

CL.044 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aldam, Baxendale, Bennett, Brine, Bullingham, Laurie Davies, Stephen Davies, Gray, Housden, James, Job, Jockel, John Jones, Mossman, Patrick, Prenter, Smith, Sutton and Turner.

Councillor Wilsher was stuck in traffic on the M25 and hoped to join the meeting shortly.

CL.045 **Declaration of Interests**

There were none.

CL.046 **Minutes**

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October were approved as a correct record.

CL.047 **Announcements**

The Chair announced that Stroud District Council (SDC) had set up a Christmas Giving Tree in reception which had been decorated with gift tags, each one specifying an item that the SDC Charity of the year, Stroud Women's Refuge, had requested for the women it supported. He then advised how Members could contribute before the deadline at 5pm on Tuesday 20 December.

CL.048 **Public Question Time**

Public questions were submitted. They were answered by the Leader of Council, Councillor Catherine Braun. ([Refer to the recording of the meeting](#)).

CL.049 **Member Questions**

There were none.

CL.050 **Canal Project Update**

The Leader, Councillor Braun, introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- This recommendation had been endorsed by the Strategy and Resources Committee to confirm the Council's commitment to the project.
- If approved this would increase the project's Capital Budget by £10.187m with £1m being funded from Stroud District Council's (SDC) Capital Reserve.
- The reasons behind the budget increase were set out in Section 1 of the report on pages 16-17 of the reports pack.
- The project had five strategic aims which were of a great importance to the district and could be found on page 16 of the document pack.
- Appendix B on page 23 of the reports pack outlined the benefits that the project would bring to the district.

The Leader, Councillor Braun, introduced the Canal Project Manager and invited him to provide a brief overview of the report:

- They would be setting up formal briefing sessions for Members to attend and learn more about the project.

- The project board had scrutinised the cost of the project throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and the increase in inflation since the start of the war in Ukraine.
- A review was undertaken by the finance team at SDC who made the recommendations to increase the Capital Budget to the project board in November 2022
- Only 10% of the increased funding would come directly from SDC, the other 90% would be externally funded. They had submitted a bid for £2.3m from the National Lottery who had previously been supportive of the project. There was also a bid for £2.17m to Gloucestershire County Council Highways who had previously invested in the project.

The Canal Project Manager gave the following answers in response to questions asked by Members:

- The new estimated costs had been created with contingency costs and inflationary costs built in.
- Any SDC invested money that was not spent on the project would be returned to the project board to be refunded accordingly.
- This was the largest project in the South West that the National Lottery were investing in. Should they not have the confidence that the project had been backed by all its funding partners, they had the ability to withhold any further funding and also to reclaim any previous funding for the project which was a total of £3m.
- Discussions with minority groups and disabled persons had not yet taken place however, they had just recruited a Community Engagement Officer and were recruiting one more person into the team to begin the detailed activity plan which was agreed during the development phase.

Councillor Braun proposed and Councillor Cornell seconded.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy welcomed the report and debated the time to progress the project. He further requested to see a report which covered the net cost to SDC for the whole project.

Councillor Green expressed her support for the project.

Councillor Cornel expressed her thanks for the continuity of support for the project across the council and across all political parties. She acknowledged the effort that had been put into fundraising for the project and the support of the funding from the National Lottery as well as other partners.

Councillor Wilsher joined the meeting.

Councillor Braun expressed her thanks for the support from both Officers, Members and Partners. She further expressed her support for the project and the benefits it would bring to the district.

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

RESOLVED To increase the capital budget for the Canal Project by £10.187m, to be funded as set out in this report and recommended by Strategy and Resources Committee.

CL.051 **Member Champion Framework**

Councillor Drury-Layfield, Chair of the Member Development Working Group, introduced the report and explained that it was developed following the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) at the Council meeting in July 2022. He then highlighted the key points of the report which included:

- The reason for the framework was to provide structure and support to the already appointed Member Champions.
- The purpose of the Member Champion role.
- The protocol set out a General Role Profile for all Champions and a Specific Role Profile for each championed interest.
- Member Champions would be expected to create a work programme and report back annually to a Parent Committee.
- There were two new role profiles created for a Migrant Champion and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions of which, nominations for those roles were listed on page 61 of the reports pack.
- The protocol provided a clear working relationship between the Champions and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Parent Committee.
- There was an extensive consultation period which was set out in section 5 of the report.

There were no Member questions.

Councillor Drury-Layfield proposed and Councillor Watson seconded. Councillor Watson welcomed the report as a current Mental Health Champion.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy raised concerns regarding the two year appointment period with the next elections being less than two years away. Councillor Drury-Layfield confirmed that the appointments made would last until the next election and would then need to be re-appointed in May 2024.

Councillor Hynd commended the report and welcomed Councillor Cornell's nomination for the Migrant Champion role.

Councillor Cornell expressed her thanks for the support and expressed her ambition to continue to support Migrants in the District should she be appointed into the Migrant Champion role.

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

RESOLVED: a) That the protocol attached at Appendix A be added to the Councils Constitution and adopted as a framework within which the Member Champions shall operate;

b) To approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Migrant Champion Roles;

c) To appoint Councillors nominated in section 2 of the report to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and migrant Champion roles; and

d) That the appointment of the Member Champions be made at the Council Annual Meeting and that this item be included in the business for Annual Council shown in the Council procedure role 2.1.1.

CL.052 **Review of Financial Regulations**

Councillor Pearson, Chair of the Constitution Working Group (CWG), introduced the report and explained that the CWG had been completing a review of the whole Constitution to ensure it was up to date and this report formed part of that review. He further explained that there were no fundamental changes to the report and proceeded to highlight the main updates:

- The formal recognition of the Accountancy Manager to fulfil the role of the Section 151 Officer in the absence of the Strategic Director of Resources.
- Clarified that a breach of the financial regulations could result in disciplinary action.
- Authorisation for the Section 151 Officer to move funds between financial years.
- Updated regulations regarding reserves to reflect the updated Scheme of Delegations.
- Formal authorisation for the Section 151 Officer to exercise discretion with regard to member expense claims.

There were no questions.

Councillor Pearson proposed and Councillor Kay seconded.

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

RESOLVED That the amended financial regulations attached at Appendix A be added to the Councils Constitution.

CL.053 **Town and Parish Council Charter and annual schedule of events**

The Leader, Councillor Braun, introduced the report and explained that the Charter had evolved from a working group set up between Parish and Town Councils and Stroud District Council (SDC). She further explained that the Charter had been established to provide clear understanding and expectation of roles of Members and Officers across both levels of authority.

The Leader highlighted the following points from the report:

- There was an annual schedule of events that had been created at Appendix B.
- It was a live document which would be continually reviewed.

In response to Councillor Studdert-Kennedy, the Leader, Councillor Cornell confirmed that the working group had reached the initial 50% participation target from Town and Parish Councils. The next step, once the charter had been approved, would be to circulate it to all Town and Parish Councils and begin discussions with those who had not yet agreed to participate.

Councillor Braun proposed and Councillor Brown seconded.

Councillors Brown, Watson and Drury-Layfield welcomed the report to improve communication between the Councils.

Councillor Pearson express support for the charter and asked all Members to encourage their Parish and Towns to participate.

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

RESOLVED To:

- a) Adopt the Parish and Town Charter; and**
- b) Give delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Resources to make minor amendments to the Charter as necessary and based on feedback from Town and Parish Councils and SDC Officers.**

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Chair