helpful for assurance purposes. In addition to the annual cycle, the committee requested major reviews of Planning, Planning Enforcement and Procurement (including Project Management and Contract Variation). These reports lay a sound foundation for future service provision and will be subject to follow-up reports in the coming year. The committee acknowledges the major work, by officers of the council and Internal Audit, undertaken to produce these reports.

The External Auditor gave an unqualified opinion on the 2020-21 annual accounts. They also stated that the Council had proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The work of the Committee has contributed to this conclusion.

This report is to inform Council of the Committee's work in 2021-22 and to note our opinion on the standard of governance, risk management and the audit arrangements in place.

The Committee has made a positive contribution to the Council's overall governance, control and risk arrangements and has been successful in fulfilling its terms of reference. I am satisfied that the Council has maintained an adequate and effective internal control framework through the period covered by this report.

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The Committee has considered regular reports on Treasury Management, Risk Management, Procurement, Fraud, Internal Audit Progress, the Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.

Finally, I would like to convey my thanks to all the members of the Committee and to the officers for all the work done during the past year. While the work was performed under somewhat challenging circumstances the results have justified the effort.

Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy

Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee

1. Background

- 1.1 Stroud District Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted lawfully and to proper standards. This includes ensuring that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this responsibility, the Council must ensure that it has proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs in place.
- 1.2 A sound corporate governance framework requires accountability to service users, stakeholders and the wider community. Within this, the Council takes decisions, leads and controls its functions to achieve stated objectives and priorities. It thereby provides an opportunity to demonstrate the positive elements of the Council's business and promote public confidence. Audit Committees are widely recognised as a core component of effective governance.
- 1.3 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) confirm that "Audit Committees are a vital part of any organisation". The Council's Audit and Governance Committee (the Committee) is responsible for overseeing corporate governance, audit and risk management arrangements. The Committee is also responsible for approving the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The Committee's specific powers and duties are set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 1.4 The key benefits of the Committee are:
 - i. Maintaining public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting. This includes providing a focus on financial reporting throughout the year, leading to confidence in the objectivity and fairness of the financial governance arrangements operating within the Council;
 - ii. Reinforcing the importance and independence of Internal and External Audit and any other similar review process;
 - iii. Considering assurance from various sources and holding management to account;
 - iv. Providing assurance through a process of independent and objective review, via the Internal Audit service provided by Audit Risk Assurance (ARA);
 - v. Raising the Council's awareness of the need for governance, ethical behaviour, internal control and the implementation of audit recommendations; and
 - vi. Providing assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management arrangements, including the risk of fraud and irregularity.
- 1.5 The Committee is established in accordance with CIPFA's "Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police – 2018". It has a direct reporting line to full Council, and the Chair also has direct access to the Chief Executive and the Leader, as required.
- 1.6 Despite the challenges faced by the Council in 2021-22, the Committee maintained a detailed work programme for its main areas of activity which it considered and updated at each meeting.

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- 1.7 The Committee met five times during the year and each meeting had a full and wide-ranging agenda, reflecting its broad role.

2. Committee Role and Responsibilities

- 2.1 The core functions of the Committee are incorporated in its terms of reference. They are presented under the main areas of activity, which are to oversee:
 - i. Audit activity (Internal, External and any Inspections);
 - ii. Regulatory framework; and
 - iii. The Statutory Accounts and AGS.
- 2.2 The Committee raises awareness of the need for sound internal control and risk management arrangements. The Committee's presence and effective operation provide assurance to the Council and stakeholders about these important aspects of governance.

3. Audit Committee Membership

- 3.1 The Committee's membership of nine elected Councillors for 2021-22 was:
 - i. Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy (Chair)
 - ii. Councillor Martin Pearcy (Vice Chair)
 - iii. Councillor Paula Baker
 - iv. Councillor Stephen Davies
 - v. Councillor Nick Hurst
 - vi. Councillor Norman Kay
 - vii. Councillor Keith Pearson
 - viii. Councillor Ashley Smith (from September 2021 after replacing Councillor Chris Brine) and
 - ix. Councillor Rich Wilsher
- 3.2 The Council's officers and External Auditors (Deloitte) support the Committee. Key officer engagement is principally via the Strategic Director of Resources (S151 Officer), the Monitoring Officer and the Head of ARA.

4. 2021-22 Committee Achievements

- 4.1 The Council entered the new financial year still being in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council continued to follow government guidance, which included asking the majority of staff to work from home.
- 4.2 The Committee has continued throughout the pandemic to oversee the Council's work on risk management, treasury management and counter fraud. The Committee held in-person meetings from May 2021 onwards.

- 4.3 The outcomes of the Committee's work in relation to its core functions are summarised below.
- 4.4 **Internal Audit** – the Council's Internal Audit is provided by ARA. The Committee reviewed and considered:
- i. The Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2021-22. The Committee contributed towards the formulation of the Internal Audit Plan. The plan helps Internal Audit to target resources to those areas considered to be the highest risks, or which contribute most to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. Based on ARA's work in 2021-22, the Committee asked for further work to be included in the Internal Audit Plan for 2022-23.
 - ii. The Head of ARA's Annual Report and opinion for 2020-21. This provided a Satisfactory opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment and summarised the activity upon which that opinion was based. The Committee can therefore take reasonable assurance that there is a sound system of internal control in place at the Council;
 - iii. Internal Audit reports – this included receiving responses from officers and Members;
 - iv. Reports on Internal Audit's progress against the Annual Audit Plan through regular update reports presented by the Head of ARA;
 - v. Information on the ARA Improvement Journey, including updates on working and reporting arrangements. This positively builds on the successful outcomes from the 2020-21 External Quality Assessment of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit;
 - vi. Management progress to address control weaknesses identified in Internal Audit reports where a limited opinion on the control environment has been provided; and
 - vii. The outcomes of special investigations undertaken by the Internal Audit Counter Fraud team. This included progress made in the investigation of queries arising as a result of the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercise.
- 4.5 **External Audit** – the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 confirms that a Council must appoint an External Auditor to audit the Council's annual Statement of Accounts and value for money arrangements. Under the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), Deloitte LLP were the appointed External Auditor for the Council for the period 2018-19 to 2022-23.
- 4.6 The Committee (or the Chair via delegated responsibility) have monitored the work of the External Auditor and have:
- i. Considered and accepted the Annual Audit Letter for 2020-21. This summarises the outcomes from External Audit work during this period;
 - ii. Considered the Internal Audit and External Audit joint working arrangements;
 - iii. Received and considered regular External Audit progress reports;

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- iv. Considered and approved the draft Statement of Accounts for 2020-21 of the Council, with regular updates on the position received from External Audit;
 - v. Considered and accepted the Audit Results Report;
 - vi. Considered and approved the Letter of Representation; and
 - vii. Considered and accepted the External Auditor's Plan for 2021-22.
- 4.7 The term of the current External Auditor ends on 31st March 2023. A report on External Auditor procurement was submitted to the Committee. Following consideration, the Committee recommended that the Council opt-in to the PSAA for the appointment of the Council's External Auditors from 2023-24. Council approved the above recommendation.
- 4.8 **Risk Management – the Committee:**
- i. Received regular risk management update reports (including the review of the Strategic Risk Register); and
 - ii. Considered risk and opportunity management implications within Internal Audit reports;
- 4.9 Risk management is a key component of effective governance. The Committee and senior management supported an independent review of the Council's risk management arrangements. This will ensure that risk management continues to be embedded within the Council's key business processes.
- 4.10 **Regulatory and Governance – the Committee:**
- i. Reviewed the Council's Local Code of Governance (the Code) and Annual Governance Statement. The Code will be kept under review and be subject to Internal Audit inspection to verify supporting evidence; and
 - ii. Reviewed the progress made by management to address the required actions identified in the 2020-21 AGS Improvement Plan.
- 4.11 CIPFA are due to issue refreshed Audit Committee guidance in 2022-23. The Committee will ensure robust self-assessment against the new guidance and identify improvement actions as required.
- 4.12 **Treasury Management – is a key area for the Committee to monitor and they continue to consider and recommend to full Council for approval amendments to the investment strategy in response to changing market conditions. For example, the 2019-20 Investment Strategy recommended by Committee included new investment options as the Council adapted its risk appetite. The Committee continues to monitor the £10m of longer-term investments in property funds and multi-asset funds arising from that change. During the year, the Committee has:**
- i. Received and accepted the quarterly and half yearly Treasury Management activity reports which monitor treasury activity against the 2021-22 strategy; and

- ii. Considered and recommended to full Council the annual report setting out the Treasury Management Strategy, the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2022/23. This report also set the Council's prudential indicators for 2022-23 and includes a new Ethical Investment Policy which seeks to increase Environment, Social and Governance factors in investment decision making.

4.13 Annual Statement of Accounts and the AGS – the Committee:

- i. Held a special meeting to scrutinise the draft annual Statement of Accounts for 2020-21;
- ii. Ensured appropriate accounting policies had been followed and considered whether there were any concerns that needed the attention of Council. Following scrutiny, the Committee approved the annual Statement of Accounts; and
- iii. Considered and approved the AGS for 2020-21.

5. Work Programme

- 5.1 The Audit Committee can report that the majority of governance functions and processes are well-controlled and delivered.
- 5.2 Where Internal Audit reports revealed risks of concern, the Committee have asked questions to management to explain their plans to rectify any areas of weakness.
- 5.3 Recent reports to the Committee have indicated that further work is needed on some areas around counter fraud and risk management arrangements.

6. Training

- 6.1 A breadth of mandatory training sessions and wider training opportunities have been offered to all Council Members within the 2021/22 Civic Year. These have included (but are not exclusive to) sessions on the following training themes:
 - i. Treasury Management and the Ethical Investment Policy;
 - ii. Risk Management; Project Management; Data Protection; and
 - iii. Covid-19: Response, Recovery and the Role of Stroud District Council.
- 6.2 In addition to the above, the following training was specifically made available to members of the Committee in 2021-22 to support them in discharging their responsibilities:
 - i. Homelessness and Introductory Tenancy Review Hearings Training 6th July 2021 – Compulsory for all Audit and Standards Committee Members;
 - ii. Audit and Standards Risk Based Internal Audit Annual Plan Workshop 8th February 2022 – Advisory for all Audit and Standards Committee Members; and
 - iii. Role of Internal Audit training 26th April 2022 – Advisory for all Audit and Standards Committee Members.

Agenda Item 12b

Appendix 1

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Committee has been successful in maintaining oversight of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control framework throughout 2021-22 and providing constructive challenge.
- 7.2 The Committee's work programme is dynamic. The programme is regularly reviewed to ensure the Committee maximises its contribution to the governance and control framework, while ensuring that the agenda for meetings are focused on key issues.
- 7.3 The Committee is committed to ensuring high governance standards are maintained.
- 7.4 During 2022-23, the Committee will continue to be an important source of assurance over the Council's risk management and control environments, and the financial and performance reporting arrangements.
- 7.5 In particular, the Committee will continue to:
 - i. Support the work of Internal and External Audit and ensure appropriate responses are given to their recommendations;
 - ii. Monitor actions arising from the AGS Action Plan for 2021-22, to ensure the Council's governance arrangements are effective; and
 - iii. Monitor actions arising from the Risk Management Annual Report 2021-22 Action Plan and support their implementation.