



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

7 December 2022

You are hereby summoned to attend Meeting of **STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL** in the Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud on **THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 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.

A G E N D A

1. **APOLOGIES**
To receive apologies for absence.
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
To receive declarations of interest.
3. **MINUTES (Pages 3 - 14)**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2022.
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
To receive announcements from the Chair of Council, Leader of Council or Chief Executive.
5. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
The Chair of the Committee will answer questions from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS
Noon on Friday, 9 December 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

6. **MEMBER QUESTIONS**

See Agenda Item 4 deadlines for submissions.

7. **RECOMMENDATION FROM STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Strategy and Resources Committee 24 November 2022

The Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee will present this item.

7a. **CANAL PROJECT UPDATE (Pages 15 - 58)**

To update on the progress of the Canal Project, to reaffirm the support of the Council for the project as accountable body, and to allocate an additional resource towards the project.

8. **MEMBER CHAMPION FRAMEWORK (Pages 59 - 82)**

To consider the adoption of the Member Champion Protocol including role descriptions and proposals for two new Member Champions.

9. **REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (Pages 83 - 144)**

To update the Financial Regulations after consideration by the Section 151 Officer and the Constitution Working Group

10. **TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER AND ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (Pages 145 - 172)**

To adopt the Parish and Town Council Charter between Stroud District Council and Parish and Town Councils within the Stroud district.



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COUNCIL

20 October 2022

7.00 - 9.46 pm

Council Chamber

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Steve Robinson (Chair)

Councillor Beki Aldam
 Councillor Paula Baker
 Councillor Natalie Bennett
 Councillor Catherine Braun
 Councillor Martin Brown
 Councillor Doina Cornell
 Councillor Gordon Craig
 Councillor Kate Crews
 Councillor Laurie Davies
 Councillor Katrina Davis
 Councillor Robin Drury-Layfield
 Councillor Jonathan Edmunds
 Councillor Christopher Evans
 Councillor Helen Fenton
 Councillor Colin Fryer
 Councillor Lindsey Green
 Councillor Jessie Hoskin
 Councillor Nicholas Housden
 Councillor Nick Hurst
 Councillor Steve Hynd
 Councillor Martin Baxendale
 Councillor Jason Bullingham
 Councillor Victoria Gray
 Councillor Dave Mossman
 Councillor Rich Wilsher

*= 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 Loraine Patrick
 Councillor Martin Percy
 Councillor Keith Pearson
 Councillor Nigel Prenter
 Councillor Mattie Ross
 Councillor Mark Ryder
 Councillor Lucas Schoemaker
 Councillor Ashley Smith
 Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy
 Councillor Haydn Sutton
 Councillor Brian Tipper
 Councillor Ken Tucker
 Councillor Chloe Turner
 Councillor Tricia Watson
 Councillor Chris Brine
 Councillor Stephen Davies
 Councillor Jenny Miles
 Councillor Gill Oxley

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Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive
 Strategic Director of Resources
 Strategic Director of Communities
 Monitoring Officer

Corporate Policy and Governance
 Manager
 Community Health & Wellbeing Manager
 Senior Democratic Services & Elections
 Officer
 Democratic Services & Elections Officer

CL.028 **VICE-CHAIR OF COUNCIL**

Councillor Norman Kay was nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of Council.

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

CL.029 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baxendale, Brine, Bullingham, Stephen Davies, Gray, Miles, Mossman, Oxley and Wilsher.

The council offered their best wishes to Councillor Wilsher's wife who was unwell in hospital.

CL.030 **Declaration of Interests**

There were none.

CL.031 **Minutes**

Councillor John Jones proposed an amendment to include the full text of his Member Question and the responses received at the last Council Meeting instead of the hyperlink that had been included. Councillor Housden seconded the amendment.

On being put to the vote the amendment was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2022 were approved as a correct record following the amendment made above.

CL.032 **Long Service Awards for Youth Council Members**

The Chair presented long service awards to three Youth Council Members and provided information regarding their time with the Youth Council and their achievements. The three members receiving awards were Charlotte Bignall, Lily Haines and Tom Wickham-Bassett.

CL.033 **Announcements**

The Chair thanked Stephen Taylor for the support he had provided as Interim Monitoring Officer for the past year and thanked Mike Hammond the previous Head of Community Services for his 33 years service at the Council.

The Leader advised that the joint bid from Councils in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, for a fusion plan that was supported by the wider Western Gateway area, had lost out to Nottinghamshire. They had also recently considered a proposal for an investment zone on the Berkeley site but were unable to support this as the relaxing of planning controls and environmental protection were too much of a risk for the local community and the environment. She reiterated that the Council remained committed to the regeneration of the Berkeley site.

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CL.034 **Public Question Time**

There were none.

CL.035 **APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND POSITIONS**

The Chair advised that the political balance had been recalculated following the formation of a new political group called the Independent Left, the Group Leader was Councillor Natalie Bennett. An additional seat was also being proposed on Strategy & Resources Committee and the Constitution Working Group (CWG) would be tasked with reviewing the number of seats on Committees prior to the annual meeting in May 2023.

In response to Councillor Housden it was confirmed that the financial implications were included in paragraph 4.1 of the report and that there were no limits as to the number of group leaders that a council could have.

In response to a question from Councillor Ryder it was confirmed that in order to have continuity of Committee Chairs some seats had been exchanged between the alliance political groups so that all of the policy Committee Chairs had a seat on Strategy and Resources Committee. It was also confirmed that in addition to reviewing the number of seats available on Committees, the CWG would also review the rules around who could sit on Strategy and Resources Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Braun and seconded by Councillor Bennett.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried with one abstention.

RESOLVED To

- a) **Approve the changes to committee membership and positions as set out in the report and appendix; and**
- b) **Approve an additional seat on Strategy and Resources Committee.**

CL.036 **Member Questions**

Member questions were submitted, they were asked by Councillor Haydn Jones. (Refer to the Council's [recording](#) and [Agenda Item 9](#)).

Councillor Jones asked a supplementary question as to why paragraph 6.74 from the Draft Local Plan, which demonstrated longer term aspiration to reconnect with the Thames at Lechlade, could not be included as part of the Canal Strategy. The Chair of Environment Committee, Councillor Turner, advised that the Canal Strategy, which had been approved as a supplementary planning document, referred to the relevant sections of the Draft Local Plan and therefore the information regarding the canal restoration to the east of Brimscombe had been included.

CL.037 **Response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis**

Councillor Aldam, Vice Chair of Community Services and Licencing Committee, introduced the report and thanked the Officers for their hard work in supporting the cost-of-living crisis.

She confirmed that the council were drawing on its own resources as well as that which had been given by central government and distributed by Gloucestershire County Council. The strain on communities and on the resources of statutory and non-statutory

agencies was set to increase significantly however, there was a lack of detailed information about what groups would be most affected. The usage of Food Banks had already risen by 90% and the use of the Citizens Advice Bureau for support had also risen sharply in recent months.

She stated that they were asking for delegation to the Strategic Director of Communities to help lead the response to the cost-of-living crisis and be given the ability to respond appropriately as more information emerged. She highlighted the actions that had been proposed to help provide support which included:

- Appoint the Strategic Director of Communities to be the cost-of-living crisis workstream lead.
- A group of Officers from across services to be identified to prioritise the cost-of-living crisis work.
- Training for all front-line staff and volunteers.
- Direct contact through printed letters sent to home addresses of those who are digitally excluded and posters for public spaces.
- Produce a map of Warm Space activities and identify when local support is not readily available.
- Work with key partners to help coordinate Warm Spaces.
- Distribute future Household Support Funding.
- Financial contribution and support for Community Hubs.
- Funding portal for Warm Spaces.
- Communications Plan.
- Update the Risk Register.

In response to Councillor Studdert-Kennedy it was confirmed that there was a typo on Page 42 Paragraph 4, where it should have read 'to' rather than 'by'. It was also confirmed that GDPR was a barrier to sourcing the information required in order to support those most at need directly. However, they were looking at the data that the Council held and working with partners who had their own data. The Council would provide support to partners who held their own information in order for them to carry out the work and target the necessary groups of people without the need for the Council to be provided with the information protected by GDPR. It was also advised that Parish and Town Councils would be provided with support.

Cllr Turner asked whether they could make sure that Members were receiving relevant information in terms of helping to support their communities. The Community Health and Wellbeing Manager advised them that the website would be updated regularly and that they would need support from Councillors.

Councillor Jockel asked for more information about how the response would be coordinated and how the Council would work in partnership with the community sector. The Community Health and Wellbeing Manager advised that they were acutely aware that the community groups were the front line for the cost-of-living crisis and they were working very closely with The Hubs however, it was difficult in communities where there wasn't a strong network of people working together. The Strategic Director of Resources provided reassurance that the council was working strategically and closely across the directorates, there had been a member working group established to help support the cost-of-living crisis.

Councillor Watson asked whether the Council could consider providing direct residents to payments to be paid in cash rather than supermarket vouchers and whether they were

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exploring options to allow funding for businesses especially where there were gaps in the not for profit support. The Strategic Director of Communities advised that they were looking to identify gaps in support and they would be interested in looking at all opportunities including working with the private sector. He further advised that they were looking to see if they could move to direct payments but there were issues regarding GDPR and the practicalities of providing cash payments.

Proposed by Councillor Aldam and seconded by Councillor Braun.

Councillor Braun offered her thanks to the Community Health and Wellbeing Manager and Strategic Director of Communities for all of the work they were doing to help coordinate a response to the cost-of-living crisis and was pleased to see that they were allocating funding for the immediate response and investing in the long term community resilience.

Councillor Housden highlighted the Household Support Fund distributed by the County Council and the Holiday Activity and Food programme which had supported over 60% of children on free school meals. He welcomed the £100k allocation for the cost-of-living crisis and stated that it was important that everyone worked together during the difficult period.

Councillor Laurie Davies thanked the Community Health and Wellbeing Manager for the support she had provided community hubs and stated the people in her ward were going to benefit from the work the council was doing to support the cost-of-living crisis.

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

RESOLVED To

- a) support the implementation of a cost-of-living crisis response set out in this report.**
- b) Agree the allocation of the £100k funding previously committed to this work by the Strategy and Resources Committee.**
- c) Delegate responsibility for developing this work to the Strategic Director of Communities in consultation with the Chair of Community Services & Licensing Committee**

CL.038 Cost of Living Emergency Motion proposed by Councillor Aldam and seconded by Councillor Bennett

Councillor Aldam presented the Motion to show the residents and businesses of the Stroud District that their elected Councillors care about what matters to them. She stated that it was an international crisis and the government needed to step up so that more support could be provided. She highlighted some key information including:

- Those aged between 30 and 50 were dying in greater numbers.
- NHS was facing a crippling winter.
- The BBC reported that one schools energy bills in South Gloucestershire could rise by up to 414% in December 2023.
- Teachers were experiencing burn out and were coming closer to industrial action.
- Gloucestershire Community Foundation found that total bills were higher than income for the poorer 60% of the country.
- 78% of workers were paid below the real living wage.
- 1 in 7 older person would go without heating that winter.

She asked the council to join her in declaring an emergency and calling on their colleagues in central government to make a clear plan to help Stroud residents and businesses navigate the coming uncertainties.

Councillor Jockel commended the motion and stated that the event threatened serious damage to human welfare and was therefore the definition of an emergency as per the civil contingencies act 2004.

Councillor James drew on his personal experiences as a teacher and stated that he had seen more children coming to school hungry and he had witnessed teachers bringing in food for children. He stated that they needed to support people better and more needed to be done.

Councillor Edmunds echoed the comments made by Councillor James and stated that 42% of people with disabilities were experiencing rises in the cost of living and were having to reduce spending on food and essentials. He identified that the long term solutions for the cost of living crisis overlapped with the climate crisis.

Councillor Housden stated that there was not one council that could deal with all of the problems but that cross council work was essential.

Councillor Cornell stated that they needed to see an uplift to benefits and that she was glad to see they would be writing to the government as they needed to take action.

Councillor Bennett was pleased to hear support for the motion across the Chamber.

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

RESOLVED:

To note

- **The basic cost of living continues to rise, and despite the recently announced cap on household energy prices, there remains around an £800 gap on average between the rise in the cost of living and the support packages for families on means tested benefits. [Joseph Rowntree Foundation]**
- **The high rate of inflation in the UK, predicted by the Bank of England to rise to 11 per cent this winter. [forbes.com]**
- **These factors are causing a Cost of Living Emergency and resulting in a significant fall in people's incomes, as pay growth and benefit uprating fails to keep pace with the increase in the cost of essential items.**
- **Food poverty is already a reality for at least 4.7 million adults in the UK [https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/food_poverty], and the Cost of Living Emergency will greatly exacerbate this problem.**
- **Those on the lowest incomes will be hardest hit by inflation and the increase in energy bills, and the support offered to them by Government so far is completely inadequate to bridge the cost of living gap. [<https://jpit.uk/enoughtolive>]**
- **The Cost of Living Emergency will also have a damaging impact on local businesses, the self-employed, and valued employers in Stroud District, who will require additional financial support from Government to cover their basic costs.**

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- Without urgent government intervention there will be a significant increase in the number of households who experience food poverty and fuel poverty in Stroud District this winter, leading to increased health problems; a rise in mental health issues and emergencies; decreased quality of life; and an exacerbation of associated social and emotional issues.
- The SDC Council officers, Citizens Advice and community hubs are already working hard to alleviate the pressure and desperation. But they should not be bearing the responsibility of what should be statutory support. The National Government needs to outline a plan and communicate it to local authorities as quickly as possible.

This Council believes that:

- No one in the Stroud District should go hungry.
- None of our residents should have to choose between food or warmth, or not be able to have either.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Declare a 'Cost of Living Emergency.'
- Request the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister, and Stroud District MPs, to call for:
 - Immediate financial support to help people to manage the Cost of Living Emergency, with most support provided to low income households, and
 - A fully funded nationwide commitment to improve the energy efficiency of homes (and consequently reduce energy bills), noting that this initiative is also required to deliver on the Government's own commitment to net zero carbon by 2050.
 - Support The Great Homes Upgrade campaign, which is calling on the Government to upgrade 19 million homes by 2030 to make sure that everyone can have a well-insulated home, heated by clean, green energy. [www.greathomesupgrade.org]
 - Call on the National Government to produce and make public a clear plan to deal with the crisis and alleviate the burden on our residents and local businesses. Emergency funding needs to be forthcoming and distributed in a way that allows District Councils like ours to be able to process it in the most effective way for our residents.

CL.039 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Councillor Pearson, Chair of the Constitution Working Group, introduced the report and thanked the members of the cross-party constitution working group and the Monitoring Officer for their support. He drew Members attention to the key changes made to the Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules and the Scheme of Officer Delegation.

Councillor Pearson also advised that it had been agreed that the Development Management Advisory Panel would be asked to consider whether Ward Members should also be able to request that expediency notices were prepared and that Cllr Kay would be invited to the discussion.

Councillor Percy asked whether Officers who had changes to their delegated powers would be informed of the new Scheme and whether they had been consulted. It was

confirmed that the changes to the Scheme of Delegation were prompted following consultation with Officers and that they would be made aware of the adopted scheme.

Proposed by Councillor Pearson and seconded by Councillor Studdert-Kennedy.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy offered his thanks to the Interim Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Ross thanked Councillor Pearson for his chairmanship of the working group and for the excellent advice received from the Monitoring Officers.

Councillor James thanked the Constitution Working Group and Equality and Diversity Working Group on their decision for the use of gender neutral pronouns throughout the Constitution.

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

RESOLVED To:

- (i) **Adopt the documents at Appendix A and Appendix C and incorporate them into the Constitution with immediate effect.**
- (ii) **Note that the Equalities Task Group has suggested the best way forward in relation to the use of gender pronouns in the Constitution and that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend gender pronouns where appropriate.**
- (iii) **Authorise the Monitoring Officer to correct any minor inconsistencies between Sections 2 and 3 of the Constitution and the Articles to ensure that the wording in the Articles prevailed.**
- (iv) **Authorise the Monitoring Officer to change the name of ‘Audit Committee’ in Article 7 and Article 8.4 back to ‘Audit and Standards Committee’ and substitute the word ‘proven’ for ‘found’ at the end of Article 7.3.**

CL.040 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

CL.041 Motion regarding Electric Vehicle Charging Points proposed by Councillor Green and seconded by Councillor Haydn Jones

Councillor Green introduced the Motion and explained that on 18 July 2019 the Council agreed to move to the use of electric and hybrid vehicles and install a number of charging points across the Stroud District. The plan for the provision of EV charging points had not yet been finalised. She expressed her disappointment that action had not been taken sooner and that she hoped Members would support the Motion to ensure the first charging points were installed and that a plan was produced for a wider roll out.

A friendly amendment as laid out with the additions in red below was proposed by Councillor Turner and agreed by Councillor Green and Councillor H Jones.

- i. ~~(At least 2 Electric~~ **vehicle** ~~charging points be installed in each of our council owned/managed car parks in at least four market town locations,~~ within the next ~~2 years~~ **12 months, with and that** a wider **phased** rollout plan ~~be included reflected~~ in the 23/24 budget.; and
- ii. **A plan for the provision of EV charge points be brought to Environment Committee in February 2023, for adoption.**

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- iii. Users ~~Residents~~ be allowed to **park their cars overnight for the purpose of using the charging points.** ~~use the charging points and have 60 minutes free car parking for that purpose.~~
- iv. The Strategic Director of Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Chair **& Vice-Chair** of the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Chair **& Vice-Chair** of the Environment Committee, to determine the appropriate method of funding the installation of the charging points and to enter into any necessary documentation to that end.

Councillor Turner acknowledged that the rollout had not moved as fast as they had liked however, she advised that it was a complex exercise. They had engaged consultants earlier that year and they were now in a position to move forward.

Councillor Schoemaker asked what the advantage of having chargers in car parks was if they were more expensive than charging at home. Councillor Turner advised that the chargers would be for those who do not have the provision for charging electric vehicles at home and for those who need to charge whilst they are away from their home. Councillor Green advised that there were also service vehicles and SDC owned vehicles that could use the charging points.

Councillor Prenter asked whether Taxi drivers could recharge their vehicles at the charging points. Councillor Turner confirmed that the chargers would be available for anyone to use but there would be a charge to park in the space. She advised that the Chamber of Trade were looking at charging points for taxi vehicles through a different project.

Councillor Cornell asked whether there would be consultation with the Town Councils regarding the best places to put the charging points and whether they would be prioritising Towns that don't have any charging points. Councillor Turner advised that the consultants had considered the existing provisions and they would be having conversations with the market towns.

Councillor Pearson asked that they consider what type of charging lead to install as different vehicles needed different leads.

In response to Councillor Pearson and Councillor Kay it was confirmed the consultants would be considering the best type of lead to install and whether fast charging points were appropriate.

Councillor Hynd stated that they lived in a District that had woeful active travel infrastructure around cycling and walking and members would have received many complaints about the bus service. He further stated that they needed a shift in how transport funding was allocated and urged those who sat on Gloucestershire Council to take that back.

Councillor Layfield advised that he welcomed any initiative that addressed the climate emergency however, Electric Vehicles were only a small part of the solution. He asked Members to think bigger and show greater ambition when it comes to climate change.

Councillor H Jones stated that this would be a step forward and it was important that when decisions were made the actions are followed up on he asked all Members to support the amended Motion.

Councillor Turner stated she was looking forward to working with members of the Environment Committee on the strategy in February.

Councillor Green hoped that everyone would be able to support the Motion.

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

RESOLVED

That:

- I. Electric vehicle charging points be installed in council owned/managed car parks in at least four market town locations, within the next 12 months, with a wider phased rollout plan reflected in the 23/24 budget.**
- II. A plan for the provision of EV charge points be brought to Environment Committee in February 2023, for adoption.**
- III. Users be allowed to park their cars overnight for the purpose of using the charging points.**
- IV. The Strategic Director of Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Chair & Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Chair & Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee, to determine the appropriate method of funding the installation of the charging points and to enter into any necessary documentation to that end.**

CL.042 DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 85 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Councillor Housden introduced the report and passed on his best wishes to Councillors Bullingham and Mossman and hoped the Council would join him in supporting their leave of absence for a period of 6 months.

Proposed by Councillor Housden and seconded by Councillor Pearson.

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

RESOLVED To:

- a) Authorise Councillor Mossman to be absent from all meetings of the Authority for a 6 month period with effect from 21 October 2022.**
- b) Authorise Councillor Bullingham to be absent from all meetings of the Authority for a 6 month period with effect from 21 October 2022.**

CL.043 Community Governance Review

Councillor Braun presented the report which asked Council to agree to carry out a Community Governance Review which would allow the Council to consider governance arrangements for Town and Parish Councils and ensured that they continued to reflect local identities and facilitated effective and convenient local government. It was confirmed that a district wide community governance review was conducted in 2019 and that the Council resolved at that time to conduct a future review of the parishes which contain the Great Oldbury development by the end of 2023. It was recommended that all parishes who submitted a request were included in the review.

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The report set out the timetable for the review including the two public consultation stages that took place. The first stage consultation was due to start at the end of this month. All ward Councillors for the parishes included in the review would be invited to join a Working Group to analyse the responses to the consultation and prepare the final recommendations for Council approval in July 2023. Any changes made would come into force at the next local elections scheduled for May 2024. It was highlighted that changes would only be made if they were necessary to reflect the identity and interests of local communities and ensure effective and convenient local governance. Councillor Braun also highlighted an error in the table in section 2.3 of the report and confirmed that it should have stated that Frampton on Severn currently had 9 councillors instead of 11.

Councillor Hurst advised that Minchinhampton did not wish to take part in the review but the only reason it had been included was because Nailsworth had put in a request to review its boundaries.

Proposed by Councillor Braun and Councillor Cornell seconded.

Councillor Ryder advised that the implementation of a new Parish Council at Hunts Grove following the 2019 Community Governance Review had been a very positive experience.

Councillor Ashley Smith advised that Woodchester had also only been included because of Nailsworths requests to consider its boundaries.

Councillor Cornell thanked the team for the presentation they delivered to Ward Members and Parish and Town Councils and confirmed that through consultation with the community they could look at whether any changes needed to be made.

Councillor Braun highlighted the consultation process at paragraph 3.4 which involved many stages and meant that residents and Parish and Town Councils would be able to get involved at every stage.

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

RESOLVED That in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, a Community Governance Review be undertaken for the Parish and Town Council areas of Cam, Dursley, Eastington, Frampton, Horsley, Hunts Grove, Minchinhampton, Nailsworth, Standish, Stonehouse and Woodchester.

The meeting closed at 9.46 pm

Chair

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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

15 DECEMBER 2022

Report Title	Canal Project Update
Purpose of Report	To update on the progress of the Canal Project, to reaffirm the support of the Council for the project as accountable body, and to allocate an additional resource towards the project.
Decision(s)	The Council RESOLVES 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.
Consultation and Feedback	<p>SDC is represented on the Cotswold Canals Connected (CCC) Project Board. All matters raised in this paper have been shared with this team.</p> <p>The Project is working to the budget that was submitted and approved in the successful National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) bid. This budget was prepared in 2018 and approved on 2nd October 2020. Project and financial governance are overseen by the CCC Project Board with financial reports presented and reviewed at Board Meetings (approx. every 12 weeks).</p> <p>Cost forecast and funding gap was last presented to the Project Board on 18th October 2022. The plans for meeting the Funding Gap requires additional contribution from all CCC project partners, National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Highways, grants and fundraising. All partners have confirmed their commitment to the successful delivery of the project and securing the additional funds that will be required.</p> <p>On Thursday 24th November 2022 the Strategy & Resources (S&R) Committee considered a report on the Canal Project. The full report is contained within this report and is provided as background to the decision taken by the S&R Committee.</p> <p>The S&R Committee confirmed their commitment to the Cotswolds Canals Connected project and agreed to allocate £1m from the Capital Reserve as the SDC contribution to the Canal Partnership.</p> <p>This request for funding is SDC's additional contribution towards meeting the funding gap which was set out in the S&R Canal Report.</p>
Report Author	Chris Mitford-Slade, CCC Project Director Email: chrisms@stroud.gov.uk

Background Papers	CCC Board Minutes – 18th October 2022 NLHF Canal Minutes – 1st November 2022			
Appendices	Appendix A – Finance update (Canal tables) Appendix B – Cotswolds Canals Connected Impact Report			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Strategic Partnership Agreement for the Cotswold Canals Connected (CCC) project was signed on 20th May 2020 and included Stroud District Council (SDC), Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), Cotswold Canals Trust (CCT), Stroud Valleys Canal Company (SVCC) and the Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT). These are known as the “core partners”.
- 1.2 The detailed proposal (aims, objectives and benefits) and project plan was set out in the NLHF bid which was submitted with the support of SDC in June 2020 and approved in October 2020. The Strategic Aims of the project are summarised below:



- 1.3 It should be noted that the project budget was set in in early 2020 before the start of the COVID pandemic and was based on a completion date of end 2024. A COVID impact assessment was written in May 2020 where it was noted that: “This situation could of course change again if there is a second Covid-19 wave of transmission, but we are in the lowest recorded UK death/cases area and we have the 12 months programme contingency.” This risk has materialised resulting in a significant impact on both project delivery and costs. The project has been significantly impacted by COVID and is now being further impacted and by rising inflation, Russian invasion of Ukraine, increasing energy increasing costs and the cost and availability of materials.

- 1.4 Project delivery and governance is managed through the CCC Executive Team (chaired by Chris Mitford-Slade, Canal Project Director,), CCC Project Board (Chaired by Brendan Cleere, SDC Director of Place) and National Lottery Heritage Fund Project Team (Chaired by Tom Brewer, NLHF Account Manager). Financial and risk management is a standing agenda on each of these meetings, with costs, budget and forecasts monitored and scrutinised.
- 1.5 Forecast costs show a cost increase of between £9M to £10M. The majority of the cost increase (£7.5M) is in the capital costs for the Engineering Programme. The Project Team have also been extended in their role for a further 30 months resulting in a cost increase in staff costs of £1.4M and Environment project costs have increased by £0.3M. Due to uncertainty in the cost of construction and materials, a significant contingency remains within the project forecast and gives rise to the range in costs. There are also costs of £0.2m outside of the NLHF Project for works on the A38 roundabout which were predominantly funded by a Highways England grant.
- 1.6 The project team are already making positive progress in closing the funding gap and securing the additional funds required to deliver the project. This can be achieved through a combination of fundraising, charitable grants, legacies, donations, public funds and additional funds from project partners. The provisional plan for securing the additional funds required to deliver the project is shown in the table below:

Funding source	Amount	Notes
Grants	£4.0M	Applications in progress
Lock Sponsorship	£1.0M	Over next 3 years
Sale of excavated materials	£1.0M	
SDC	£1.0M	S&R Committee application
Partners	£1.0M	Over next 3 years
Fundraising	£2.0M	Over next 3 years
TOTAL	£10.0M	Over next 3 years

- 1.7 NLHF need to be reassured that the CCC Project Team can secure the additional funding that will be required to deliver this project and this is a key requirement in order for NLHF to grant full Permission to Start (PTS). NLHF have awarded partial Permission to Start (PTS) which has been extended until 31st December 2022. The following criteria must be met in order to achieve full PTS:
- 1.7.1 *Proof of required statutory permissions, licenses and consents*
- 1.7.2 *Proof of ownership or signed third party landowner agreements*
- 1.7.3 *Evidence that a governance review in relation to diversity and inclusion has taken place and been implemented*
- 1.7.4 *Evidence that all partnership funding has been secured (including evidence previously submitted to ensure we have all documents in one place)*
- 1.7.5 *An updated integrated project programme*
- 1.7.6 *An updated cashflow*

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 Progress against achieving the full PTS criteria was presented and discussed at a recent meeting with NLHF representatives. Although excellent progress was noted across a range of areas of the project, there were two criteria which could not be met by 31st December 2022:

- 2.1.1 Statutory permissions: The Missing Mile planning application has been delayed due to additional work required on flood modelling and ecology. These matters are being addressed and we aim to submit the application to SDC for approval at Development Control Committee on 7th March 2023.
- 2.1.2 Partnership funding: Project costs have escalated since the original lottery bid (prepared in 2018) due to Brexit, COVID, Ukraine, energy crisis, cost of materials and inflation. We need to provide evidence to NLHF that the project can be completed with partnership funding contributions.
- 2.2 Current delays to the Missing Mile Planning Application are not currently impacting the Engineering Programme but there have been significant delays to the Environment Programme due to the need for additional surveys and the application for water vole relocation licences. NLHF understand the reasons for the delay and the mitigation measures that have been put in place.
- 2.3 It is recognised that additional time will be required to secure this funding which could delay the completion of the project. However, we would deliver the three elements of the project over the following timescales:
 - 2.3.1 Environment programme – complete by end 2024
 - 2.3.2 Community Engagement programme – complete by November 2025
 - 2.3.3 Engineering programme – complete Sections 2 and 3 by end 2025; may require further time to complete Section 1 (western end of the canal and connection to the national network at Saul Junction).
- 2.4 In response to the financial challenges of the project a new response to managing the programme and associated risks is proposed. The financial risk to SDC could be mitigated by controlling project spend in line with income. Essentially this means that each stage of the project would only proceed when fundraising and partner contributions have generated sufficient funds to meet the costs. There could be a risk that delaying projects could result in increased costs. Therefore, cashflow and forecasts would need to be tightly managed and aligned with the engineering programme.
- 2.5 As accountable body for the project, SDC is committed to working with partners to secure all necessary additional funding to complete the project.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 For all the reasons set out in this report, the S&R Committee agreed to award an additional contribution of £1M.
- 3.2 It was noted by the S&R Committee that an additional £9M of funding would be secured through additional grants from National Highways, National Lottery Heritage Fund, grants, charitable trusts and private donations. This external investment is required for the successful delivery of this project in order to realise the significant economic, environmental and community benefits as set out with the original bid.
- 3.3 The additional costs for this project will require SDC as the Accountable Body, to increase the capital budget for the Canal Project by £10.187m, to be funded as set out in this report at para 1.6 and recommended by Strategy and Resources Committee. The Council is therefore recommended to approve this capital budget increase.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

- 4.1.1 This report sets out that the cost of delivering phase 1B of Cotswold Canals Connected has increased significantly due to many external factors outside the control of the project. In particular the cost of labour and materials increasing, inflation costs being higher than previously expected and delays leading to a longer delivery period. This increase is expected to be in the region of £9m to £10m, which includes some contingency to reflect uncertainty in some costs at this stage. There have also been additional costs of £0.2m on delivering the works at the A38 roundabout, which although do not fall within the NLHF project, will need to be funded within the project partnership.
- 4.1.2 SDC committed to fund £3m towards Phase 1B, of which £0.5m funded the development stages of the bid, and £2.5m was available for the delivery stage. An amount of £0.16m was also allocated to fund salaries during an interregnum period between the delivery and development stages.
- 4.1.3 The additional costs of £10.2m identified in this report are to be funded across the partnership, through seeking new grant funding and the sale of excavated material. The additional contribution sought from SDC is £1m. As the accountable body SDC must include the full cost of the project within its capital programme but it is only that £1m which will come from Council resources.
- 4.1.4 Strategy and Resources Committee have allocated the additional SDC contribution of £1m from the capital reserve (existing funding allocated by Council for capital works). This would allow SDCs contribution to be increased without new borrowing and without an impact to the Medium Term Financial Plan which would require a reduction in Council revenue services. It should also be noted that this is a General Fund reserve and is therefore not available to fund housing capital works.
- 4.1.5 As accountable body SDC will continue to work with the other partners in order to secure the remaining funding needed.
- 4.1.6 Should the project not continue, NLHF could withdraw funding and request that the existing project funding provided be returned. The funding currently received from NLHF for the delivery stage is £3.1m.

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4.2 Legal Implications

If the recommended Option is adopted then there will be no Legal Implications as the project will continue to be delivered under the agreements with both NLHF and core partners.

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4.3 Equality Implications

The bid submitted to NLHF included a wide range of community benefits, with a particular focus on promoting equality, inclusion and wider health and wellbeing. These benefits were outlined in a community engagement programme and associated activity plan, submitted as part of the bid. If the recommended option is adopted, the project will have the required funds to deliver the community engagement programme and benefits.

4.4 Environmental Implications

The bid submitted to NLHF included a wide range of environmental benefits, outlined in an associated environmental programme. If the recommended option is adopted, there will be sufficient funding to deliver the environmental benefits set out in the NLHF bid.

Cotswold Canals Connected Phase 1B Forecast

	NLHF Bid Budget £k	Forecast £k	Variance to Project Budget £k
Project Cost			
Engineering - Section 1 (Saul to A38)	2,330	4,178	1,848
Engineering - Section 2 (missing mile)	3,183	6,920	3,737
Engineering - Section 3 (Eastington to Ocean)	5,046	6,003	957
Engineering – Project costs	113	1,112	999
Total Engineering	10,672	18,213	7,541
Land Acquisition	750	868	118
Biodiversity	512	792	280
Community Engagement	592	602	10
Salaries	1,869	3,313	1,444
Contingency	948	1,500	552
Total Project Expenditure	15,343	25,288	9,945
Additional Costs (A38 roundabout)	0	242	242
Total Expenditure	15,343	25,530	10,187

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Cotswold Canals Connected Impact Report

Update report by Peter Brett Associates (now part of Stantec): 2019

FINAL REPORT

On behalf of **Stroud District Council**



Project Ref: 47228/001 | Rev: B | Date: December 2019

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1** In August 2017, Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA) submitted a report to Stroud District Council entitled *HLF Bid Theme 6 Support*, providing advice to the Council on its Round 1 application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for funding to restore a 4-mile section of the Stroudwater Navigation between Saul Junction and Ocean Railway Bridge at Stonehouse.
- 1.1.2** The purpose of this report is to update and expand upon the 2017 report to support the planned Round 2 application, and to provide answers to the following questions:
- Based on economic and other indicators, how prosperous is Stroud District now?
 - What has changed since the report that Peter Brett Associates produced for the 2017 Round 1 bid?
 - What kinds of impacts on the District's prosperity is the completion of the canal likely to have and why?

1.2 Context

- 1.2.1** The District Council is currently reviewing the Local Plan and is proposing to extend it for the period 2020-2040. Documents prepared to date include:
- Issues and Options Paper (October 2017)
 - Emerging Strategy Paper (November 2018)
 - Draft Plan for Public Consultation (November 2019)
- 1.2.2** Initial draft documents have highlighted the role of the Cotswolds Canals in the District and the potential of the proposed scheme to deliver a reopened Stroudwater Canal from Saul Junction to Brimscombe Port. In the Draft Plan, Draft Site Allocation PS20 M5 Junction 13 additionally identifies the land required for the proposed canal scheme as part of a wider development:
- “Land at M5 Junction 13 (in Eastington Parish), as identified on the policies map, is allocated for a strategic mixed use development, including 10 ha employment, sports stadium, sports pitches, canal and open space uses, together with strategic landscaping. Detailed policy criteria will be developed to highlight specific mitigation measures and infrastructure requirements and how development will prioritise walking, cycling and public transport over the use of the private car. A development brief incorporating an indicative masterplan, to be approved by the District Council, will detail the way in which the land uses and infrastructure will be developed in an integrated and co-ordinated manner.”*
- 1.2.3** This consultation document has currently little or no weight in terms of the determination of future planning applications. However it identifies the current direction of travel of the Council and if carried forward into the Pre-submission Draft Local Plan, scheduled for approval by September 2020, will have some weight in the planning context for the proposed scheme.

1.3 Report Structure

1.3.1 The report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides an **economic baseline analysis** of current conditions and trends in Stroud District and in the canal corridor
- **Section 3** provides an **update on the 2017 PBA report**, summarising the significant changes that have taken place since its publication
- **Sections 4** provides an overview of Creative Sustainability CIC's **target audience groups**, examining how many individuals fall into each of these groups in Stroud, and how this differs from the national average
- **Section 5** provides an update to our **economic impact analysis**, setting out in more detail the workings behind our assessment of the economic impacts of increased walking, running and cycling activities, and an additional analysis of the land value uplift implications of the canal corridor restoration
- **Section 6 concludes**, by building on the evidence of the report, to provide a clear, evidence-based response to the three questions above.

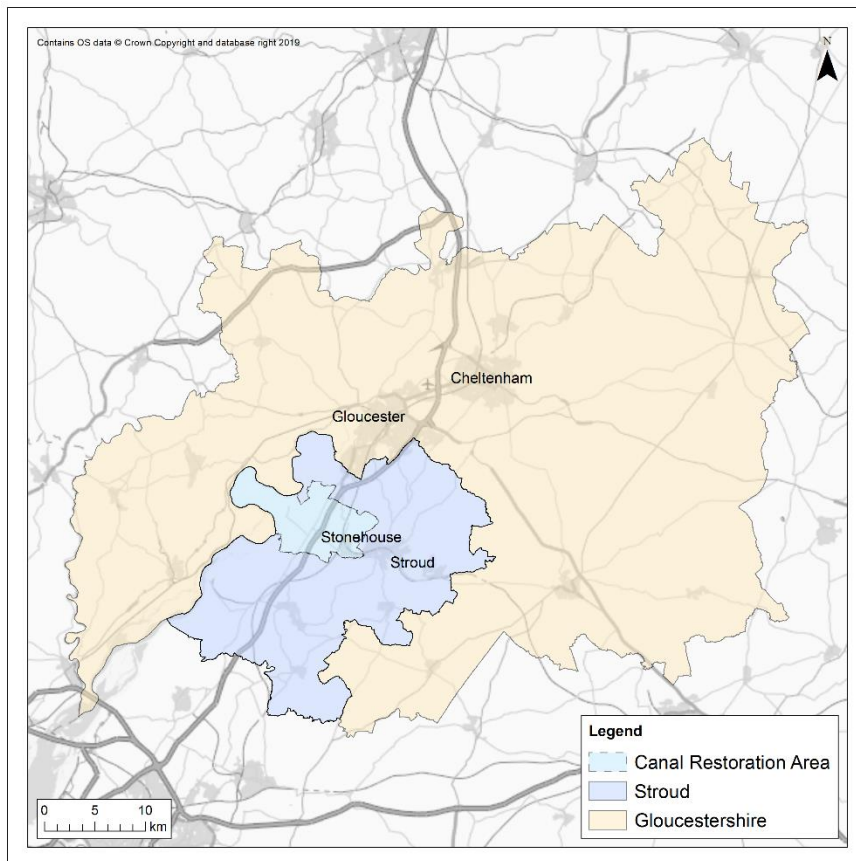
2 Economic Baseline Analysis

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section provides an overview of current demographic, economic and labour market conditions in the Canal Phase 1B Upgrade Corridor¹ (referred to hereafter for brevity as after as the Canal Restoration Corridor) and Stroud District; how these are changing; and how these compare to trends across Gloucestershire and England as a whole. The Canal Restoration Corridor is represented in **Figure 2.1** below.

2.1.2 Having an understanding of these baseline conditions will be beneficial both in terms of informing the design of the project, to ensure that it reflects local needs, and in developing an evaluation framework and set of performance metrics that will enable the project’s impact to be assessed in future.

Figure 2.1: Canal Restoration Corridor



J:\47228 Cotswolds Canal Economic Impact Assessment 2019\Maps, Graphics and Photos\GIS\02_mxd\47228_1_F.mxd
30/06/2019

Source: Stantec (2019)

¹ For the purpose of this analysis, we have defined the Canal Phase 1B Upgrade Corridor as consisting of the Stroud 003A, 003B and 003C Lower Layer Super Output Areas and the Stroud 005 Middle Layer Super Output Area. Where detailed data is not available for the LSOA’s and MSOA, Stroud District has been used. These are compared against Gloucestershire and England providing wider context.

2.2 Demographic Trends

Population

- 2.2.1 ONS population estimates for 2017 (**Table 2.1**) show that an estimated 13,579 people live on the Canal Restoration Corridor, equivalent to 11% of Stroud District's population. Stroud District (118,200) in turn makes up 19% of Gloucestershire (627,600), with Gloucestershire contributing 1% of England's total population (55,628,600).

Table 2.1: Population

	Canal Restoration Corridor ²	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
2017	13,579	118,200	627,600	55,628,600

Source: ONS population estimates (2018)

- 2.2.2 Over the 10yr period of 2008-2018 (**Table 2.2**), population growth in Stroud increased at a marginally slower rate (7%, or 0.68% per annum) than that of Gloucestershire and England (both 8%, or 0.77% per annum). While ONS does not publish directly comparable figures for the Canal Corridor area, figures for the period between 2011-2017 suggest that the population of this area grew more slowly over this period, at a rate of 0.54% per annum.
- 2.2.3 Population projections for the next ten years (2018-2028) show that the populations of Stroud and Gloucestershire are both projected to rise by a further 7% over this period, while the population of England as a whole is only expected to rise by 5%.

Table 2.2: Population Projections

	Comparators		
	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
2008	111,400	587,600	51,815,900
2018	119,000	633,600	55,977,200
2028	127,800	675,300	59,043,500
% change			
2008-2018	7%	8%	8%
2018-2028	7%	7%	5%

Source: ONS population estimates 2016-based subnational population projections (2019)

² As figures for 2018 are not yet published at a SOA level, this figure is an estimate based on applying the four-year average population growth rate in this area to the published 2017 figure.

Age Profile

2.2.4 **Table 2.3** below shows that Stroud’s population is older than the Gloucestershire and England average, with 22% of the district’s population aged 65 or above (compared to 21% in Gloucestershire and 18% in England). It also shows that proportion of Canal Restoration Corridor residents aged 65 or older is below the Stroud and Gloucestershire averages, but still above the average for England as a whole.

Table 2.3: Population Age Profile

	Canal Restoration Corridor	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
0-15 population	19%	18%	18%	19%
16-64 population	61%	60%	61%	63%
65 + population	20%	22%	21%	18%

Source: ONS population estimates - local authority based by five-year age band (2018)

2.3 The Labour Market

Economic Activity

2.3.1 The economic activity rate measures the proportion of the 16-64 year old population that are either employed or are actively seeking employment. The latest available statistics (**Table 2.4**) indicate that between April 2018 and March 2019, 87% of the Stroud population were economically active, a figure that is higher than that report in both Gloucestershire (83%) and across England as a whole (79%).

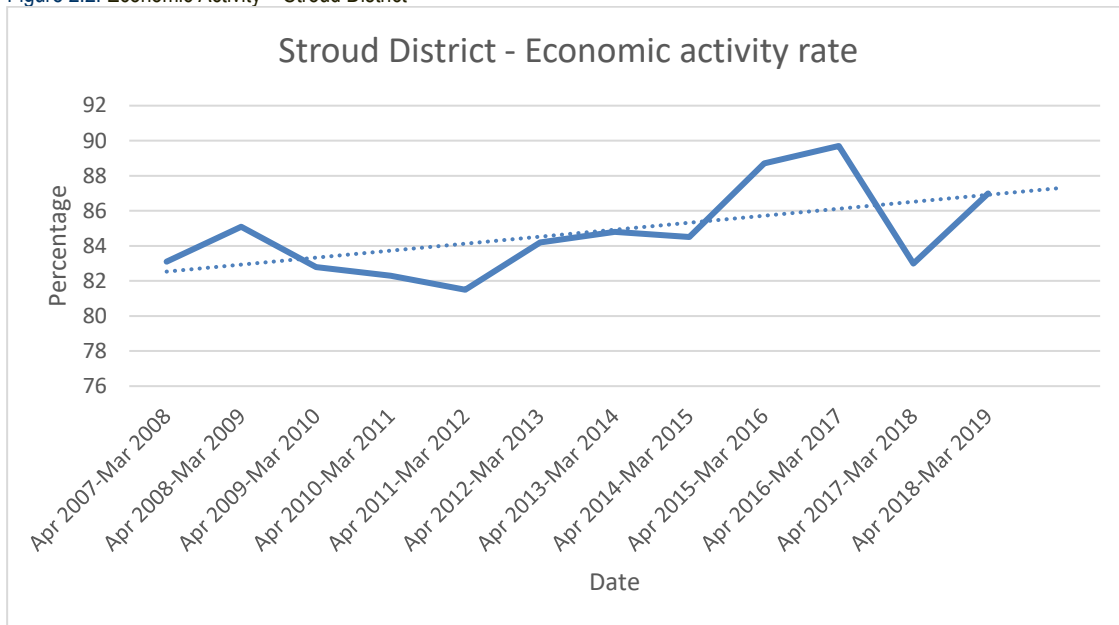
Table 2.4: Economic Activity

	Comparators		
	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
Economically active population	62,100	314,800	27,414,100
Economically Active %	87%	83%	79%
Economically Inactive %	13%	17%	21%

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey - April 2018 to March 2019 (2019)

2.3.2 A review of the economic activity rate (16-64yrs) from April 2007 to March 2019 (**Figure 2.2**) shows some significant fluctuations in the economic activity rate. It should be noted that these figures are survey driven and may therefore be influenced by sampling errors. However, these figures appear to indicate a clear long-term upward trend in economic activity rates.

Figure 2.2: Economic Activity – Stroud District



*aged 16-64yrs as a percentage
 Source: ONS annual population survey - April 2007 to March 2019 (2019)

Employment, unemployment and inactivity

- 2.3.3 As can be seen in **Table 2.5** below, in April 2018 to March 2019, Stroud District had an employment rate of 85%. This is 3% above that for Gloucestershire and 9% above England.
- 2.3.4 Unemployment in Stroud and Gloucestershire (both 2%) are both below the average for England as a whole (4%)

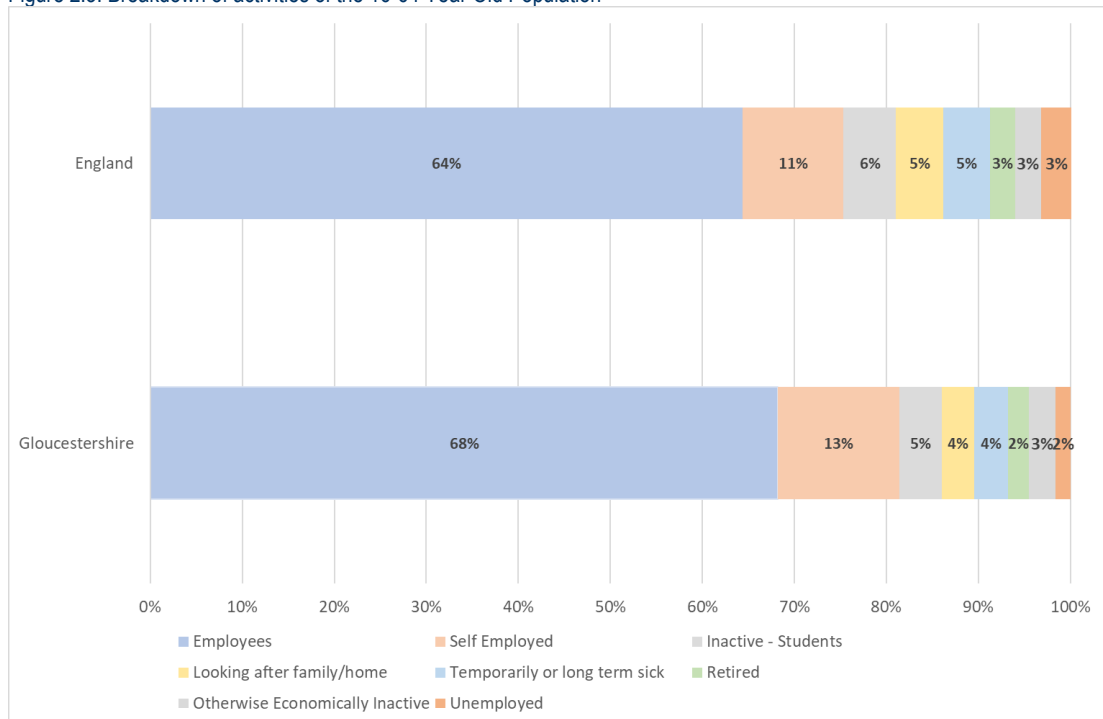
Table 2.5: Economic Activity by Type

	Comparators		
	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
%			
Employment rate - aged 16-64	85%	82%	76%
Unemployment rate - aged 16-64	2%	2%	4%
Inactivity rate – aged 16-64	13%	17%	21%

Source: ONS annual population survey - April 2018 to March 2019 (2019)

- 2.3.5 The figure below provides a breakdown of the types of activity that people aged 16-64 in Gloucestershire and England engage in (these figures are not all available at a district level). It shows that a higher proportion of Gloucestershire’s 16-64 year olds are employees, and are self-employed, while a lower proportion are students, sick, looking after the family/home and retired.

Figure 2.3: Breakdown of activities of the 16-64 Year Old Population



2.4 Employment Structure

Occupational Profile

- 2.4.1 Stroud District has a higher than average proportion of its workforce employed (Table 2.6) in administrative and secretarial occupations (13%) compared to Gloucestershire and England (11% and 10% respectively). It also has higher employment shares in caring, leisure and other service occupations (12%) compared to Gloucestershire and England (8% and 9% respectively). In contrast, the proportion of those employed as managers, directors and senior officials (8%) and process, plant and machine operatives (4%) is lower.
- 2.4.2 The District is otherwise comparable to Gloucestershire and England with the leading occupational profile being professional occupations (17%) and associate professional and technical occupations (17%).

Table 2.6: Occupational Profile

Occupational Profile	Comparators		
	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
Managers, directors and senior officials	8%	12%	11%
Professional occupations	17%	19%	21%
Associate professional and technical occupations	17%	14%	15%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	13%	11%	10%
Skilled trades occupations	11%	11%	10%
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	12%	8%	9%
Sales and customer service occupations	8%	8%	7%
Process, plant and machine operatives	4%	6%	6%
Elementary occupations	10%	11%	10%

Source: ONS annual population survey - April 2018 to March 2019 (2019)

Sectoral profile

- 2.4.3 The sectoral profile of Stroud and the Canal Corridor also differ from the Gloucestershire and England averages (**Table 2.7**), with the area's workforce more likely to be employed in manufacturing and construction occupations, and less likely to be employed in public sector or professional services roles.

Table 2.7: Industries of Employment

Industry of Employment	Study Area	Comparator		
	Canal Restoration Corridor	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, extractive industries, mining, utilities and water (SIC sections A, B, D & E)	0%	3%	2%	2%
Manufacturing (SIC section C)	35%	20%	12%	8%
Construction (SIC section F)	10%	7%	6%	5%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (SIC section G)	9%	14%	15%	15%
Transportation and storage (SIC section H)	4%	3%	3%	5%
Accommodation and food service activities (SIC section I)	4%	9%	9%	7%
IT, Finance, Real Estate and Professional Services (SIC sections J, K, L & M)	10%	13%	19%	19%
Public administration, education & health (SIC sections N, O, P & Q)	27%	28%	32%	35%
R: Arts, entertainment, recreation and other service activities (SIC sections R&S)	2%	4%	3%	5%

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (2017)

Job Density

- 2.4.4 Jobs density is defined as the number of jobs in an area divided by the resident population aged 16-64yrs in that area. For example, a job density of 1.0 would mean that there is one job for every resident aged 16-64yrs.
- 2.4.5 In 2017, Stroud had a job density of 0.85³, marginally below the figures for Gloucestershire (0.88) and England (0.87).

2.5 Earnings

- 2.5.1 In 2018, average gross weekly pay in Stroud was £546.60, significantly below the England average of £574.90.
- 2.5.2 Between 2008 and 2018, earnings in Stroud grew by 8%, against significantly below the average growth rate for England as a whole of 19%.

³ Source: ONS jobs density (2017)

Table 2.8: Average Earnings Levels and Growth Rates

	Comparators		
	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
Average earnings, 2008	£504.20	£479.70	£484.50
Average earnings, 2018	£546.60	£555.90	£574.90
% change	8%	16%	19%

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2018)

2.6 Gross Value Added (GVA)

2.6.1 GVA is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy, and is broadly equivalent to both:

- the total value of all sales made in an area minus the total cost associated with those sales
- the combined earnings of the local workforce plus the combined profits of the local business base

2.6.2 While local area GVA data is only currently available up to 2016, this data shows that Stroud's economy is currently worth in the region of £3 bn, and is growing at a rate that is comparable to the England average (though more slowly than Gloucestershire as a whole).

Table 2.9: GVA Levels and Growth Rates

	Comparators		
	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
GVA, 2006	£2.1 bn	£18.2 bn	£1.1 tn
GVA, 2016	£2.9 bn	£25.5 bn	£1.5 tn
% change	36%	41%	35%

Source: Regional Gross Value Added (Balanced) by Local Authority in the UK

GVA per head of population

2.6.3 Despite Stroud’s above average employment rate, the District has a lower GVA per head of population than the Gloucestershire and England averages, although this gap is narrowing slightly. This suggests that a high proportion of the area’s workforce are employed in less productive areas of economic activity, although the situation is improving.

Table 2.10: GVA Per Capita Levels and Growth Rates

	Comparators		
	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
2006	£19,272	£21,718	£21,773
2016	£24,653	£28,343	£27,108
% change	28%	31%	25%

Source: Regional Gross Value Added (Balanced) by Local Authority in the UK

GVA per working age adult

2.6.4 One explanatory factor for this difference is the fact that the dependency ratio (the ratio between the number of non-working age adults to working age adults in a community) is higher in Stroud than the England average, on account of its proportionately higher 65 + population.

2.6.5 After correcting for this, by using working age population as the denominator, it can be shown that the productivity gap in the area is not as significant as the above figures suggest, though the GVA per working age adult figure in Stroud is still lower than the England and Gloucestershire averages.

Table 2.11: GVA Per Working Age Adult

	Comparators		
	Stroud District	Gloucestershire	England
2006	£30,670	£33,987	£33,516
2016	£40,998	£46,248	£42,983
% change	34%	31%	25%

Source: Stantec, based on Regional Gross Value Added (Balanced) by Local Authority in the UK and ONS population estimates - local authority based by five-year age band (2018)

Conclusions

This economic baseline review has found that:

- Stroud is experiencing a more rapid rate of population growth than England as a whole, and housing sites need to be opened up to accommodate this growth
- Stroud has proportionately fewer working age adults than the England average, and this is placing a constraint on its economic performance
- The canal corridor is more attractive to working age adults and to households with children than the District average
- Despite its higher than average employment rate, the Stroud economy is less productive than the average for England as a whole, with lower average earnings and more limited opportunities for work in professional occupations and private sector roles

Based on these observations, it can be concluded that any policies that can attract talent and knowledge intensive jobs to the area, either through opening up new sites for housing and commercial development, or by positioning the district as an attractive and healthy place to live and work, will help the area to overcome its productivity gap and lift average earnings closer to the national average.

A strong argument can be put forward in favour of the canal restoration project within this context, and there is a strong rationale for including indicators around productivity, earnings and demographic composition as performance metrics in the application.

3 Update of 2017 Report

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This chapter provides an update to the information presented in sections 2,3 and 4 of the 2017 PBA report.

3.2 Local Policy

3.2.1 The local policy landscape within which the canal restoration will be delivered has remained broadly unchanged since 2017, and the key policy documents are still the Stroud District Local Plan (2015), the Stroud Neighbourhood Plan (2016) and the Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016). We summarise how the project supports the delivery of each of these plans in the table below.

Table 3.1 Policy Compliance

Document	Policy	Description
Stroud District Local Plan (2015)	Accessible Communities (S01)	Several housing sites will be enabled by canal restoration, as identified in the Local Plan.
	Local Economy and Jobs (S02)	Development of a number of employment sites will be enabled by canal restoration, in addition to potential smaller scale enterprises from activity stimulated by restoration (e.g. cafes, bike hires, etc.)
	Town Centres and Rural Hinterlands (SO3)	The canal will support urban centre regeneration and tourism. It will link population centres and draw rural & urban communities together to promote an integrated local tourism offer.
	Transport and Travel (SO4)	Canal restoration is a key priority, noting the potential to reduce car journeys and to integrate housing and employment localities.
	Climate Change and environmental limits (SO5)	Sustainable housing locations will be attributable to the canal restoration. Future sites may utilise the canal as an integrated SuDs measure. It promotes the reuse of brownfield land.
	District's Distinctive Qualities (SO6)	Canal restoration will directly influence brownfield sites in the canal corridor. It will also support rural stewardship programmes.
	Site Allocation policies	The canal will support development of some of the allocations West of Stonehouse, thereby supporting affordable housing provision (30%), providing key services (education, etc.), employment opportunities, and improved strategic transport infrastructure.
Stroud Neighbourhood Plan (2016)	Retail and Social (AP2)	A restored canal and points of access to town centre will increase footfall to Stroud and impact the vitality of shopping districts. Increased confidence will help develop a more diversified town centre with varied accommodation, social and cultural enterprises to cater for a variety of canal users.
	Access and Movement (AP3)	Improved towpaths and integrated walking/cycle routes and PROW will improve accessibility between the town centre and canal.
	Green space, amenity space and setting (AP5a-5b)	Canal restoration will directly impact local green spaces (Wallbridge, in particular and Capel's Mill area), creating amenity spaces along the canal embankment.
	Affordable Housing (NP7)	Where sites come forward as a result of the value and infrastructure enhancement from canal restoration, opportunities for local affordable housing will also be enabled. This is particularly the case on brownfield sites.

Document	Policy	Description
	Canal Basin Site (ZP2b)	Canal restoration is a prerequisite for the redevelopment of the canal basin site (Lower Wallbridge).
Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016)	Protect and Enhance Biodiversity and the Natural Environment (EP2)	Canal restoration will enable creation of a green linear corridor including: associated woodland replanting; promotion and conservation of historic rural character; creation of new public access & open green spaces; and enhanced habitats/orchards.
	Restoration and development of the canal corridor (EP3)	This is an explicit objective, with a focus on linking footpaths to the canal, creation of green recreational spaces, and adequate parking.

3.3 Tourism Baseline

Overnight trips

- 3.3.1 The latest statistics from VisitEngland (covering the period from 2015-2017) show significant increases in the numbers of domestic overnight trips made to Stroud (up 15% on the 2013-15 figure reported in 2017), the number of nights they stayed for (also up 15%), and their total visitor spend (up 64%).
- 3.3.2 These growth rates are significantly higher than those experienced across England as a whole, where the number of domestic overnight trips grew by 3%, total visitor nights grew by 2% and total visitor spend grew by 2%. They also occur over a period when visitor trips to the rest of Gloucestershire have been on a downward trajectory.
- 3.3.3 One possible explanation for this increase is the rapid emergence of online private holiday letting platforms such as Airbnb over this period, which is likely to have had a disproportionate impact on areas with strong visitor appeal, but limited hotel capacity such as the Cotswolds.
- 3.3.4 At the time of reporting, the website listed 306 properties in the Stroud area and, while we have been unable to establish how many local properties were listed on the site in 2015, we note that the number of Airbnb hosts registered in Bristol increased by 69% between 2015 and 2017⁴.

⁴ Source: <http://insideairbnb.com/get-the-data.html>. 1,334 hosts were listed at 31st December 2015, while 2,260 were listed by 31st December 2017.

Table 3.2 Total Visitor Trips to Stroud, Gloucestershire and England

	2013/15	2015/17	% change
Domestic Overnight Trips (thousands)			
Stroud	197	226	15%
Gloucestershire	1,611	1,574	-2%
England	99,028	102,078	3%
Total Nights Spent by Domestic Overnight Visitors (thousands)			
Stroud	555	641	15%
Gloucestershire	4,162	3,865	-7%
England	289,850	295,560	2%
Spend (£million)			
Stroud	22	36	64%
Gloucestershire	269	266	-1%
England	18,788	19,086	2%

Source: Visit Britain Statistics, 2017.

Day Trips

- 3.3.5 Stroud has also been more successful in attracting day visitors over this period than the County-wide and national averages, with visitor numbers rising by 44% and spend rising by 57%. This significant upward trend is likely to put pressure on Stroud town centre, and there will be a requirement to spread the benefits of this growth to other parts of the district through interventions such as the restoration of the Stonehouse to Saul Junction section of the canal.

Table 3.3 Day Visits to Stroud and England

	2013/15	2015/17	% change
Visits			
Stroud	2.26 million	3.27 million	44%
Gloucestershire	274,320	295,680	8%
England	1.42 billion	1.45 billion	3%
Spend			
Stroud	£74 million	£116 million	57%
Gloucestershire	£276 million	£303 million	10%
England	£48.4 billion	£50.3 billion	4%

Source: Visit Britain Statistics, 2017.

Water Based Tourism

- 3.3.6 Since our last report, the number of people using the canal for passenger trips has increased by 8.7%. Again, this growth could lead to constraints on the existing canal infrastructure, and could be used as evidence to support the case for restoring new sections of canal.
- 3.3.7 The Trust does not appear to have been as successful as it could have been in encouraging these new passengers to make use of the visitor centre, and the number of visits made to the centre has fallen slightly over this period.

Table 3.4 Participation in Water Based Tourism

	2016/17	2018/19	% change
Trip boat passenger numbers	3,820	4,151	8.7%
Visitor centre numbers	16,838	16,555	- 1.7%

Source: Cotswold Canals Trust, 2019

Conclusions

- Stroud's tourism economy has performed well in recent years, with the numbers of day visitors and overnight visitors, and the value of visitor spend attracted all outperforming the Gloucestershire and England averages.
- Part of this growth may be attributable to the rise of online holiday letting platforms such as Airbnb, which have helped the area to address the challenge of limited accommodation supply identified in our 2017 report
- This rapid growth could place additional pressures on Stroud town centre, and it would be beneficial if the benefits of these additional tourist could be spread across the district through initiatives such as the canal corridor restoration
- This increase in visitor numbers has contributed to a rise in demand for water based tourism in the area, with the number of passenger boat trips on the canal rising by 8.7%. This growth will place a constraint of the existing canal infrastructure, and investments in restoring further sections of the canal corridor may be necessary in order to sustain this growth.
- Stroud's economic development policy landscape has not changed markedly since we reported in 2017, and a strong strategic case can still be made in favour of the project.

4 Additional Analysis on Audience Groups

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 In September 2017, the Canals & River Trust published the findings into a major study into the economic impacts of waterways on the wellbeing of communities⁵.
- 4.1.2 This research identified the significant physical and mental health benefits associated with access to waterways, finding that waterway users exercised almost twice as often as non-users; provided evidence of the positive impacts of accessing waterways on individuals experiencing anxiety and depression; and noted the significant impacts that waterways can have on community engagement, broadening opportunities and inclusivity; community safety, education; skills & lifelong learning; economic growth; regeneration and development. However, the research noted that young people and people from BAME communities were proportionately far less likely to utilise waterway assets than other population groups.
- 4.1.3 Creative Sustainability CIC is a Stroud based community interest company which aims to encourage community togetherness; extend local resilience; advance local sustainable development; develop environmental and sustainability skills, knowledge and understanding; and explore, extend and empower personal, social and environmental responsibility.
- 4.1.4 It works with local people, community groups and businesses, making sure everyone who wants to can take part in the canal restoration so that the it is inclusive, community-led and benefits local people and communities, wildlife and heritage. It targets its support towards disadvantaged children & young people; disadvantaged adults; people with mental and physical health issues; teenagers, 18-30 year olds and people aged 66 or over; schools; BAME communities; lottery players and people with special interests in heritage, nature and sport; and enterprises in the canal corridor.
- 4.1.5 This section of the report provides details of the size of each of these audience groups, and how they differ from those across England as a whole.

4.2 Disadvantaged Children and Young People

Disabled children and young people

- 4.2.1 Data from DWP show that there were 575 children aged under 16 who were in receipt of disability living allowance in Stroud in November 2018 (2.7% of all people in this cohort), including 85 children who live in the Canal regeneration corridor (3.4%). These figures are slightly below the 3.8% England average.

Children excluded from education

- 4.2.2 Figures from the Department of Education show that school pupils in Gloucestershire are marginally more likely to experience a permanent exclusion from school, but also marginally less likely to experience a fixed term exclusion.

⁵ *Waterways & Wellbeing, Building the Evidence Base – First Outcomes Report*

Table 4.1: Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions From State Funded Schools

	No. of permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusions per 10,000 pupils	No. of pupils receiving 1 or more fixed period exclusions	Pupils receiving fixed period exclusions per 10,000 pupils
State Funded Primary				
Gloucestershire	22	5	260	54
England	1,210	3	29,236	62
State Funded Secondary				
Gloucestershire	100	26	1,524	400
England	6,612	20	153,479	471

Source: Department for Education, 2017/18

4.3 Disadvantaged Adults

Addiction

- 4.3.1 According to figures from Public Health England⁶, 1,926 admissions were made to Stroud hospitals for alcohol related conditions in 2017/18, equivalent to 1,520 admissions per 100,000 population, a figure that is below the England average of 2,224⁷. However, the same figures also show that the number of admissions of people aged under 18 for alcohol specific conditions in Stroud (25, or 35 per 100,000 population) was marginally above the England average (33 per 100,000 population).

Table 4.2: Alcohol Related Hospital Admissions, 2017/18

	Stroud (number)	Stroud (per 100,000)	England (per 100,000)
Admissions for alcohol related conditions (broad definition)	1,926	1,520	2,224
Admissions for alcohol related conditions (narrow definition)	656	533	632
Admissions of people aged under 18 for alcohol specific conditions	25	35	33

Source: Public Health England

- 4.3.2 While no comparable figures for Stroud are available on drug related admissions, figures for Gloucestershire show a lower rate of diagnosis for drug related mental health and behavioural disorders than the England average, but a higher rate of poisoning by illicit drugs.

⁶ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-alcohol-profiles/>

⁷ These figures are based on the broad definition of an alcohol related condition, and includes, for example, admissions where the treatment may cost more because of the part alcohol plays but the treatment itself does not specifically address the alcohol related condition.

Table 4.3: Drug Related Hospital Admissions, 2016/17

	Gloucestershire (number)	Gloucestershire (per 100,000)	England (per 100,000)
Primary diagnosis of drug related mental health and behavioural disorders	58	10	13
Primary or secondary diagnosis of drug related mental health and behavioural disorders	738	127	149
Primary diagnosis of poisoning by illicit drugs	160	27	25

Source: NHS Digital

Disability

- 4.3.3 The latest ONS local area statistics show that in November 2018 there were 2,195 people claiming disability living allowance in Stroud District, including 340 people who live in the Canal Regeneration Corridor. Over 80% of claimants in both areas had been in receipt of this benefit for 5 years or more, while approximately 1/3 were aged 70 or over.

Table 4.4: Disability Living Allowance Claimants by Age and Duration

Age	Canal regeneration corridor	Stroud	Duration	Canal regeneration corridor	Stroud
Under 16	85	575	Less than 12 months	25	115
16-24	10	90	1-2 years	10	60
25-49	50	300	2-5 years	20	170
50-59	35	245	5 years and over	285	1,850
60-69	40	270	Male	190	1,135
70 and over	120	715	Female	150	1,060
Total	340	2,195	Total	340	2,195

Source: Department of Work and Pensions

Long term unemployment

- 4.3.4 According to the latest figures from DWP⁸, 30 Stroud residents have been claiming job seekers allowance for 6 months or more (equivalent to 4.2 per 10,000 adults), and 20 who had been claiming for 1 year or more (2.8 per 10,000 adults). These figures are substantially lower than the England averages of 37.8 and 33.3 respectively.

⁸ JSA Claimant Statistics, sourced from www.nomisweb.co.uk

Homelessness

- 4.3.5 According to most recent figures⁹, there were 4 people sleeping rough in Stroud in 2018, all of whom were male UK nationals aged 26 and over. This figure equates to 0.6 people per 1,000 households, a figure significantly below the England average of 2.0.
- 4.3.6 Further recent evidence from MHCLG¹⁰ shows that, in December 2018, there were 11 households living in temporary accommodation in Stroud, including 3 households with children. These include 7 households in bed & breakfast hotels, 3 in nightly paid privately managed accommodation¹¹, and 1 in private sector accommodation leased by the local authority or by a registered provider. A further 9 Stroud residents were housed in temporary accommodation in another local authority district.

4.4 People with Mental and Physical Health Issues

- 4.4.1 According to latest figures from DWP, 60 people in Stroud received either incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance in Stroud (8.4 per 10,000 working age adults). 25 of these were receiving their benefit due to a mental health issue (3.5 per 10,000 working age adults). These proportions are below the England averages of 12.2 and 4.7 respectively.

4.5 Target Age Group

- 4.5.1 According to latest ONS estimates, young adults (age 13-18) account for a significantly lower proportion of the Stroud and Canal Restoration Corridor populations than the English average, while older people (age 66+) account for a higher population share.

Table 4.5: Population Share by Age Cohort (2017)

	Canal Restoration Corridor		Stroud		England	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Young adults 18 to 30	1,765	13%	14,480	12%	9,410,811	17%
Teenagers age 13 to 18	1,075	8%	8,182	7%	3,680,172	7%
Older people aged 66 +	2,584	19%	24,729	21%	9,471,893	17%

Source: ONS Population Estimates

⁹ MHCLG Rough Sleeping in England Street Councils, 2018

¹⁰ Source: MHCLG Temporary Accommodation Statistics

¹¹ All of the households with children fall into this category

4.7 People and Community Groups Living in Target Areas

Rural areas

- 4.7.1 According to figures from the 2011 Census, 29% of residents of Stroud District live in rural areas (defined as small towns, villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings), compared to 18% of the population of England as a whole.

Areas of deprivation

- 4.7.2 The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation provides an overall deprivation score for 32,844 small areas across the UK (known as ‘super output areas’) based on a range of income, employment, health, education, crime, housing and environmental indicators, including for 8 areas in the canal restoration corridor, and 69 areas across Stroud as a whole.
- 4.7.3 This showed that none of the areas in the Canal Restoration Corridor fell into the 25% of most deprives areas in England, while only 2 areas in Stroud district (Stroud 11F - Woodfield, Cam and Stroud 14D - Dursley, Cam) did so.

Table 4.6: Number and % of Super Output Areas in England’s Most Deprived Quartile

	Number of SOAs	% of SOAs
Canal Restoration Area	0	0%
Stroud	2	3%
England	8,211	25%

Source: 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation

4.8 Education Groups

- 4.8.1 There are 10 schools situated along the Phase 1B Canal Restoration Corridor, including five state funded infant, junior or primary schools, 1 state funded secondary school, 2 special schools and 2 independent schools. Together, they provide teaching to 2,330 pupils.

Table 4.7: Number of Enrolled School Pupils Along Canal Corridor

School	Roll
State Funded Infant/Junior/Primary Schools (5)	802
Lakefield C of E Primary School	202
Whitminster	113
Eastington Primary School	139
Park Junior School	166
Stonehouse Park Infant School	182
State Funded Secondary Schools (1)	580
Maidenhill School	580
Special Schools (2)	159
The Shrubberies School	124
William Morris Camphill Community	35
Independent Schools (2)	789
Hopelands Preparatory School	77
Wycliffe College	712
All Schools (10)	2,330

Source: Gloucestershire Schools Census 2018, Ofsted

4.9 Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Communities

According to figures from the 2011 Census, 2.3% of the population of the Canal Restoration Corridor and 2.1% of the population of Stroud District identified themselves as belonging to a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group¹².

¹² This includes all respondents who identified themselves as 'Mixed multiple ethnic groups', 'Asian/Asian British', 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British' and 'Other ethnic group'

4.11 People with Young Children Living in the Canal Corridor

4.11.1 At the time of the last Census in 2011, there were 1,497 households with dependent children living in the canal corridor area (equivalent to 28% of all households in the area), including 248 single parent households (5% of households). These figures are only slightly lower than the average for England as a whole, where 29% of households have dependent children, and 7% of households are lone parent households.

Table 4.8: Dependent and Lone Parent Households as % of All Households

	Canal Corridor	Stroud	Gloucestershire	England
Number of households with dependent children	1,497	13,167	68,457	6,423,941
% of households with dependent children	28%	28%	27%	29%
Number of single parent households	248	2,292	13,130	1,573,255
% of households that are single parent households	5%	5%	5%	7%

Source: Census, 2011

4.12 Lottery Players

4.12.1 According to figures from the Gambling Commission, the proportion of the population who played the National Lottery has fallen significantly over the past four years, from 38% in 2014 to 27% in 2018. We have not been able to identify any local breakdowns of participation rates.

4.13 People with Specialist Interests in Heritage, Nature and Sport

Heritage

4.13.1 According to data from English Heritage, 84% of South West adults participate in have visited a heritage site in the past 12 months, a figure significantly above the 73% English average. However, only 76% of people from the region’s lower socio-economic groups, and only 61% of the region’s BAME community have done so.

4.14 Enterprise in the Canal Corridor

4.14.1 In 2018, there were 6,695 organisations employing at least 1 person operating in Stroud district, 13% more than was the case in 2010. This is a significantly lower rate of increase than the 24% increase experienced across England as a whole.

4.14.2 Organisations in Stroud are more likely to be sole traders than the English average (17% of all organisations locally, compared to 14% nationally) or to be Partnerships (9% vs 6%), and less likely to be registered companies (67% vs 74%). The proportion of organisations that are either public sector or not for profit is the same in both Stroud and across the UK at 7%.

4.14.3 Organisations in Stroud are marginally more likely to be micro organisations employing 9 people or fewer (86.2% vs 84.7%), and marginally less like to be medium to large organisations employing 50 staff or more (2.1% vs 3.0%)

4.14.4 While the two sectors with the largest number of employers in Stroud are the same as they are in England (construction and professional services), there is a significantly higher

proportion of Stroud employers in the agriculture, forestry & fishing sector (8% of employers in Stroud vs 4% across England), and fewer employers in the retail sector (7.8% of Stroud employers vs an English average of 9.4%).

Conclusion

- Waterways can have significant positive impacts on society, and are linked with increased exercise and improved mental health and physical activity. There is also evidence to suggest a link between the presence of waterways, and community engagement, broadening opportunities and inclusivity; community safety, education; skills & lifelong learning; economic growth; regeneration and development.
- However, there is evidence to suggest that, across England as a whole, young people and people from BAME communities are significantly less likely to use waterway infrastructure than other population groups.
- Our research has found that there are proportionately more children excluded from school, and more people under the age of 18 admitted to hospital due to alcohol abuse in Stroud than across the rest of the UK, indicating that it is right for Creative Sustainability CIC to be targeting its support towards these groups.
- The research also found that 18-30 year olds account for a significantly lower share of the population in Stroud than across the UK as a whole, and that Creative Sustainability CIC is right to be engaging in projects to help retain these individuals in the local community.

5 Economic Impact Analysis

5.1 Summary of Impacts

5.1.1 This section sets out the workings from our assessment of the health benefits associated with increased walking, running and cycling activity along the canal corridor. It also presents the findings of our analysis of the land value uplift impacts of the canal restoration, which was not reported in 2017, but has now been added to reflect recent changes to HM Treasury’s *Green Book* appraisal guidance. We summarise our findings for Phase 1B of the project below:

Table 5.1: Summary of Project Impacts – Phase 1B

Phase 1B Summary	Indicator	Phase 1B Key Benefits
Quality of Life	New Canal Users (visits)	630 boat; 230 trail boats; 100,000 informal visitors; 5,500 canoeists and kayakers, 22,400 overnight visitors, and 6,200 anglers.
	Benefits of land-based activities (visits)	8,800 additional walkers; 7,130 cyclists; and 2,400 runners. Monetised health benefits from walking at £1.41m per annum and cycling c. £1.73m per year (combined impact of £3.14m per year). Further modal shift benefits of £2.76 million as a result of people moving from motorised transport to walking, running and cycling ¹³ . Combined benefit of 5.90 million
Benefits to the local community resulting from environmental improvements	Training and apprenticeships	8 trainees supported, a value of over £100k. The value of work delivered by local contractors would support 1 apprenticeship for canal-based work and 10 in attributable construction.
	Volunteering	Increase of 1,700 youth volunteer hours per year.
	Education	Potential to engage 15,000 secondary school pupils in Gloucester and Stroud in outdoor skills and learning.
	Housing and Population	88 net construction jobs supported <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ £9.4m GVA Council Tax expenditure of £719k annually. Total retained resident retail expenditure of £2.2m per annum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 17 retail jobs supported ▪ £1.5m GVA per annum 0.66% increase in affordable housing provision. Improved Dependency Ratio by 0.7%. Additional disposable income along Phase 1B: £5.4m.
Drivers for Micro-level prosperity	Increased canal user expenditure	Canal side uses (café + bike or boat hire) support at least 13 FTEs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over £1m GVA to the local economy. £1.5m spend per annum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20 tourism jobs supported in Stroud ▪ £0.67m GVA annually.

¹³ This figure includes reduced congestion, infrastructure cost savings, reduced accident rate, improved air quality, and reduced noise and greenhouse gas emissions)

5.1.2 We summarise the cumulative impacts across all project phases below:

Table 5.2: Summary of Cumulative Impacts Across all Project Phases

Cumulative Summary	Indicator	Outcome
Quality of Life	New Canal Users (visits)	It is estimated that the canal corridor will see 1,300 boat visits per year, 500 trail boats, 250,000 informal visitors, over 12,000 canoeists and kayakers, 76,000 overnight visitors, and 12,400 anglers.
	Benefits of land-based activities (visits)	c. 22,000 additional walkers; 17,800 cyclists and 6,000 runners. Monetised health benefits from walking at £3.52m per annum, and cycling c. £4.34m per year (combined impact of £7.86m per year). Further modal shift benefits of £6.89 million as a result of people moving from motorised transport to walking, running and cycling ¹⁴ . Combined benefit of £14.75 million
Benefits to the local community resulting from environmental improvements	Training and apprenticeships	Expenditure on the canal restoration and attributable housing construction could support 84 trainees, a value of over £1m. The value of work delivered by local contractors would support 1 apprenticeship for canal-based work and 10 in attributable construction. There will be additional opportunities to build on partnerships with WRG, the Royal Agricultural University, University of Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire & Stroud College, to build the skills profile of local people and to help people gain skills with an employability focus.
	Volunteering	Increased opportunities for existing and future volunteers for a variety of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled tasks. There is an opportunity to capitalise on youth volunteering: there is potential to capture an estimated 1,700 youth volunteer hours annually (an increase of between 4% in existing volunteer hours) within the canal corridor;
	Education	Potential to reach some 15,000 secondary school pupils in Gloucester and Stroud to support STEM education. Outdoor learning opportunities for primary and secondary pupils offered by the canal can enhance learning outcomes. Continued partnerships with local employability organisations, youth groups and local businesses and charities will support skills development.
	Housing and Population	Attributable housing in the District will increase by 2.0% in Phase 1A and 0.66% in Phase 1B. An increase in family housing attributable to the canal and economically active persons will decrease the dependency ratio by 2% in Phase 1A and 0.7% in Phase 1B.
Drivers for Micro-level prosperity	Increased canal user expenditure	Additional spend in the local area estimated at between £5.0 and £5.6m spend per annum from canal users in the local economy. Around 100 tourism jobs supported, generating over £3.0m per year in GVA.
Land value uplift	Conversion of agricultural land to housing land	An uplift of £84.188 million

¹⁴ This figure includes reduced congestion, infrastructure cost savings, reduced accident rate, improved air quality, and reduced noise and greenhouse gas emissions)

5.2 Health Benefits from Increased Walking, Running & Cycling

5.2.1 We estimate that the Phase 1B extension to the canal corridor will encourage 11,200 extra walkers per year, and 7,130 extra cyclists per year to use the canal towpath. We believe that this increase in towpath usage will help to generate an additional £3.1 million of health benefits. We show the workings behind this calculation in the table below.

Table 5.3: Economic Impact of Increased Walking, Running and Cycling, Phase 1B

Calculation stage	Walkers & Runners	Cyclists	All users	Sources
A. Number of additional people exercising	11,200	7,130	18,330	Stantec assumption - assumes a 25% increase on current use
B. Mortality rate under 'no exercise' scenario	0.223%	0.223%	-	World Health Organisation
C. Number of deaths under 'no exercise' scenario	24.987	15.907	40.893	= A x B
D. Reduction in risk associated with 'full fitness' scenario	11%	22%	-	Stantec calculation using data from National Transport Survey, and various assumptions around distance walked by users
E. Potential lives saved	2.865	3.526	6.391	= C x D
F. Value of each preventable casualty	£1,640,134	£1,640,134	-	DfT Transport Analysis Guidance
G. Reduced Mortality Benefits associated with having full fitness	£4,699,689	£5,782,901	£10,482,590	= E x F
H. Years of additional continuous exercise needed to achieve full fitness	3.33	3.33	-	Stantec calculation. Assumes 5 years needed to achieve full fitness, adjusted to account for levels of fitness that users may already have
I. Health benefit	£1,409,874	£1,734,884	£3,144,758	=G x H

- 5.2.3 We estimate that combined impact of all project phases will be to encourage 27,989 extra walkers per year, and 17,834 extra cyclists per year to use the canal towpath. We believe that this increase in towpath usage will help to generate an additional £7.9 million of health benefits. We show the workings behind this calculation in the table below.

Table 5.4: Economic Impact of Increased Walking, Running and Cycling, Full Restoration

Calculation stage	Walkers & Runners	Cyclists	All users	Sources
A. Number of additional people exercising	27,989	17,834	45,823	Stantec assumption - assumes a 25% increase on current use
B. Mortality rate under 'no exercise' scenario	0.223%	0.223%	-	World Health Organisation
C. Number of deaths under 'no exercise' scenario	62.442	39.787	102.228	= A x B
D. Reduction in risk associated with 'full fitness' scenario	11%	22%	-	Stantec calculation using data from National Transport Survey, and various assumptions around distance walked by users
E. Potential lives saved	7.161	8.819	15.980	= C x D
F. Value of each preventable casualty	£1,640,134	£1,640,134	-	DfT Transport Analysis Guidance
G. Reduced Mortality Benefits associated with having full fitness	£11,744,607	£14,464,551	£26,209,158	= E x F
H. Years of additional continuous exercise needed to achieve full fitness	3.33	3.33	-	Stantec calculation. Assumes 5 years needed to achieve full fitness, adjusted to account for levels of fitness that users may already have
I. Health benefit	£3,523,300	£4,339,400	£7,862,700	=G x H

5.3 Land Value Uplift Assessment

5.3.1 We estimate that Phase 1B of the development will add £28.1 million to local land values, while the project as a whole will add £73.6 million

Table 5.5: Assessment of the Land Value Uplift Impacts of the Development of the Canal Corridor

Indicator	Phase 1B	Full Project	Source
A. Number of additional houses to be developed along the canal corridor	450	1,181	PBA, 2017
B. Average UK plot size (m2)	275.6	275.6	MHCLG English Housing Survey *
C. Total area of land to be developed for housing (ha)	12.4	32.5	= A x B
D. Average cost per ha of housing land	£2,285,000	£2,285,000	MHCLG Land Value Estimates for Policy Appraisal 2017 **
E. Average cost per ha of agricultural land	£22,250	£22,250	MHCLG Land Value Estimates for Policy Appraisal 2017 **
F. Land value uplift per ha	£2,262,750	£2,262,750	= D - E
G. Total land value uplift	£28,062,626	£73,648,802	= C x F

* As referenced in <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-05/241489/>

** as referenced in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/land-value-estimates-for-policy-appraisal-2017>

Conclusion

- We estimate that the Phase 1B extension to the canal corridor will encourage 11,200 extra walkers per year, and 7,130 extra cyclists per year to use the canal towpath. We believe that this increase in towpath usage will help to generate an additional £3.1 million of health benefits.
- We estimate that combined impact of all project phases will be to encourage 27,989 extra walkers per year, and 17,834 extra cyclists per year to use the canal towpath. We believe that this increase in towpath usage will help to generate an additional £7.9 million of health benefits.
- We estimate that Phase 1B of the development will add £28.1 million to local land values, while the project as a whole will add £73.6 million
- All other impacts remain unchanged on those referenced in our 2017 report.

6 Conclusions

6.1.1 The following conclusions can be drawn from the preceding analysis:

6.2 Economic Baseline Analysis

6.2.1 The economic baseline review has found that:

- Stroud is experiencing a more rapid rate of population growth than England as a whole, and housing sites need to be opened up to accommodate this growth
- Stroud has proportionately fewer working age adults than the England average, and this is placing a constraint on its economic performance
- The canal corridor is more attractive to working age adults and to households with children than the District average
- Despite its higher than average employment rate, the Stroud economy is less productive than the average for England as a whole, with lower average earnings and more limited opportunities for work in professional occupations and private sector roles

6.2.2 Based on these observations, it can be concluded that any policies that can attract talent and knowledge intensive jobs to the area, either through opening up new sites for housing and commercial development, or by positioning the district as an attracting and healthy place to live and work, will help the area to overcome its productivity gap and lift average earnings closer to the national average.

6.2.3 A strong argument can be put forward in favour of the canal restoration project within this context, and there is a strong rationale for including indicators around productivity, earnings and demographic composition as performance metrics in your application.

6.3 Update of 2017 Report

6.3.1 Stroud's tourism economy has performed well in recent years, with the numbers of day visitors and overnight visitors, and the value of visitor spend attracted all outperforming the Gloucestershire and England averages.

6.3.2 Part of this growth may be attributable to the rise of online holiday letting platforms such as Airbnb, which have helped the area to address the challenge of limited accommodation supply identified in our 2017 report

6.3.3 This rapid growth could place additional pressures on Stroud town centre, and it would be beneficial if the benefits of these additional tourist could be spread across the district through initiatives such as the canal corridor restoration

6.3.4 This increase in visitor numbers has contributed to a rise in demand for water based tourism in the area, with the number of passenger boat trips on the canal rising by 8.7%. This growth will place a constraint of the existing canal infrastructure, and investments in restoring further sections of the canal corridor may be necessary in order to sustain this growth.

6.3.5 Stroud's economic development policy landscape has not changed markedly since we reported in 2017, and a strong strategic case can still be made in favour of the project.

6.4 Additional Analysis on Audience Groups

- 6.4.1 Waterways can have significant positive impacts on society, and are lined with increased exercise and improved mental health and physical activity. There is also evidence to suggest a link between the presence of waterways, and community engagement, broadening opportunities and inclusivity; community safety, education; skills & lifelong learning; economic growth; regeneration and development.
- 6.4.2 However, there is evidence to suggest that, across England as a whole, young people and people from BAME communities are significantly less likely to use waterway infrastructure than other population groups.
- 6.4.3 Our research has found that there are proportionately more children excluded from school, and more people under the age of 18 admitted to hospital due to alcohol abuse in Stroud than across the rest of the UK, indicating that it is right for Creative Sustainability CIC to be targeting its support towards these groups.
- 6.4.4 The research also found that 18-30 year olds account for a significantly lower share of the population in Stroud than across the UK as a whole, and that Creative Sustainability CIC is right to be engaging in projects to help retain these individuals in the local community.

6.5 Summary of Economic Impacts

- 6.5.1 We estimate that the Phase 1B extension to the canal corridor will encourage 11,200 extra walkers per year, and 7,130 extra cyclists per year to use the canal towpath. We believe that this increase in towpath usage will help to generate an additional £3.1 million of health benefits.
- 6.5.2 We estimate that combined impact of all project phases will be to encourage 27,989 extra walkers per year, and 17,834 extra cyclists per year to use the canal towpath. We believe that this increase in towpath usage will help to generate an additional £7.9 million of health benefits.
- 6.5.3 We estimate that Phase 1B of the development will add £28.1 million to local land values, while the project as a whole will add £73.6 million

All other impacts remain unchanged on those referenced in our 2017 report.

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

15 DECEMBER 2022

Report Title	Member Champion Protocol			
Purpose of Report	To consider the adoption of the Member Champion Protocol including role descriptions and proposals for two new Member Champions.			
Decision(s)	<p>The Council RESOLVES:</p> <p>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;</p> <p>b) To approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Migrant Champion roles;</p> <p>c) To appoint Councillors nominated in section 2 of the report to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Migrant Champion roles; and</p> <p>d) That the appointment of Member Champions be made at the Council Annual Meeting and that this item be included in the business for Annual Council shown in Council procedure rule 2.1.1.</p>			
Consultation and Feedback	Consultation has been held with the Constitution Working Group, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, Member Development Working Group, appointed Member Champions, Group Leaders and all Councillors, Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), Lead Officers and the Strategic Leadership Team.			
Report Author	Katie Kirton, Democratic Services and Elections Officer Email: katie.kirton@stroud.gov.uk Hannah Emery, Corporate Policy and Governance Manager Email: Hannah.Emery@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	An alternative option is not to adopt the Member Champion Framework. This is not recommended as it does not support the decision taken at the July 2022 Council meeting where Members approved the recommendations of the IRP which included establishing a framework for Member Champions.			
Background Papers	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel July 2022			
Appendices	Appendix A – Member Champion Framework and Role Descriptions Appendix B – Equality Analysis Form			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	Yes	No

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Although there is no legislative requirement for local authorities to appoint Member Champions, a number of Local authorities have recognised the value in having named

Elected Members acting as Champions for certain services, themes of communities or place of interest. Member Champions are elected Members who are appointed to specialise in important areas of work and drive issues forward as champions of specific areas of interest.

- 1.2 A report from the Independent Remuneration Panel was approved by Council on 21 July 2022. The report included a recommendation to establish a clear structural and constitutional framework within which Member Champions could operate, in order to maximise their effectiveness.
- 1.3 The Council currently have two Member Champion Roles which have previously been agreed by Council. These roles do not have an identified structure to work within and therefore the remit of the Champions and their position in the Council structure has been uncertain and at times lacked focus.
- 1.4 The current Member Champion Roles are included in the table below:

Champion Role	Date Champion Role was approved	Councillors	Date of Appointment	Summary of role
Mental Health Champion	Motion to Council proposed by Councillor Skinner and seconded by Councillor Davies – Agreed 26 April 2018	Cllr Bennett Cllr Gray Cllr Watson	19 May 2022	Aim of enhancing the mental health of local communities by promoting well-being, signposting to appropriate help and support and advocating for the consideration of mental health in council policy.
Armed Forces Champion	Agreed by Council 18 July 2019	Cllr Robinson Cllr Patrick	21 July 2022	To work with and support the Strategic Director of Communities delivering the military covenant helping to support the needs of service veterans in the Stroud District.

- 1.5 Member Champions will act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council’s business and encourage communication and positive action over the issues they represent.

2. ADDITIONAL MEMBER CHAMPION ROLES

- 2.1 The following Champion roles have been developed following requests made to the Council’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group and the draft role profiles can be found at Appendix A:

Champion Role	Role Profile	Nominated Councillors
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion	To support the Council to meet the equality objectives set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and help to embed equality in organisational activities.	Cllrs Bennett, Brown, Drury-Layfield, Kay, Oxley. Note: a requirement of this role is to sit on the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.
Migrant Champion	To champion the rights of migrants, advocate for migrants' rights, and be a point of contact for migrant residents and organisations supporting migrants ensuring their needs are considered and voices heard.	Councillor Cornell.

3 MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 It is important that the Council has in place robust arrangements to ensure that Member Champion roles are recognised, given credibility and that there is some capacity provided to support member champions.
- 3.2 The protocol attached as appendix A sets out a recommended framework within which member champions might work effectively. This will ensure that champions, other members, officers and community interest groups understand the role and its parameters and where the Champion fits into the councils structure and leadership arrangements.
- 3.3 The protocol includes a general role profile for champions as well as a role profile for each specific champion role. Member champions will:
- Make sure that their area of interest is considered when developing policy or making decisions.
 - Raise the profile of the interest and promote best practice.
 - Engage with external bodies who work in the area and support community engagement activities.
 - Engage with other members, officers and community groups who have an interest/stake in the area.
 - Engage with community groups with an interest/stake in the area.
 - Report to their Committee, full Council or other committees (as necessary and requested) setting out the actions taken and how those actions have contributed to the success and promotion of that area of interest.
- 3.4 To assist in providing structured support and to assist Champions with their responsibilities, each Member Champion area will be designated a named officer support. It is important that the champions and officers work together to agree roles and actions for the area being championed to avoid any potential duplication or overlap of work.
- 3.5 Member champions will work in partnership with Committee Chairs and liaise with external organisations, including partner bodies. They do not have authority to commit the council.
- 3.6 The benefits associated with appointing Member Champions include:
- Involving a greater number of Councillors in the work of the Council.
 - Providing support and focus for an aspect of the councils services, priorities or aims.

- Emphasising and promoting social inclusion (for example, disability, equalities or homelessness are common interests that are championed).
- Engaging Councillors in specific and general aspects of community leadership.

4. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER CHAMPIONS

- 4.1 The appointment of Member Champions will be made at full Council.
- 4.2 To allow for consistency and stability in the role, the Protocol sets out that the term of a Champion should be for a minimum of two years, although there will be opportunity to review positions at each Annual Meeting.
- 4.3 Due to the next district council elections being held in 2024, it is recommended that all Member Champion appointments are appointed until this date at which time, the Member Champion Roles will be re-appointed to at the Council's Annual Meeting for the years 2024 – 2026.
- 4.4 Each political group will be made aware of proposals to appoint Member Champions and given the opportunity to submit nominations. There is no legal requirement to apply the political balance rules to the appointment so they should be made based on skills, knowledge and suitability for the role.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation with Members and various working groups on the protocol provided valuable feedback and resulted in several changes:
- 5.2 The development of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion resulted from a request from the Staff Pride Network (STRIDE) endorsed by the Council's Equality Diversity & Inclusion Working Group.
- 5.3 Group Leaders requested clarity on the appointment of Member Champions and for this to be made a Full Council. They queried the name of the Migrant Champion due to the word 'Migrant' having a negative portrayal however, due to the important link this champion will have with the Migrant Champions network it was agreed this name was appropriate. It was also requested there be a method of measuring the effectiveness of Champions and the requirement to submit an annual report to the relevant committee was added to the Framework.
- 5.4 The Member Development Working Group requested that the relationship between the Champion and a parent committee is strengthened. As a result, each Champion role profile sets out the identified parent committee for the Champion roles including reporting to committee and appropriate consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair; the work programme should allow for Champions to add activity in response to local national events.
- 5.5 A number of responses to the consultation highlighted the need for Champions to receive media training and be consulted along with the relevant Chair and Vice Chair in relation to including a quote in the council's press releases.
- 5.6 The Constitution Working Group discussed the Member Champion Protocol at their meeting in November and considered the necessity of the framework, the Members concluded that they had no additional recommendations or additions to the Protocol.

5.7 The Independent Remuneration Panel welcomes the initiative to produce this guidance, which will help the Council and others to see the Member Champion role in context. They look forward to monitoring how the Member Champion role evolves in Stroud with this clear framework in place.”

5.8 All Lead Officers identified in the Champion Role Profiles have been consulted with and agree to the role they play in supporting Member Champions.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The Constitution currently makes no reference to Member Champions, the protocol is therefore recommended for approval in order to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Member Champions. If the Member Champion Framework is approved, it will form part of the Council’s Constitution and be periodically reviewed by the Council’s Constitution Working Group. As part of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel it is also recommended that the Panel review the duties, time and effort of the Champions once the framework has been established.

7. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this decision. Any training requirements for members will be considered as part of existing budgets. Any future recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel having review the role of the Champions will be the subject of a separate Council decision.

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

4.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from the report recommendations.

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

4.3 Equality Implications

The Member Champion Protocol demonstrates the Council’s commitment to equality and diversity. The current Mental Health Champion and Armed Forces Champion roles and the recommended Migrant Champion and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion roles will promote social inclusion and equalities. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Member Champion roles will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics by assisting the Council to meet the equality objectives set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

An Equality Analysis Form has been completed and can be found at Appendix B.

4.4 Environmental Implications

There are no direct environment implications arising as a result of adopting a Member Champion Protocol.

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Stroud District Council

Member Champion

Protocol

This Member Champion Protocol was developed following a recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel approved at full Council on the 21 July 2022. This section provides a summary of the role and function of Member Champions and includes the detailed role profiles for specific Member Champion roles.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Member Champions are elected Members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business or a particular interest within the community, they have evolved in the Council as a result of national initiatives and approval at Council. The primary responsibility of each Member Champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent.

2. Appointment of Member Champions

- 2.1. Appointment of the Member Champions will be made at Full Council meetings. A proposal for a new Member Champion role may be made by a motion to Council or a recommendation from a Committee. It is recommended that Group Leaders should be consulted and advice from the Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive sought prior to the submission of any motions.
- 2.2. The Council, at its annual meeting will appoint Member Champions. Although the Council will be entitled to make changes at its annual meeting, a Champion is expected to serve for a minimum period of two years to ensure some stability in the role.
- 2.3. Member Champion roles are not subject to political proportionality rules and therefore the appointments should be made based on skills, knowledge, suitability for the role and relevant national and local guidance. Each political group will be made aware of proposals to appoint Member Champions and given the opportunity to submit nominations.
- 2.4. A Member Champion may resign from office by giving written notice to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer. The position will remain vacant until the appointment is made at the next Council meeting.

3. Role of Member Champions

- 3.1. All Member Champions will have a role profile which will set out their respective duties and responsibilities. These responsibilities are in addition to those listed in the [Councillor Role Profile in Section 16](#).
- 3.2. The Champion role profiles will be developed by the Lead Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Parent Committee or Working Group as well as the Champions themselves.
- 3.3. A generic role description is set out in Appendix A to this protocol.

4. Parameters of Member Champion Role

- 4.1. The above role is set in the context of a specific interest or theme. The following parameters apply to the role:
 - a) All Champions must act reasonably in the role.
 - b) All Champions must recognise and work effectively within the political management and working arrangements agreed by the Council.
- 4.2. A Member Champion:
 - a) Is effectively given authority by the Stroud District Council (appointing committee) to take all reasonable actions judged by the Member as being necessary to perform the role of Champion.

- b) Cannot commit the Council in any way that is contrary to established policy and practice but may confirm a Council position as stated in published policy.
- c) Cannot make decisions that bind the Council and must have regard to any budget implications which may arise.
- d) Must adhere to the Press and Media protocol and liaise with the Communications team on all forms of contact with the press and media including if they have been approached by the media for comment.
- e) Is entitled to have access to the information held by the Council relating to the interest being championed and access to a reasonable amount of Officer time. to discuss that information but may not commit officer time to such an extent that other priority work required of Officers is prejudiced.
- f) Should agree with the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Parent Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, a programme of activity for a Council year. The work programme must reflect the Council's overall priorities as set out in the Council Plan, but the Champion may include such aspects as seen to them to be relevant for attention, as long as overall priorities are not directly prejudiced by those aspects. The work programme will be a 'live' document and can be updated throughout the year.

5. Support put in place by the Council

5.1. Taking all the above into account the Council will:

- a) Take steps to promote understanding within the Council of the role of a Member Champion and describe how it relates to other Member level functions.
- b) Promote similar understanding among its working partners, external bodies and the local community.
- c) Arrange to designate a Lead Officer to support each appointed Champion.
- d) Ensure that the Lead Officer, relating to each Championed interest, are aware of the champion roles that affect them and the rights of Champions to access / discuss information about the service.
- e) Require each Champion to report annually to the Council / Parent Committee on the performance of the function and on issues arising.
- f) Invite the Member Champion to act as its representative on some or all of the relevant external bodies where Council representation is required or sought. If representation is already in place then to work closely with the appointed Member.
- g) Put in place appropriate skills development for Champions within the overall Member development strategy of the Council.
- h) Keep under review the relevance of the role of Member Champions in the context of the Council's Members' Scheme of Allowances and if appropriate, make a request for the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel to consider this.
- i) When appointing Champions, set down any additional protocol requirements not covered by this version as part of the specific role profile.

6. Internal Working relationships

6.1. Committee Chairs and Councillors will:

- a) Acknowledge the right of Champions to be consulted on matters relating to their interest.
- b) Ensure where appropriate that there is engagement or consultation with Champions in the formulation of a policy or other matters and that the views of the Champions are contained in the information provided to decision makers.
- c) Consider inviting the relevant Champion to represent the Council at any relevant conference / seminar on the subject matter of the interest on the basis that the Champion will report back to the Council or Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs.
- d) Take full account of any views offered by Champions prior to any decision making on matters that clearly relate to the interest being championed.
- e) Acknowledge and facilitate the right of Member Champions to attend Committees of which they are not a member in order to observe or to make representations.
- f) Attend relevant meetings where invited by the Champion(s) in order to receive updates and offer support.

6.2. Officers will:

- a) Acknowledge the right of Champions to be consulted and to participate in discussions on matters relating to their interest.
- b) Ensure there is appropriate engagement or consultation with all relevant Champions where the issue clearly relates to the interest, every effort should be made to include all of the Member Champions regarding interests which are championed by multiple Members.
- c) Co-operate fully with Champions in enabling them to perform their functions and to discuss directly with Champions and Members where proposed actions might prejudice Council or other priorities.
- d) Explain fully and openly to Champions any issues of capacity relating to the role of supporting the Champion function.
- e) Work with Champions in the formulation of a programme of activity that is consistent with what the Council wishes to achieve and recognises the right of the Champion to focus on other aspects.
- f) The Communications Team will contact the relevant Member Champions on matters relating to the interest and will endeavour to include a quote from one Member Champion on any matters relating to the interest being championed.

7. External working relationships

7.1. The Champion will:

- a) Consider being the Council's representative on certain relevant external bodies.
- b) Monitor and work closely with partner bodies in the field of the interest being championed.
- c) Identify the most relevant community bodies whose work is associated with the interest and foster good working relationships with those groups.

- d) Take steps to promote within the wider community the specific issues on which the Champion is to focus and to provide opportunities for local engagement.

8. Conflict resolution

- 8.1. In the event that there is disagreement between the Champion and either an Officer or a Member, the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council shall determine the matter. The decision of the Chief Executive shall be final.
- 8.2. If the disagreement is between the Champion and the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, shall determine the matter.

Appendix A - Member Champion General Role Profile

1. Background

- 1.1. Member Champions are elected members who in addition to their other council responsibilities help to ensure that the issue or group that they are championing is taken into account when council policy is being developed and decisions are made.
- 1.2. Member Champions exist to provide a voice for underrepresented groups, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of council business.
- 1.3. The Member Champion role does not have personal delegated power to act on the council's behalf on matters relating to the interest being championed. Member Champions must work within the council's Constitution.
- 1.4. The Member Champion/s will represent the whole District with regards to their championed interest and will not be confined to just the ward they represent as a District Councillor.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

2.1. Member Champions will:

- a) Champion the adopted policy of the Council for the relevant interest and to contribute to the review and development of policies pertaining to the area of interest.
- b) Promote their area of interest and act as a catalyst for change and improvement both within and outside of the Council, having regard to the Council's overall corporate and service priorities and Council Plan.
- c) Keep up to date with all relevant matters connected with the interest including networking with other Member Champions both from within the organisation and from other local authorities with the same or similar interests.
- d) Ensure good practice within the authority relating to the interest is shared and that examples of good practice elsewhere are brought to the attention of Members and Officers.
- e) Present an annual report to the Council or the Parent Committee.
- f) Monitor the Stroud Council Plan and work with Lead Officers and Members proactively to advise, identify, challenge and to exert influence on behalf of the interest.
- g) Ensure that all Members of the Council and the Council's Officers are aware of the needs, issues and support available relating to the interest.
- h) Take advice from the appointed Lead Officer.
- i) Seek to engage with senior management by offering to attend meetings in order to deliver presentations, ask questions or raise issues for consideration.
- j) Serve where appropriate on working groups relating to their area of interest and seek to place appropriate items on Member Working Group agendas.
- k) Work closely with Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Parent Committee to keep them up to date with progress and ask for support where necessary.

- l) In all of the above, recognise the limited capacity of Officers to support the Champion role alongside the demands of all other Member and Council Functions and will, therefore make reasonable allowance for this.

3. Skills

- 3.1. Member Champions will pursue such personal development and training opportunities to enable effective performance in the role of a member champion and raise personal awareness of issues relevant to the interest being championed.
- 3.2. Member Champions must be Self-motivated and able to manage their own workload whilst working closely with the Lead Officer and any relevant Chairs and Vice -Chairs.

4. Time Commitment

- 4.1. Member Champions will present an annual report to the Council or the Parent Committee on the work achieved during the previous reporting period and priorities identified for the future.
- 4.2. They will work with a nominated Lead Officer in prioritising actions as a Member Champion, creating a work plan that achieves a balance between helping to achieve corporate priorities and delivering other priorities identified by the Member Champion.

Appendix B - Mental Health Champion Role Profile

1. Background

- 1.1. The Local Authority Mental Health Challenge was setup by a group of leading mental health charities. At a full Council meeting on the 26th April 2018, Stroud District Council approved a Motion to sign up and appoint Mental Health Champions.
- 1.2. The challenge specified the need for nominated elected members to become mental health champions, and while the exact remit is defined locally and developed by the champions themselves. Key objectives include:
 - a) Promotion of well-being, resilience and positive mental health with SDC Officers, Members and Residents.
 - b) Signpost to existing services for more specialist things and seek ways to fill gaps as they are identified, aware that most provision falls outside the council's remit and crosses NHS, community and private service provision. Keen to embed consideration of mental health in all council decision making, alongside diversity and equality as a whole
 - c) Advocate consideration of mental health alongside equality, diversity, and physical requirements in council policy.
 - d) To build wellbeing and mental health support into all community hubs as they emerge

2. Requirements for the role:

- 2.1. An enthusiasm for, and interest in wellbeing, improving the working environment and supporting engagement.
- 2.2. Being approachable and willing to help.
- 2.3. A basic understanding of healthy lifestyles and health promotion.
- 2.4. Keen to keep up to date with activities and attend training events / relevant meetings.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Mental Health Champions will:
 - a) Fulfil the requirements of the general Member Champion Role profile as seen in Appendix A in addition to the specified requirements for the championed interest.
 - b) Advocate for mental health awareness, wellbeing and beneficial intervention opportunities in council/committee meetings and policy development.
 - c) Reach out to the local community (e.g. via schools, businesses, faith groups) to raise awareness and challenge stigma.
 - d) Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health.
 - e) Provide information about and encourage others to participate in health and wellbeing initiatives/challenges
 - f) Foster local partnerships between agencies to support people with mental health problems more effectively.

- g) Engage with people through your role in the community and by attending local groups and events.
- h) Encourage the council to support the mental health of its own workforce, contractors and Members.

4. Supporting Officer

- 4.1. The Lead Officer(s) will be Head of Community Services, and Head of Human Resources.

5. Parent Committee(s)

- 5.1. The Parent Committee for Mental Health Champions will be Community Services and Licensing Committee

Appendix C - Armed Forces Champion Role Profile

1. Background

- 1.1. The Armed Forces Covenant outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the armed forces is a commitment by a local authority, statutory services, military charities, and the private sector to support members of their local armed forces community. It is a pledge that acknowledges those who serve, or who have served, in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.
- 1.2. At a full Council meeting on the 18th July 2019, Stroud District Council agreed to appoint two Armed Forces Member Champions to support the Armed Forces Covenant. An amendment to this decision recognised that the role should continue to be a civic duty and therefore either the Chair or Vice-Chair of Council should always hold at least one of these positions.

2. Requirements for the role:

- 2.1. At least one Armed Forces Champion must either be the Chair or Vice-Chair of Council.
- 2.2. An enthusiasm for, and interest in encouraging local communities to support the armed forces community in their area.
- 2.3. Being approachable and willing to help.
- 2.4. Some Armed Forces experience would be an advantage, though not required.
- 2.5. Keen to keep up to date with activities and attend the occasional training event / meeting.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Armed Forces Champions will:
 - a) Raise the profile and needs of the Armed Forces community (serving personnel, both regular and reserve, their families and veterans), within the Council and the wider county.
 - b) Keep up to date on activities being undertaken locally to support service personnel and their families.
 - c) Have up to date knowledge on any Armed Forces issues and be able to provide information on local activities.
 - d) Attend events on behalf of the Chair relating to the Armed Forces.
 - e) Raise the profile of the Armed Forces and ex-Service personnel and promote local events.
 - f) Develop and encourage local businesses to support the Covenant.

4. Supporting Officer

- 4.1. The Lead Officer will be the Strategic Director of Communities.

5. Parent Committee(s)

- 5.1. The Parent Committee for Armed Forces Champions will be Council.

Appendix D - Migrant Champion Role Profile

1. Background

- 1.1. The Migrant Champions Network is a new project that will support local councillors to champion the rights of migrants in their local areas and beyond. The network will support councillors to advocate for migrants' rights, help them to connect with local services and advice centres, and ensure their needs are considered and voices heard. This role will work closely with the migrant Network.

2. Requirements for the role:

- 2.1. An enthusiasm for, and interest in wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion and promoting the rights of migrants.
- 2.2. Being approachable and willing to help.
- 2.3. Keen to keep up to date with activities and attend the occasional training or network events and meetings.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Migrant Champions will work with Stroud District Council and where appropriate, Gloucestershire County Council to:
 - a) Be a point of contact for migrant residents, and organisations supporting migrants;
 - b) Review policies and procedures to ensure migrants have adequate access to services;
 - c) promote council resolutions to promote migrants' rights;
 - d) take up cases across the authority that involve migrants' rights;
 - e) ensure that the needs of vulnerable migrants, especially children, are met by council services; and
 - f) ensure that all migrants entitled to vote are asked to register and helped if they need it, and that the information provided by relevant officers is accurate and appropriate.

4. Supporting Officer

- 4.1. The Lead Officers will be the Interim Head of Strategic Housing Services and the International Resettlement Officer.

5. Parent Committee(s)

- 5.1. The Parent Committee for Migrant Champions will be Council

Appendix E – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions

1. Background

- 1.1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions will play a central role in assisting the Council to meet the equality objectives set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. They will monitor delivery of the associated 1-year Action Plan and report progress annually to Full Council.

2. Requirements for the role:

- 2.1. The Equality, diversity, and inclusivity champion should have:
 - a) Excellent communication skills
 - b) The ability to be objective
 - c) A sensitive and professional manner
 - d) Understanding of, or willingness to learn about, equality and diversity matters
 - e) Strong relationships with team members across a variety of roles and positions
 - f) A willingness to engage openly and honestly with others on topics that can at times be challenging and difficult to discuss
 - g) An enthusiasm for, and interest in wellbeing, improving the working environment and supporting engagement.
- 2.2. The appointed ED&I Champions must sit on the Council's Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Working Group.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Ensure that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is consistently measured and appraised with progress against the current objectives kept under review.
- 3.2. Understand the communities that make up the Stroud District and work with them on a range of issues.
- 3.3. Develop the roles of elected members in driving equalities forward.
- 3.4. Champion the equality and diversity agenda and embed equality in organisational activities.
- 3.5. Use the expertise within the group to find practical solutions to any barriers that may present themselves in delivering the Council's aspirations and obligations around equality and diversity.
- 3.6. Share and exchange knowledge and information about how the different communities of the Stroud district experience service delivery.
- 3.7. Establish mechanisms for on-going dialogue and joined up working between teams to share good practice and ensure consistency across the organisation.
- 3.8. Identify areas in which the organisation can improve its efforts to be more inclusive and recommend actions.

4. Supporting Officer

4.1. The Lead Officers will be the Policy & Performance Officer, and the Senior Operations Partner (HR).

5. Parent Committee(s)

5.1. The Parent Committee for ED&I Champions will be Council

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Equality Analysis Form

By completing this form you will provide evidence of how your service is helping to meet Stroud District Council's General Equality duty:

The Equality Act 2010 states that:

*A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have **due regard** to the need to –*

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are listed in Question 9

Stroud District Equality data can be found at: <https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/>

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Name(s): Katie Kirton	Telephone: 01453 754383
	E-Mail: katie.kirton@stroud.gov.uk
Service: Corporate Policy & Governance	Date of Assessment: 6 December 2022

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Member Champion Protocol

Is this new or an existing one? **New**

3. Briefly describe its aims and objectives

Member Champions are elected members who are appointed to specialise in important areas of work and drive issues forward as champions of specific interest. Member Champions will act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business and encourage communication and positive action over the issues they represent.

4. Are there external considerations? (Legislation / government directive, etc)

No

5. Who is intended to benefit from it and in what way?

The Member Champion Protocol has been created to provide structure and support for Champions in driving forward and advocating for their specific interest. The protocol should enable Champions to be more successful in their role thereby providing increased benefit to any individual or community group related to the area they are championing.

6. What outcomes are expected?

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Fostering good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

7. What evidence has been used for this assessment?: (eg Research, previous consultations, Inform (MAIDEN); Google assessments carried out by other Authorities)

- National and local research/statistics: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/equality-and-diversity/>
- The Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

8. Has any consultation been carried out?

Yes

Details of consultation

Consultation has been held with the Council's Constitution Working Group, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, Member Development Working Group, appointed Member Champions, Group Leaders and all Councillors, the Independent Remuneration Panel, Lead Officers and the Strategic Leadership Team.

If NO please outline any planned activities

9. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?

(Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure)

Protected Group	Type of impact, reason and any evidence (from Q7 & 8)
Age	It has not been identified that the Member Champion Protocol will negatively impact any of the protected characteristics.
Disability	
Gender Re-assignment	The current Mental Health Champion and Armed Forces Champion roles and the recommended Migrant Champion and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions will raise awareness and promote social inclusion and equalities.
Pregnancy & Maternity	
Race	
Religion – Belief	
Sex	The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions in particular will have a positive impact by advancing equality and minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to protected characteristics.
Sexual Orientation	
Marriage & Civil Partnerships (part (a) of duty only)	
Rural considerations: le Access to services; transport; education; employment; broadband;	

10. If you have identified a negative impact in question 9, what actions have you undertaken or do you plan to undertake to lessen or negate this impact?

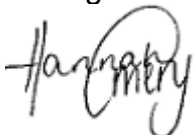
Please transfer any actions to your Service Action plan on Excelsis.

Action(s):	Lead officer	Resource	Timescale

Declaration

We are satisfied that an Impact Assessment has been carried out the Review Panel recommendations and where a negative impact has been identified, actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact.

We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment

Completed by: Katie Kirton	Date: 07/12/2022
Role: Democratic Services and Elections Officer	
Countersigned by Head of Service/Director: Hannah Emery, Corporate Policy and Governance Manager	Date: 07/12/2022
	

Date for Review: Please forward an electronic copy to eka.nowakowska@stroud.gov.uk

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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2022

Report Title	Review of Financial Regulations			
Purpose of Report	To update the Financial Regulations after consideration by the Section 151 Officer and the Constitution Working Group			
Decision(s)	The Council RESOLVES that the amended financial regulations attached at Appendix A be added to the Councils Constitution.			
Consultation and Feedback	All amendments suggested by the Constitution Working Group have been incorporated			
Report Author	Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	The Council may choose to alter any of the financial regulations in consultation with the Section 151 Officer			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix A – New financial regulations Appendix B – Tracked changes amended version			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The cross-party Constitution Working Group (CWG) has been tasked with reviewing the Council's Constitution and reporting to Council on its deliberations.
- 1.2 The Financial Regulations were an area of the Constitution identified for review during the 2022 year. The Regulations serve as the starting point for the guiding principles for how both Officers and Members are responsible for managing the Council's money.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 The Strategic Director of Resources has overall responsibility for ensuring the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council, as required by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, and by Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. This includes proper preparation of a set of financial regulations for approval and adoption by the Council.
- 2.2 It has been some time since the Financial Regulations were last reviewed in full and, although no fundamental issues have been identified, it is therefore appropriate to periodically review and update the regulations for accuracy and relevance.
- 2.3 The regulations have recently been reviewed by the Strategic Director of Resources and the Accountancy Manager. A tracked changes document was produced for consideration by the Constitution Working Group at their meeting of 15th November 2022.
- 2.4 The Group considered the entire document in detail and made a number of suggested amendments, primarily to ensure clarity of wording and to ensure the relevant roles of the

Audit and Standards Committee, as part of good financial management, were properly reflected in the regulations. All changes requested by the Group are included in the version for consideration by Full Council.

- 2.5 To allow for better comparison of the new and previous versions of the Financial Regulations a “tracked changes” version of the document is included at Appendix B. In summary the principal changes for consideration are;
- Updating job titles throughout the document to current versions
 - Formal recognition of the Accountancy Manager as fulfilling the role of Section 151 Officer in the absence of the Strategic Director of Resources
 - A clarification that breaking financial regulations can result in disciplinary action
 - An authorisation for the Section 151 Officer to move funds between financial years
 - Updates on the regulations around reserves to reflect the scheme of delegations
 - Updated monetary levels around write off authorisations
 - Formal authorisation for the Section 151 Officer to exercise discretion in member expense claims
- 2.6 The job titles of a number of roles have changed since the last full update of the Regulations. Most significantly the Section 151 Officer position was held by the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services). The current role is Strategic Director of Resources and this has been updated throughout.
- 2.7 The Accountancy Manager serves as the Deputy Section 151 Officer. The update to the financial regulations clarifies that they fulfil all the functions of the Section 151 Officer in the absence of the Strategic Director of Resources.
- 2.8 The financial regulations are a vital part of the good financial governance of the authority. The regulations now confirm that non-compliance with the rules can potentially lead to disciplinary action.
- 2.9 One of the key roles performed by the Section 151 Officer is to ensure effective management of Council funds at financial year-end. The regulations now confirm that the Section 151 Officer may move funds between financial years as long as it is for the purpose originally allocated by Council. This is always reported back to Strategy and Resources Committee and is a key part of managing year end effectively,
- 2.10 The scheme of delegations approved by Council gives delegations to the Section 151 Officers around reserves. The financial regulations are updated to reflect those delegations. Principally this relates to the establishment of reserves and the authorisation of expenditure from them. Consultation with Committee Chairs is included as part of the process.
- 2.11 The levels for write off of debt authorisations have not changed in many years. They are now updated to more appropriate levels.
- 2.12 In practice the Section 151 Officer exercises discretion around member expense claims, for example where a member has legitimate reason for making a claim outside of the usual time periods. The regulations are updated to formally reflect that discretion.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 These changes reflect manageable and practicable updates to the Council's financial regulations. They have been reviewed by both the Section 151 Officer and the Constitution Working Group and the Council is recommended to accept them.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications of the decision. The regulations reflect good practice in managing the overall financial affairs of the Council.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources

Tel: 01453 754115 Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk

4.2 Legal Implications

Changes to the Constitution must be reviewed by Council.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources

Tel: 01453 754115 Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk

(Report reviewed by Claire Hughes, Monitoring Officer)

4.3 Equality Implications

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

4.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

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Financial Regulations

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A FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A1 Financial Management Standards

Why is this important?

All staff (including temporary and contract staff and consultants) and members have a duty to abide by the highest standards of probity in dealing with financial issues. This is facilitated by ensuring everyone is clear about the standards to which they are working and the controls that are in place to ensure that these standards are met.

Financial Regulations do not cover every eventuality or circumstance but the principles outlined should always be applied.

- A1.1 The Strategic Director of Resources has overall responsibility for ensuring the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council, as required by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, and by Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Their nominated deputy is the Accountancy Manager who fulfills all the functions of the Section 151 Officer in the event of their absence.
- A1.2 The Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of Financial Regulations which shall provide for the supervision and control of finances, accounts, expenditure, income and assets.
- A1.3 Any changes to Financial Regulations will be subject to the approval of the full Council.
- A1.4 The Financial Regulations provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs. They apply to every elected member and all staff of the Council.
- A1.5 All elected members and staff have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security of assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of assets and resources is legal, properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.
- A1.6 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, and the Leadership and Management Team are responsible for ensuring that all staff in their service areas are aware of the existence and content of Financial Regulations and other internal regulatory and procedure documents, and that they comply with them.
- A1.7 Should an instance of non-compliance with these rules be discovered the Strategic Director of Resources may, after consultation with the Chief Executive, make a report to the Leader, Full Council and/or Audit & Standards Committee, as appropriate. Non-compliance with financial rules may also lead to disciplinary action being taken.

A2 Scheme of Virement

Why is this important?

The scheme of virement is intended to enable the Policy Committees, Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and their staff to manage budgets with a degree of flexibility within the overall policy framework determined by the full Council, and therefore to optimise the use of resources.

- A2.1 A Strategic Leadership Team Member, Strategic Director or Head of Service may exercise virement on budgets under their control for amounts up to £25,000 on any one

budget head during the current financial year only, following agreement with the Strategic Director of Resources and subject to the conditions in paragraph A2.4 below.

- A2.2 Virements of amounts greater than £25,000 but less than £75,000 require the approval of the appropriate committee, following a joint report by the Strategic Director of Resources and the Strategic Leadership Team Member, which must specify the proposed expenditure and the source of funding, and must explain the implications in the current and future financial year.
- A2.3 Virement of amounts greater than £75,000 requires the approval of Strategy and Resources committee, following a joint report by the Strategic Director of Resources and the Strategic Leadership Team Member, which must specify the proposed expenditure and the source of funding, and must explain the implications in the current and future financial year.
- A2.4 Virement between pay and non-pay must be approved by the Strategic Director of Resources.
- A2.5 The Strategic Director of Resources may authorise additional expenditure funded from additional income arising up to a level of £100,000. Any such authorisation must be reported in the next budget report to Strategy and Resources Committee.
- A2.6 Virement that is likely to impact on the level of service activity of another Strategic Leadership Team Member or Head of Service should be implemented only after agreement with that officer.
- A2.7 Where an approved budget is a lump-sum budget, reserve contingency intended for allocation during the year, its allocation will not be treated as a virement, provided that:
- (i) The amount is used in accordance with the purposes for which it has been established;
 - (ii) Strategy and Resources has approved the basis and the terms, including financial limits, on which it will be allocated. Individual allocations in excess of the financial limits should be reported to the Committee.
 - (iii) The Strategic Director of Resources has approved the usage.
- A2.8 Budget adjustments within the Housing Repairs and Improvements Programme will be subject to separate arrangements in agreement with the relevant budget holder and the Strategic Director of Resources or Accountancy Manager, as set out below:
- (i) Virement on budgets within the Housing Repairs and Improvements Programme for amounts up to £50,000 are subject to agreement with the relevant budget holder and the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services);
 - (ii) Virement of amounts greater than £50,000 but less than £250,000 require the approval of the Housing Committee;
 - (iii) Virement of amounts greater than £250,000 requires the approval of the appropriate Strategy and Resources committee.

A3 Treatment of Year-End Balances

Why is this important?

The rules below cover arrangements for the transfer of resources between accounting years, i.e. a carry forward.

- A3.1 Normally, only specifically designated accounting reserves and provisions may be carried forward from one accounting year to the next.
- A3.2 The Section 151 Officer may agree carry forward of resources from one financial year to the next, if they are satisfied that the expenditure will be incurred in the new financial year on the same purpose as originally intended.
- A3.3 The level of approved carry forwards will be reported to Strategy and Resources Committee as part of the annual Outturn Report.

A4 Accounting Policies

Why is this important?

The Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for the preparation of the Council's statement of accounts, in accordance with proper accounting practices as currently in force, for each financial year ending 31 March.

- A4.1 The Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for selecting suitable accounting policies and for ensuring that they are applied consistently. The accounting policies are set out in the statement of accounts, which is prepared at 31 March each year. Such policies should comply with the proper accounting practices currently in force.

A5 Accounting Records and Returns

Why is this important?

Maintaining proper accounting records is one of the ways in which the Council discharges its responsibility for stewardship of public resources. The Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare its annual accounts to present fairly its operations during the year. These are subject to external audit. This audit provides assurance that the accounts are prepared properly, that proper accounting practices have been followed and that quality arrangements have been made for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the Council's resources.

- A5.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall determine the accounting procedures and records of the Council.
- A5.2 The Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange for the proper administration of all accounts and accounting records.
- A5.3 Wherever possible, the following principles shall be complied with when allocating financial duties:
 - (i) separating the duties of providing information about sums due to or from the authority and calculating, checking and recording these sums from the duty of collecting or disbursing them.

- (ii) employees with the duty of examining or checking the accounts of cash transactions must not themselves be engaged in these transactions.

A5.4 The Strategic Director of Resources must be consulted on and approve any changes to accounting records and procedures.

A5.5 All staff and members must maintain adequate records to provide an audit trail leading from the source of income/expenditure through to the accounting statements.

A6 The Annual Statement of Accounts

Why is this important?

The Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare its own accounts to present a true and fair view of its operations during the year. The Audit and Standards Committee full Council is responsible for approving the statutory annual statement of accounts.

Relevant legislation determines the format and deadlines.

A6.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall sign and date the statement of accounts, stating that it presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March each year.

A6.2 The Strategic Director of Resources shall draw up a timetable for final accounts preparation and advise staff and external auditors accordingly.

A6.3 Staff and members shall comply with accounting guidance provided by the Strategic Director of Resources and supply the Strategic Director of Resources promptly with any information required for the preparation of the statement of accounts.

A6.4 The Strategic Director of Resources shall ensure that the Statement of Accounts is audited in line with government requirements and the results of the audit are reported back to the Audit and Standards Committee.

B FINANCIAL PLANNING

B1 Revenue Budget Preparation, Monitoring and Control

Why is this important?

Budget management ensures that once the budget has been approved by the full Council, resources allocated are used for their intended purposes and are properly accounted for. Budgetary control is a continuous process, enabling the Council to review and adjust its budget targets during the financial year. It also provides the mechanism that calls to account managers responsible for defined elements of the budget. By continuously identifying and explaining variances against budgetary targets, the Council can identify changes in trends and resource requirements at the earliest opportunity. The Council itself operates within an annual budget limit, approved when setting the overall budget. To ensure that the Council in total does not overspend, each service is required to manage its own expenditure within the budget allocated to it.

B1.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall, in consultation with Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service, prepare and submit annually to the appropriate committee budget estimates of income and expenditure.

- B1.2 The estimates presented to committees shall be accompanied by a report from the Strategic Director of Resources drawing attention to any provision made for a new service or the material alteration or extension of an existing service.
- B1.3 After consideration by the committees, the Budget shall be presented to Strategy and Resources Committee and then full Council, together with a report by the Strategic Director of Resources with a recommendation relating to setting the rate of Council Tax.
- B1.4 The Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for determining the format and timetable of the budget setting process, and for providing guidance to Officers on the process of preparing estimates.
- B1.5 Heads of Service are ultimately responsible for the preparation of a budget for their own service area.
- B1.6 The full Council's approval of the Budget shall authorise the incurring of expenditure and the collection of income within the approved budget estimates. The decisions to be made each February will include;
- The allocation of resources and approval of income targets for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account
 - The Capital Programme
 - The Medium-Term Financial Plan
 - Any indicators as required by "The Prudential Code", including the borrowing limit
 - The Capital Strategy
 - A list of fees and charges as agreed by Policy Committees
 - The Council Tax Base
 - The rate of B and D Council Tax
- B1.7 The Strategic Director of Resources shall establish and maintain an appropriate framework of budgetary management and control which ensures that:
- (i) budgets remain within the approved estimates unless the full Council agrees otherwise.
 - (ii) each budget holder has available timely and accurate information on income and expenditure on each budget which is sufficiently detailed to enable them to fulfil their budgetary management responsibilities.
 - (iii) expenditure is only committed against an approved budget head.
 - (iv) all officers responsible for committing expenditure comply with relevant guidance, Contract and Procurement & Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations.
 - (v) budget responsibility is aligned as closely as possible to the decision making process that commits expenditure.
 - (vi) significant variances from approved budget estimates are investigated promptly and explained by budget holders.
- B1.8 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and nominated budget holders are responsible for maintaining budgetary control within their service areas in adherence to the principles in B1.6 and for ensuring that all income and expenditure is properly recorded and accounted for.

- B1.9 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and nominated budget holders should ensure that spending remains within each of their service areas overall budget limits, and that individual budget heads are not overspent, by monitoring budgets and taking appropriate corrective action where significant variations from the approved budget estimates are forecast. The Strategic Director of Resources must be informed of all estimated variances over £20,000 as soon as is practicable after they are identified.
- B1.10 Budget monitoring reports will be presented to Policy Committees at least three times in each financial year and include analysis of variances above £20,000.
- B1.11 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and nominated budget holders should ensure that a monitoring process is in place to review performance levels/levels of service in conjunction with the budget and that this is operating effectively.

B2 Budgets and Medium-Term Planning

Why is this important?

The Council is a complex organisation responsible for delivering a wide variety of services. It needs to plan effectively and to develop systems to enable scarce resources to be allocated in accordance with carefully weighed priorities. Medium-term planning (or a three to five year planning system) involves a planning cycle in which managers develop their own plans and these are consolidated into an overall strategic plan for the Council. The Medium-Term Plan is the financial representation of the strategic objectives as set out in the overarching Council Plan. As each year passes, another future year will be added to the medium-term plan. This ensures that the Council is always preparing for events in advance.

- B2.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange for the preparation of a Medium Term Financial Plan, covering a four year period, which shall be updated at least annually to reflect changes in anticipated budget outturns, levels of funding and expenditure, and other prudent financial projections.
- B2.2 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Managers should inform the Strategic Director of Resources promptly of any known or anticipated service, legislative or other changes which may have significant financial impacts within the next four years.

B3 Resource Allocation

Why is this important?

A mismatch often exists between available resources and required resources. A common scenario is that available resources are not adequate to fulfil need/desire. It is therefore imperative that needs/desires are carefully prioritised and that resources are fairly allocated, in order to fulfil all legal responsibilities. Resources may include staff, money, equipment, goods and materials.

- B3.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall advise on methods available for the funding of resources, such as grants from central government and borrowing requirements.

- B3.2 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Managers shall work within budget limits and shall utilise resources in the most efficient, effective and economic way.
- B3.3 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and managers shall seek to identify opportunities for efficiency savings where it is possible to minimise or eliminate resource requirements or consumption without having a detrimental effect on service delivery.
- B3.4 If required by the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Managers, shall present options to meet any saving targets required by the Medium Term Financial Plan.

B4 Capital Programme

Why is this important?

Capital expenditure involves acquiring or enhancing fixed assets with a long-term value to the Council, such as land, buildings, and major items of plant, equipment or vehicles. Capital assets shape the way services are delivered in the long term and create financial commitments for the future in the form of financing costs and revenue running costs. The Council must operate within the prudential framework as set out by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. This means that capital expenditure should form part of an investment strategy and should be carefully prioritised in order to maximise the benefit of scarce resources.

- B4.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall present an annual four year capital plan, together with details of the funding estimated to be available, to Strategy and Resources committee. The Strategy and Resources committee will make recommendations on the capital plan and on any associated financing requirements to the full Council.
- B4.2 The Strategic Director of Resources shall issue guidance concerning capital schemes and controls, for example, on project management techniques. The Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for determining whether expenditure is classed as capital or revenue, having regard to government regulations and accounting requirements.
- B4.3 The procedures for establishing and monitoring the Capital Programme are set out in the "Capital Strategy" to be approved annually by Full Council and include such guidance as required by B4.2.
- B4.4 The inclusion of any capital proposal in the programme does not commit the Council to such expenditure.
- B4.5 No action shall be taken to commit the Council to capital expenditure until the relevant Strategic Leadership Team Member has determined whether it is necessary to undertake a feasibility study.
- B4.6 Any procurement of goods, services and works relating to the Capital Programme must be carried out in accordance with the Council's Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules.

B5 Maintenance of Reserves

Why is this important?

The Council must decide the level of general reserves it wishes to maintain before it can decide the level of council tax. Reserves are maintained as a matter of prudence. They enable the Council to provide for unexpected events and thereby protect it from overspending, should such events occur. Reserves for specific purposes may also be maintained, such as the purchase or renewal of capital items.

- B5.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall advise the Strategy and Resources committee and/or the full Council on prudent levels of reserves for the Council and shall take account of the advice of the external auditors in this matter.
- B5.2 The Strategic Director of Resources will allocate funds to reserves as part of the year-end financial closedown process and report their decisions to the Strategy and Resources Committee.
- B5.3 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and nominated budget holders should ensure that reserves are used only for the purposes for which they were intended.
- B5.4 The Strategic Director of Resources can approve allocations from reserves on the purposes for which they were established, in consultation with the Chief Executive and relevant Committee Chair.
- B5.5 Strategy and Resources Committee can approve the use of the capital reserve, and the Major Repairs Reserve for the HRA, for variation on capital schemes subject to there being sufficient funds available in the reserve and a limit per scheme of £250,000 and is no more than 50% of the original capital scheme budget. A joint report by the Strategic Director of Resources and the Strategic Leadership Team Member must specify the proposed additional expenditure and must explain the implications in the current and future financial year.

C RISK MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF RESOURCES

C1 Risk Management and Insurance

Why is this important?

All organisations, whether private or public sector, face risks to people, property and continued operations. Risk is the chance or possibility of loss, damage, injury or failure to achieve objectives caused by an unwanted or uncertain action or event. Risk management is the planned and systematic approach to the identification, evaluation and control of risk. Its objectives are to secure the assets of the Council and to ensure its continued financial stability and good reputation. In essence it is, therefore, an integral part of good business practice.

- C1.1 The Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services), in consultation with the other Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, shall prepare and promote the Council's risk management policy statement, and develop risk management controls.

- C1.2 The Strategic Leadership Team is responsible for maintaining a Strategic Risk Register with each Head of Service, or Service Manager being responsible for maintaining their own service based risk register.
- C1.3 The Audit and Standards Committee is responsible for oversight of risk management arrangements, including approval of the Risk Management Framework.
- C1.4 The Strategic Director of Resources shall include all appropriate employees of the Council in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.
- C1.5 The Strategic Director of Resources shall effect corporate insurance cover, through external insurance and internal funding, and negotiate all claims, in consultation with other officers where necessary.
- C1.6 Staff and elected members shall notify the Strategic Director of Resources immediately of any loss, liability or damage that may lead to a claim against the Council, together with any information or explanation required by the Strategic Director of Resources or the Council's insurers.
- C1.7 Staff and elected members shall take responsibility for risk management where appropriate, having regard to advice from the Strategic Director of Resources and other specialists (e.g. crime prevention, fire safety and prevention, and health and safety).
- C1.8 The Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that there are regular reviews of risk within their service areas. This should include any risks associated with the operation and expiry of contracts within their service areas to ensure continued or appropriate service delivery without interruptions or additional costs. They must also ensure that all employees;
- are aware of their responsibilities for risk management and insurance
 - receive adequate support and training to carry out their responsibilities
 - comply with the council's standards of financial management
 - are personally protected from risk
- C1.9 The Strategic Director of Resources must be notified promptly of all new risks requiring insurance, new properties and vehicles, and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- C1.10 Staff and elected members should not admit liability or make any offer to pay compensation that may prejudice the assessment of liability in respect of any insurance claim.

C2 Internal Controls

Why is this important?

The Council requires internal controls to manage and monitor progress towards its strategic objectives. The Council also has statutory obligations, and, therefore, requires internal controls to identify, meet and monitor compliance with these obligations. Additionally, the Council faces a wide range of financial, administrative and commercial risks, both from internal and external factors, which threaten the achievement of its objectives. Internal controls are necessary to manage these risks.

- C2.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall advise on the establishment of an appropriate control environment and effective internal controls which provide reasonable assurance of effective and efficient operations, financial stewardship, probity and compliance with laws and regulations.
- C2.2 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall establish formal processes to check at least annually that established controls in their service areas are being adhered to and to evaluate their effectiveness, in order to be confident of the proper use of resources, achievement of objectives and management of risks.
- C2.3 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall review existing controls in the light of changes affecting the Council and establish and implement new ones in line with guidance from the Strategic Director of Resources. They are also responsible for removing controls that are unnecessary or not cost or risk effective – for example, because of duplication. In such cases the Strategic Director of Resources must be consulted before removing any controls.
- C2.4 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that staff have a clear understanding of the internal controls which they are required to operate and comply with, and appreciate the consequences of a lack of control.
- C2.5 Internal Audit shall be informed immediately if any officer or elected member believes that there has been or may be a breach of internal controls.

C3 Internal Audit

Why is this important?

The requirement for an internal audit function for local authorities is implied by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which requires that authorities “make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs”. The Accounts and Audit Regulations more specifically require that a “relevant authority must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance”.

- C3.1 Internal Audit shall have the authority to:
- (i) access all Council premises at reasonable times
 - (ii) access all assets, records, documents, correspondence and control systems
 - (iii) receive any information and explanation from any officer or elected member of the Council considered necessary concerning any matter under consideration
 - (iv) require any employee or elected member of the Council to account for cash, stores or any other Council asset under his or her control
 - (v) access records belonging to third parties, such as contractors, when required
 - (vi) directly access the Chief Executive, and any Committee of the Council.
- C3.2 The internal audit function should operate in accordance with the CIPFA’s Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom, the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (UK and Ireland) Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, and with any other statutory obligations and regulations

- C3.3 Internal Audit shall provide an independent, objective, assurance and consulting activity for the review of the council's system of internal control.
- C3.4 The Head of Internal Audit is responsible for providing a written report to those charged with governance, which includes an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's control environment
- C3.5 The Strategic Director of Resources, in consultation with Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and the Audit and Standards Committee, shall approve the risk based Internal Audit Annual Plan prepared by the Internal Audit Manager..
- C3.6 The Head of Internal Audit shall ensure that effective procedures are in place to investigate promptly any alleged fraud or irregularity.
- C3.7 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall:
- (i) consider and respond promptly to recommendations in Internal Audit reports
 - (ii) ensure that any agreed actions arising from Internal Audit recommendations are carried out in a timely and efficient fashion
 - (iii) notify Internal Audit immediately of any suspected fraud, theft, irregularity, improper use or misappropriation of the Council's property or resources
 - (iv) ensure that new systems for maintaining financial records or records of assets, or changes to such systems, are discussed with and agreed by the Internal Audit Manager prior to implementation.

C4 External Audit

Why is this important?

The external auditor has a statutory responsibility for providing an opinion on the Statement of Accounts and the Value for Money opinion of the Council.

- C4.1 External auditors shall be given access at all reasonable times to premises, personnel, documents and assets that they consider necessary for the purposes of their work.
- C4.2 Staff should ensure that all records and systems are up to date and available for inspection by external audit if required.

C5 Preventing Fraud and Corruption

Why is it this important?

The Council will not tolerate fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether internal or external. The Council's expectation of propriety and accountability is that elected members and staff at all levels will lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices. The Council also expects that individuals and organisations (eg. suppliers, contractors, service providers) with whom it comes into contact will act towards the Council with integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud and corruption.

- C5.1 The Internal Audit Manager shall maintain and keep up to date the Council's anti-fraud and corruption policy.

- C5.2 The Monitoring Officer shall maintain and keep up to date the Council's whistle-blowing policy.
- C5.3 Staff and elected members shall report any suspected irregularities immediately to Internal Audit.
- C5.4 Should any irregularity reported to Internal Audit be thought to warrant police involvement, the police shall be contacted by the Head of Internal Audit after consulting with the Chief Executive and/or the Strategic Director of Resources.
- C5.5 Staff and elected members shall comply with the requirements of the relevant Codes of Conduct relating to making declarations of gifts and hospitality, and private interests.

C6 Security

Why is this important?

The Council holds assets in the form of land, property, vehicles, equipment, furniture and other items worth many millions of pounds. It is important that assets are safeguarded and used efficiently in service delivery, and that there are arrangements for the security of both assets and information required for service operations. An up-to-date asset register is a prerequisite for proper fixed asset accounting and sound asset management.

- C6.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall ensure that an asset register is maintained in accordance with good practice for all fixed assets with a value in excess of £20,000. The function of the asset register is to provide the authority with information about fixed assets so that they are:
- (i) safeguarded
 - (ii) used efficiently and effectively
 - (iii) adequately maintained.
- C6.2 Any use of Council property or equipment other than for direct service delivery should be supported by documentation identifying terms, responsibilities and duration of use.
- C6.3 One Legal shall hold and provide for the safe custody of all deeds, leases and similar documents relating to the ownership of land and buildings.
- C6.4 Staff and elected members shall not use any Council asset or item of equipment for personal use without proper authority.
- C6.5 Staff and elected members shall ensure the safe custody of monies, vehicles, equipment, furniture, inventories and other property belonging to the Council.
- C6.6 The Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that their service areas maintain a register of moveable assets and equipment in accordance with arrangements defined by the Strategic Director of Resources.
- C6.7 The Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that assets and equipment are identified, their location recorded and that they are appropriately marked as Council property and insured.
- C6.8 The Strategic Director of Resources shall be consulted in any case where security is thought to be defective or where it is considered that special security arrangements may be needed.

- C6.9 Cash holdings on premises shall be kept to a minimum.
- C6.10 Keys to safes and similar receptacles shall be carried on the person of those responsible at all times; loss of any such keys must be reported to the Strategic Director of Resources as soon as possible.
- C6.11 The disposal or part exchange of assets over £20,000 in value should normally be by public auction or open market sale.
- C6.12 Staff and elected members have a personal responsibility with regard to the protection and confidentiality of information, whether held in manual or computerised records. Information may be sensitive or privileged, or may possess some intrinsic value, and its disclosure or loss could result in a cost to the Council in some way, or may be in breach of Data Protection legislation.
- C6.13 Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Managers shall ensure that inventories are maintained at reasonable levels, are adequately recorded and safeguarded, and are subject to a regular independent physical check. All discrepancies should be investigated and pursued to a satisfactory conclusion.
- C6.14 If required for the production of the annual statement of accounts, Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall arrange for independent stock takes at the 31st March each year, and shall provided a certified stock valuation certificate to the Strategic Director of Resources in accordance with the timetable specified.
- C6.15 Heads of Service may authorise for write off or disposal redundant stocks and equipment up to a total value of £5,000 after consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources. Where any items disposed of have a financial value, appropriate measures must be taken to achieve value for money. Where the value of items to be written off or disposed of exceeds £5,000, authorisation of the appropriate Strategic Leadership Team member must be obtained, and disposal should be by competitive quotations or auction, unless, following consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources, the relevant Strategic Leadership Team member decides otherwise in a particular case.

C7 Treasury Management

Why is this important?

Many millions of pounds pass through the Council's hands each year. Treasury Management procedures aim to provide assurance that the Council's money is properly managed in a way that balances risk with return, but with overriding consideration being given to security.

- C7.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange the borrowing and investments of the authority in such a manner as to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Council's treasury management policy statement and strategy.
- C7.2 The Strategic Director of Resources shall report at least twice yearly on treasury management activities to Audit and Standards Committee, as well as setting an annual Treasury Management Strategy.
- C7.3 The Strategic Director of Resources shall operate such bank accounts as are considered necessary. Opening or closing any bank account shall require the approval of the Strategic Director of Resources. All bank accounts shall be in the name of the Council.

- C7.4 The Strategic Director of Resources shall be responsible for ordering all cheques and any other instruments of payment, and shall make adequate arrangements for their safe custody.
- C7.5 All investments of money shall be made in the name of the Council or in the name of nominees approved by the full Council.
- C7.6 The Strategic Director of Resources shall effect any borrowings that may be required, which shall be in the name of the Council.
- C7.7 No loans shall be made to third parties nor any interests acquired in companies, joint ventures or other enterprises without the approval of the Strategy and Resources Committee, following consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources.
- C7.8 The Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange for all trust funds to be held, wherever possible, in the name of the Council. All officers acting as trustees by virtue of their official position shall deposit securities, etc relating to the trust with the Strategic Director of Resources, unless the deed provides otherwise.
- C7.9 Where an officer of the Council becomes responsible for the safe-keeping or administration of any monies, funds or valuables which are not the property of the Council, but which, save for their employment by the Council the officer would not otherwise have responsibility for, that officer must take all reasonable steps to ensure the monies, funds or valuables involved are properly safe-guarded and accounted for. The officer should inform their line manager of the circumstances relating to any such instances.

C8 Imprest Accounts (Petty Cash)

- C8.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall approve the provision of any petty cash imprest accounts to meet minor expenditure on behalf of the Council and shall prescribe rules for operating these accounts.
- C8.2 Officers operating a petty cash imprest account shall:
- (i) obtain and retain vouchers to support each payment from the imprest account. Where appropriate, an official receipted VAT invoice must be obtained
 - (ii) make adequate arrangements for the safe custody of the account
 - (iii) produce upon demand by the Strategic Director of Resources or Internal Audit cash and all vouchers to the total value of the imprest amount
 - (iv) record transactions promptly
 - (v) reconcile and balance the account at least monthly; reconciliation sheets to be signed and retained by the imprest holder
 - (vi) provide the Strategic Director of Resources with a certificate of the value of the account held at 31 March each year
 - (vii) ensure that the float is never used to cash personal cheques or to make personal loans and that the only payments into the account are the reimbursement of the float and change relating to purchases where an advance has been made

- (viii) on leaving the authority's employment or otherwise ceasing to be entitled to hold an imprest advance, an employee shall account to the Strategic Director of Resources for the amount advanced to him or her.

D SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES

D1 General

Why is this important?

Service areas have many systems and procedures relating to the control of the Council's assets, including purchasing, costing and management systems. They are increasingly reliant on computers for their financial management information. The information must therefore be accurate and the systems and procedures sound and well administered. They should contain controls to ensure that transactions are properly processed and errors detected promptly. The Strategic Director of Resources has a professional responsibility to ensure that the Council's financial systems are sound and should therefore be notified of any new developments or changes.

- D1.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall make arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, including:
 - (i) issuing advice, guidance and procedures for officers and others acting on the Council's behalf
 - (ii) determining the accounting systems, form of accounts and supporting financial records
 - (iii) establishing arrangements for audit of the Council's financial affairs
 - (iv) approving any new financial systems to be introduced
 - (v) approving any changes to be made to existing financial systems.
- D1.2 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Service Manager shall establish appropriate controls to ensure that, where relevant:
 - (i) all input is genuine, complete, accurate, timely and not previously processed
 - (ii) all processing is carried out in an accurate, complete and timely manner
 - (iii) output from systems is complete, accurate and timely.
- D1.3 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that the organisational structure provides an appropriate segregation of duties to provide adequate internal controls and to minimise the risk of fraud or other malpractice.
- D1.4 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that systems are documented and staff trained in operations.
- D1.5 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team shall, subject to approval from the Strategic Director of Resources, establish a scheme of delegation identifying officers authorised to act upon their behalf in respect of payments, income collection and placing orders, including variations, and showing the limits of their authority, and shall supply lists of authorised officers, delegated limits, to the Strategic Director of Resources together with any subsequent variations.

- D1.6 The Head of Technology shall ensure that effective contingency arrangements, including back-up procedures and disaster recovery, exist for computer systems.
- D1.7 All staff shall comply with Data Protection, computer misuse and copyright legislation and, in particular, shall ensure that only software legally acquired and installed by the Council is used on its computers.

D2 Income

Why is this important?

Income can be a vulnerable asset and effective income collection systems are necessary to ensure that all income due is identified, collected, receipted and banked properly. It is preferable to obtain income in advance of supplying goods or services as this improves the Council's cashflow and also avoids the time and cost of administering debts.

- D2.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall agree arrangements for the collection of all income due to the Council and to approve the procedures, systems and documentation for its collection.
- D2.2 The Strategic Director of Resources shall order and supply all receipt forms, books or tickets and similar items and establish the arrangements for their control.
- D2.3 The Strategic Director of Resources shall approve all debts to be written off in accordance with the authorisation limits as set out in the table below, and shall keep a record of all sums written off and will adhere to the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations currently in force.

Amount/Limit	Authorisation process
Amounts not exceeding £250	Senior Accounting Technician in consultation with the Accountancy Manager.
Amounts greater than £250 but not exceeding £10,000	Strategic Director of Resources/Accountancy Manager in consultation with the relevant Strategic Leadership Team Member or Head of Service.
Amounts greater than £10,000 but not exceeding £50,000	Strategic Director of Resources in consultation with the relevant Strategic Leadership Team Member or Head of Service. Write-offs must be reported retrospectively to the relevant delegated Committee.
Amounts greater than £50,000	These should only be written-off with the approval of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

- D2.4 Where small debt or credit balances for Council Tax and Business Rates are lower than the cost of court fees to make a claim, these can be written off by a senior revenues officer and reported within an annual report summarising write-offs on the Collection Fund.
- D2.5 The Strategic Director of Resources or Accountancy Manager shall approve credit balances on closed accounts to be written off after a reasonable effort to return the credit balance.
- D2.6 The Strategic Director of Resources shall establish a fees and charges policy for the supply of goods or services, including the appropriate charging of VAT, and to review it

annually, in line with corporate policies. This shall be approved by full Council annually each February.

- D2.7 Strategic Leadership Team members and Heads of Service are responsible for recommending to the Strategic Director of Resources the fees and charges to be set for goods or services falling within their control, apart from those charges fixed on a statutory basis.
- D2.8 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service must seek to recover sundry debt outstanding in accordance with Debt Recovery Policy as approved by the Strategic Director of Resources.
- D2.9 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service are responsible for the collection of income within their area of responsibility shall establish and initiate appropriate recovery procedures, including legal action where necessary, for debts that are not paid promptly.
- D2.10 Staff shall issue official receipts or maintain other documentation as approved by the Strategic Director of Resources for all income collected.
- D2.11 At least two employees shall be present when post is opened, and money received by post shall be properly identified and recorded.
- D2.12 All income shall be paid fully and promptly into Cashiers or to the Council's designated security collection agency. Appropriate details should be recorded on paying-in slips to provide an audit trail.
- D2.13 Income collected shall be paid in intact, and shall not be used to cash personal cheques or make payments, except where specifically permitted by the Strategic Director of Resources.
- D2.14 A record shall be kept of every transfer of money between employees of the Council. The receiving officer must sign for the transfer and the transferor must retain a copy.
- D2.15 Once raised, no bona fide debt may be cancelled, except by full payment or by its formal writing off. A credit note to replace a debt can only be issued to correct a factual inaccuracy or administrative error in the calculation and/or billing of the original debt.
- D2.16 The Strategic Director of Resources shall be notified of outstanding income relating to the previous financial year as soon as possible after 31 March in line with the timetable determined by the Strategic Director of Resources and not later than 30 April.

D3 Ordering and Paying for Work, Goods and Services

Why is this important?

Public money should be spent with demonstrable probity and in accordance with the Council's policies. The Council has a statutory duty to achieve best value, in part through economy and efficiency. The Council's procedures should help to ensure that services obtain value for money from their purchasing arrangements.

These procedures must be read in conjunction with the Council's Procurement and Procedure Rules relating to contracts.

- D3.1 Every officer and member of the Council has a responsibility to declare any links or personal interests that they may have with suppliers and/or contractors if they are

engaged in contractual or purchasing decisions on behalf of the Council, in accordance with the relevant Codes of Conduct.

- D3.2 Official orders must be in a form approved by the Strategic Director of Resources. Official orders must be issued for all work, goods or services to be supplied to the Council, except for supplies of utilities, periodic payments such as rent or rates, petty cash purchases or other exceptions specified by the Strategic Director of Resources.
- D3.3 Each order must conform to the guidelines approved by the Council and the Procurement and Procedure rules.
- D3.4 Payments will be made by the Council within 30 days of the receipt, or other mutually agreed terms, of goods or services. Heads of Service must consult with the Strategic Director of Resources before agreeing any non-standard terms.
- D3.5 Apart from petty cash, Government Procurement Card, and payments made from cash advances, the normal method of payment shall be by BACS, drawn on the Council's bank account by the Strategic Director of Resources. Cheque payments will only be made in exceptional circumstances. The use of direct debit for any payment shall require the prior agreement of the Strategic Director of Resources.
- D3.6 The Strategic Director of Resources will give authorisation for an Officer to use a Government Procurement Card. When the card has been issued the Officer must follow the regulations set out in the Conditions of Use and procedures Manual. In particular a VAT invoice should be obtained for each transaction.
- D3.7 Official orders must not be raised for any personal or private purchases, nor must personal or private use be made of Council contracts or purchasing arrangements.
- D3.8 The authoriser of a purchase order should be satisfied that the goods and services ordered are appropriate and needed, that there is adequate budgetary provision and that quotations or tenders have been obtained if necessary. Best value principles should underpin the Councils approach to procurement. Value for money should always be achieved.
- D3.9 Goods and services shall be checked on receipt to verify that they are in accordance with the order. This check should, where possible, be carried out by a different officer from the person who authorised the order.
- D3.10 Payment shall not made unless a proper VAT invoice has been received, checked, coded and certified for payment, in accordance with the procedures specified by the Strategic Director of Resources Invoices shall not be amended; if any invoice is found to be incorrect, a replacement shall be requested from the originator.
- D3.11 Payments shall not be made on photocopied or faxed invoices, statements or any documents other than the formal invoice which may be received via email.
- D3.12 The Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange for such checks and requests for explanation as are considered necessary before any payment is made. Payment may be withheld if the Strategic Director of Resources considers that to make such payment may be illegal or improper.
- D3.13 The Strategic Director of Resources shall be notified of outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year as soon as possible after 31 March in line with the

timetable determined by the Strategic Director of Resources and, in any case, not later than 7 April or the date specified in the Closure of Accounts Guidance.

D3.14 Where any contract exceeds £200,000 in value, details of the proposed list of contractors to be invited to tender shall be provided to Financial Services for vetting of their financial status.

D3.15 With regard to contract management and monitoring, the following requirements must be complied with:

- (i) payment to contractors shall only be made on a certificate issued by the responsible officer in accordance with the contract, which shall show the estimated value of work to date, the balance remaining, and the percentage of retention money if any,
- (ii) any variation to a contract shall be authorised by the supervising or responsible officer who shall, where possible notify the contractor in writing prior to the work being done. All verbal variations to a contract must be confirmed by a written variation order in accordance with the requirements of the contract,
- (iii) any variation shall be reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee where a substantial change in the specification of any works or additional expenditure is involved which is likely to result in exceeding the original project budget by 5% or by £50,000 (whichever is the greater),

D3.16 Nothing in these Financial Regulations shall prevent the Authority from incurring expenditure which is essential to meet any immediate needs created by a sudden emergency or which is referable to Section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972 Emergency Regulations.

D3.17 When an event is deemed to be an emergency by the County Emergency Planning Team any one of the following officers shall be permitted to authorise expenditure up to £100,000:

- Chief Executive
- Strategic Directors

In the unlikely event that none of these are available, the most senior officer present is expected to authorise such expenditure as is necessary to quickly and effectively respond to the emergency. Appropriate records and audit trails must be kept, and all expenditure must be made through the team leading the emergency response.

D4 Payments to Employees and Members

Why is this important?

Staff costs are the largest item of expenditure for most Council services. It is therefore important that payments are accurate, timely, made only where they are due for services to the Council and that payments accord with individuals' conditions of employment. It is also important that all payments are accurately and completely recorded and accounted for and that members' allowances are paid in accordance with the scheme adopted by the full Council.

- D4.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange and control secure and reliable payment of salaries, wages, compensation or other emoluments to employees, in accordance with prescribed procedures, on the due date.
- D4.2 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the maintenance of proper national insurance, income tax and other statutory pay records and for the accurate and timely payment of pension contributions and other deductions to third parties
- D4.3 No new appointments or changes to arrangements for existing employees are permitted without adequate budget provision or approval from the Strategic Director of Resources/Strategic Leadership Team. All appointments shall be made in accordance with the Council's rules and approved establishments, grades and scales of pay.
- D4.4 The Strategic Director of Resources shall make arrangements for paying members travel or other allowances upon receiving the prescribed form, duly completed and authorised within the required timescales. The Strategic Director of Resources has the discretion in making payments outside of those timescales.
- D4.5 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that appointments are made in accordance with the regulations and policies of the Council and the approved staffing establishment, grades and scale of pay and that adequate budget provision is available.
- D4.6 The Strategic Director of Resources and Human Resources shall be notified immediately of all appointments, terminations (including proposed redundancies and early retirements), or variations which may affect the pay or pension of an employee or former employee,
- D4.7 Officers authorising travel and subsistence claims and other allowances shall satisfy themselves that journeys were on Council business and expenses were properly and necessarily incurred, and that reimbursement is properly due from the Council, ensuring that cost-effective use of travel arrangements is achieved.
- D4.8 Officers authorising travel claims must satisfy themselves that the vehicles used for council business are properly insured, taxed and roadworthy.
- D4.9 Officers authorising payments shall satisfy themselves that work claimed for has actually been undertaken and/or in the case of goods that they have actually been received.
- D4.10 The Strategic Director of Resources shall be notified of the details of any benefits in kind received by employees, to enable full and complete reporting in accordance with Inland Revenue requirements.

D5 Taxation

Why is this important?

Like all organisations, the Council is responsible for ensuring its tax affairs are in order. Tax issues are often very complex and the penalties for incorrectly accounting for tax are severe. It is therefore very important for all officers to be aware of their role.

- D5.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange for the correct completion and submission of all HM Revenue and Customs returns regarding PAYE.

- D5.2 The Strategic Director of resources shall arrange for the completion an accurate monthly return of VAT inputs and outputs to HM Revenue and Customs.
- D5.3 The Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange for the submission of all required details to the HM Revenue and Customs regarding the construction industry tax deduction scheme.
- D5.4 Staff shall ensure that the correct VAT liability is attached to all income due and that all VAT recoverable on purchases complies with HM Revenue and Customs regulations, in accordance with guidance and instructions issued by the Strategic Director of Resources.
- D5.5 Staff shall ensure that, where construction and maintenance works are undertaken, the contractor fulfils the necessary construction industry tax deduction requirements.
- D5.6 Capital Schemes – There are VAT implications for de minimus exempt income calculation. There is a need to consult with the Strategic Director of Resources on VAT implications of all new schemes.
- D5.7 Under no circumstances shall an Officer or Member use the auspices of the council to purchase goods or services for their own private purposes to avoid paying VAT. To do so may result in disciplinary action.

D6 Partnerships

Why is this important?

Partnerships play a key role in delivering community strategies and in helping to promote and improve the well-being of the area. The Council is continually working in partnership with others – public agencies, private companies, community groups and voluntary organisations, in order to mobilise investment, bid for funds, champion the needs of the area and harness the energies of local people and community organisations.

- D6.1 The main reasons for entering into a partnership are:
- (i) the desire to find new ways to share risk
 - (ii) the ability to access new resources
 - (iii) to provide new more efficient ways of delivering services
 - (iv) to forge new relationships.
- D6.2 A partner is defined as either:
- (i) an organisation (private or public) undertaking, part funding or participating as a beneficiary in a project or
 - (ii) a body whose nature or status give it a right or obligation to support the project.
- D6.3 Partners participate in projects by:
- (i) acting as a project deliverer or sponsor, solely or in concert with others.
 - (ii) acting as a project funder or part funder.
 - (iii) being the beneficiary group of the activity undertaken in a project.

- D6.4 Partners have common responsibilities:
- (i) to be willing to take on a role in the broader programme appropriate to the skills and resources of the partner organization.
 - (ii) to act in good faith at all times and in the best interests of the partnership's aims and objectives.
 - (iii) be open about any conflict of interests that might arise.
 - (iv) to encourage joint working and promote the sharing of information, resources and skills between public, private and community sectors.
 - (v) to hold confidentially any information received as a result of partnership activities or duties that is of a confidential or commercially sensitive nature.
 - (vi) to act wherever possible as ambassadors for the project.
- D6.5 Where the Council's total financial commitment to any partnership project in terms of funding in cash or in kind is anticipated to exceed £200,000, the following requirements must be agreed with the Strategic Director of Resources.
- (i) a scheme appraisal for financial viability in both the current and future years.
 - (ii) risk appraisal and management.
 - (iii) resourcing, including taxation issues.
 - (iv) audit, accounting, security and control requirements.
 - (v) carry-forward arrangements.
- D6.6 Partnership agreements and arrangements should not be entered into where they may impact adversely upon the services provided by the Council.
- D6.7 Partnership agreements and arrangements shall be properly documented, in a format agreed by the Strategic Director of Resources and the Monitoring Officer.
- D6.8 Where a partnership involves the procurement of goods or services, the requirements of the Council's Procurement and Procedure Rules relating to contracts and Financial Regulations must be followed in the selection of partner organisations and the workings of partnerships when Stroud District Council is the lead authority on procurement. Where the normal tendering arrangements are not appropriate the Strategic Director of Resources shall agree a Service Level Agreement between the organisations involved.
- D6.9 The Strategic Director of Resources shall be entitled to request sufficient information relating to any partnership agreement or arrangement to make entries in the Council's accounting records or any disclosure in the Council's statement of accounts which may be required.

D7 External Funding

Why is this important?

External funding is potentially a very important source of income, but funding conditions need to be carefully considered to ensure that they are compatible with the aims and objectives of the Council. Local authorities are increasingly encouraged to provide seamless service delivery through working closely with other agencies and private service providers. Funds from external agencies such as the National Lottery and the Home Office provide additional resources to enable the Council to deliver services to the local community. However, in some instances, although the scope for external funding has increased, such funding is linked to tight specifications and may not be flexible enough to link to the Council's overall plan.

- D7.1 The Strategic Director of Resources shall be notified in advance of all funding to be received from external bodies and shall make arrangements for the proper receipt and recording of such funding in the Council's accounting records.
- D7.2 Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that bids or applications for external funding are only made where they can be justified in terms of the Council's aims and objectives, and that suitable and sufficient resources can be allocated to comply with any funding, administration and accounting requirements without adversely impacting upon the Council's existing services.
- D7.3 Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring compliance with all grant conditions placed by external funders upon grant income received. This includes appropriate liaison with Internal Audit and the relevant member of the Strategic Leadership Team, as required, to ensure sign off requirements are met.

Financial Regulations

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A. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A1 Financial Management Standards

Why is this important?

All staff (including temporary and contract staff and consultants) and members have a duty to abide by the highest standards of probity in dealing with financial issues. This is facilitated by ensuring everyone is clear about the standards to which they are working and the controls that are in place to ensure that these standards are met.

Financial Regulations do not cover every eventuality or circumstance but the principles outlined should always be applied.

A1.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources has overall responsibility for ensuring the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council, as required by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, and by Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Their nominated deputy is the Accountancy Manager who fulfills all the functions of the Section 151 Officer in the event of their absence.

A1.2 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of Financial Regulations which shall provide for the supervision and control of finances, accounts, expenditure, income and assets.

A1.3 Any changes to Financial Regulations will be subject to the approval of the full Council.

A1.4 The Financial Regulations provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs. They apply to every elected member and all staff of the Council.

A1.5 All elected members and staff have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security of assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of assets and resources is legal, properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.

A1.6 ~~Corporate Team Strategic Leadership Team Members~~ Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, and the Leadership and Management Team Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff in their service areas are aware of the existence and content of Financial Regulations and other internal regulatory and procedure documents, and that they comply with them.

A1.7 Should an instance of non-compliance with these rules be discovered the Strategic Director of Resources, ~~Officer~~ may, after consultation with the Chief

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Executive, make a report to the Leader, Full Council and/or Audit & Standards Committee, as appropriate. Non-compliance with financial rules may also lead to disciplinary action being taken.

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A2 Scheme of Virement

Why is this important?

The scheme of virement is intended to enable the ~~Service Policy~~ Committees, ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team ~~Members~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and their staff to manage budgets with a degree of flexibility within the overall policy framework determined by the full Council, and therefore to optimise the use of resources.

- A2.1 A ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team ~~Member~~Strategic Director or Head of Service may exercise virement on budgets under their control for amounts up to £~~250~~,000 on any one budget head during the current financial year only, following agreement with the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources and subject to the conditions in paragraph A2.4 below.
- A2.2 Virements of amounts greater than £~~250~~,000 but less than £~~5075~~,000 require the approval of the appropriate committee, following a joint report by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources and the ~~Corporate Strategic Leadership Team~~ Member, which must specify the proposed expenditure and the source of funding, and must explain the implications in the current and future financial year.
- A2.3 Virement of amounts greater than £~~5075~~,000 requires the approval of Strategy and Resources committee, following a joint report by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources and the ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team Member, which must specify the proposed expenditure and the source of funding, and must explain the implications in the current and future financial year.
- A2.4 Virement between pay and non pay must be approved by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources.
- A2.5 The Strategic Director of Resources may authorize additional expenditure funded from additional income arising up to a level of £100,000. Any such authorisation must be reported in the next budget report to Strategy and Resources Committee.
- A2.5 Virement that is likely to impact on the level of service activity of another ~~Corporate Strategic Leadership Team~~ Member or Head of Service should be implemented only after agreement with that officer.
- A2.6 Where an approved budget is a lump-sum budget, ~~reserve or~~ contingency intended for allocation during the year, its allocation will not be treated as a virement, provided that:

- (i) the amount is used in accordance with the purposes for which it has been established;
- ~~(ii)~~ Strategy and Resources has approved the basis and the terms, including financial limits, on which it will be allocated. Individual allocations in excess of the financial limits should be reported to the ~~Executive Committee~~
- ~~(iii)~~(iii) The Strategic Director of Resources has approved the usage.

A2.7 Budget adjustments within the Housing Repairs and Improvements Programme will be subject to separate arrangements in agreement with the relevant budget holder and the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources or Accountancy Manager, as set out below:

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- (i) Virement on budgets within the Housing Repairs and Improvements Programme for amounts up to £50,000 are subject to agreement with the relevant budget holder and the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services);
- (ii) Virement of amounts greater than £50,000 but less than £250,000 require the approval of the Housing ~~C~~committee;
- (iii) Virement of amounts greater than £250,000 requires the approval of the appropriate Strategy and Resources committee.

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A3 Treatment of Year-End Balances

Why is this important?

The rules below cover arrangements for the transfer of resources between accounting years, ie a carry forward.

A3.1 Normally, only specifically designated accounting reserves and provisions may be carried forward from one accounting year to the next.

A3.2 The Section 151 Officer may agree carry forward of resources from one financial year to the next, if they are satisfied that the expenditure will be incurred in the new financial year on the same purpose as originally intended.

~~A3.3 The level of approved carry forwards will be reported to Strategy and Resources Committee as part of the annual Outturn Report. The carry forward of resources relating to individual revenue or capital budget headings requires the approval of the Strategy and Resources Committee, and will normally only be permitted for individual amounts in excess of £10,000 where there is clear justification as to why the resources could not be utilised in the financial year for which they were originally allocated.~~

A4 Accounting Policies

Why is this important?

The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for the preparation of the Council's statement of accounts, in accordance with proper accounting practices as currently in force, for each financial year ending 31 March.

A4.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for selecting suitable accounting policies and for ensuring that they are applied consistently. The accounting policies are set out in the statement of accounts, which is prepared at 31 March each year. Such policies should comply with the proper accounting practices currently in force.

A5 Accounting Records and Returns**Why is this important?**

Maintaining proper accounting records is one of the ways in which the Council discharges its responsibility for stewardship of public resources. The Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare its annual accounts to present fairly its operations during the year. These are subject to external audit. This audit provides assurance that the accounts are prepared properly, that proper accounting practices have been followed and that quality arrangements have been made for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the Council's resources.

- A5.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall determine the accounting procedures and records of the Council.
- A5.2 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange for the proper administration of all accounts and accounting records.
- A5.3 Wherever possible, the following principles shall be complied with when allocating financial duties:
- (i) separating the duties of providing information about sums due to or from the authority and calculating, checking and recording these sums from the duty of collecting or disbursing them.
 - (ii) employees with the duty of examining or checking the accounts of cash transactions must not themselves be engaged in these transactions.
- A5.4 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources must be consulted on and approve any changes to accounting records and procedures.
- A5.5 All staff and members must maintain adequate records to provide an audit trail leading from the source of income/expenditure through to the accounting statements.

A6 The Annual Statement of Accounts**Why is this important?**

The Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare its own accounts to present a true and fair view of its operations during the year. The Audit and Standards Committee full Council is responsible for approving the statutory annual statement of accounts.

Relevant legislation determines the format and deadlines.

- A6.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall sign and date the statement of accounts, stating that it presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March each year.
- A6.2 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall draw up a timetable for final accounts preparation and advise staff and external auditors accordingly.
- A6.3 Staff and members shall comply with accounting guidance provided by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources and supply the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources promptly with any information required for the preparation of the statement of accounts.

A6.4 The Strategic Director of Resources shall ensure that the Statement of Accounts is audited in line with government requirements and the results of the audit are reported back to the Audit and Standards Committee.

B. FINANCIAL PLANNING

B1 Revenue Budget Preparation, Monitoring and Control

Why is this important?

Budget management ensures that once the budget has been approved by the full Council, resources allocated are used for their intended purposes and are properly accounted for. Budgetary control is a continuous process, enabling the Council to review and adjust its budget targets during the financial year. It also provides the mechanism that calls to account managers responsible for defined elements of the budget. By continuously identifying and explaining variances against budgetary targets, the Council can identify changes in trends and resource requirements at the earliest opportunity. The Council itself operates within an annual budget limit, approved when setting the overall budget. To ensure that the Council in total does not overspend, each service is required to manage its own expenditure within the budget allocated to it.

- B1.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall, in consultation with ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members and Heads of Service, prepare and submit annually to the appropriate committee budget estimates of income and expenditure.

B1.2 The estimates presented to committees shall be accompanied by a report from the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources drawing attention to any provision made for a new service or the material alteration or extension of an existing service.

B1.3 After consideration by the committees, the Budget shall be presented to ~~Strategy and Resources Committee and then~~ full Council, together with a report by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources with a recommendation relating to ~~the levying of a precept setting the rate of Council Tax.~~

B1.4 The Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for determining the format and timetable of the budget setting process, and for providing guidance to Officers on the process of preparing estimates.

B1.5 Heads of Service are ultimately responsible for the preparation of a budget for their own service area.

B1.56 The full Council's approval of the Budget shall authorise the incurring of expenditure and the collection of income within the approved budget estimates. The decisions to be made each February will include:

- The allocation of resources and approval of income targets for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account
- The Capital Programme
- The Medium-Term Financial Plan
- Any indicators as required by "The Prudential Code", including the borrowing limit
- The Capital Strategy
- A list of fees and charges as agreed by Policy Committees
- The Council Tax Base
- The rate of Band D Council Tax

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B1.56 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall establish and maintain an appropriate framework of budgetary management and control which ensures that:

- (i) budgets remain within the approved estimates unless the full Council agrees otherwise

- (ii) each budget holder has available timely and accurate information on income and expenditure on each budget which is sufficiently detailed to enable them to fulfil their budgetary management responsibilities
- (iii) expenditure is only committed against an approved budget head
- (iv) all officers responsible for committing expenditure comply with relevant guidance, Contract and Procurement & Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations
- (v) budget responsibility is aligned as closely as possible to the decision making process that commits expenditure
- (vi) significant variances from approved budget estimates are investigated promptly and explained by budget holders.

B1.67 ~~Corporate Team Strategic Leadership Team Members~~ Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and nominated budget holders are responsible for maintaining budgetary control within their service areas in adherence to the principles in B1.6 and for ensuring that all income and expenditure is properly recorded and accounted for.

B1.78 ~~Corporate Team Strategic Leadership Team Members~~ Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and nominated budget holders should ensure that spending remains within each of their service areas overall budget limits, and that individual budget heads are not overspent, by monitoring budgets and taking appropriate corrective action where significant variations from the approved budget estimates are forecast. The Strategic Director of Resources must be informed of all estimated variances over £20,000 as soon as is practicable after they are identified.

B1.9 Budget monitoring reports will be presented to Policy Committees at least three times in each financial year and include analysis of variances above £20,000.

B1.89 ~~Corporate Team Strategic Leadership Team Members~~ Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and nominated budget holders should ensure that a monitoring process is in place to review performance levels/levels of service in conjunction with the budget and that this is operating effectively.

B2 Budgets and Medium-Term Planning

Why is this important?

The Council is a complex organisation responsible for delivering a wide variety of services. It needs to plan effectively and to develop systems to enable scarce resources to be allocated in accordance with carefully weighed priorities. Medium-term planning (or a three to five year planning system) involves a planning cycle in which managers develop their own plans and these are consolidated into an overall strategic plan for the Council. The Medium-Term Plan is the financial representation of the strategic objectives as set out in the overarching Council Plan. As each year passes, another future year will be added to the medium-term plan. This ensures that the Council is always preparing for events in advance.

B2.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of ~~sha~~Resources shall arrange for the preparation of a Medium Term Financial Plan, covering a four year period, which shall be updated at least annually to reflect changes in anticipated budget outturns, levels of funding and expenditure, and other prudent financial projections.

B2.2 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members ~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~, Heads of Service and Managers should inform the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources promptly of any known or anticipated service, legislative or other changes which may have significant financial impacts within the next four years.

B3 Resource Allocation

Why is this important?

A mismatch often exists between available resources and required resources. A common scenario is that available resources are not adequate to fulfil need/desire. It is therefore imperative that needs/desires are carefully prioritised and that resources are fairly allocated, in order to fulfil all legal responsibilities. Resources may include staff, money, equipment, goods and materials.

B3.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of ~~sha~~Resources shall advise on methods available for the funding of resources, such as grants from central government and borrowing requirements.

B3.2 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members ~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~, Heads of Service and Managers shall work within budget limits and shall utilise resources in the most efficient, effective and economic way.

B3.3 ~~Corporate Team Strategic Leadership Team Members~~ Members of the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and managers shall seek to identify opportunities for efficiency savings where it is possible to minimise or eliminate resource requirements or consumption without having a detrimental effect on service delivery.

B3.4 If required by the Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Managers, shall present options to meet any saving targets required by the Medium Term Financial Plan.

B4 Capital Programme

Why is this important?

Capital expenditure involves acquiring or enhancing fixed assets with a long-term value to the Council, such as land, buildings, and major items of plant, equipment or vehicles. Capital assets shape the way services are delivered in the long term and create financial commitments for the future in the form of financing costs and revenue running costs. ~~There are Government requirements on the financing capacity of the Council.~~ The Council must operate within the prudential framework as set out by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. This means that capital expenditure should form part of an investment strategy and should be carefully prioritised in order to maximise the benefit of scarce resources.

B4.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall present an annual four year capital plan, together with details of the funding estimated to be available, to Strategy and Resources committee. The Strategy and Resources committee will make recommendations on the capital plan and on any associated financing requirements to the full Council.

B4.2 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall issue guidance concerning capital schemes and controls, for example, on project management techniques. ~~The definition of 'capital' will be determined by the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources is responsible for determining whether expenditure is classed as capital or revenue, having regard to government regulations and accounting requirements.

B4.3 The procedures for establishing and monitoring the Capital Programme are set out in the "Capital Strategy" to be approved annually by Full Council and include such guidance as required by B4.2.

B4.3 The inclusion of any capital proposal in the programme does not commit the Council to such expenditure.

- B4.4 No action shall be taken to commit the Council to capital expenditure until the relevant ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team~~Strategic Leadership Team~~ Member has determined whether it is necessary to undertake a feasibility study.
- B4.5 ~~For all schemes with an anticipated value in excess of £250,000, a project management team must be set up. The Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) may nominate a member of staff from Financial Services who will give advice as needed to this team. Any resulting or associated~~ procurement of goods, services and works relating to the Capital Programme must be carried out in accordance with the Council's Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules.

B5 Maintenance of Reserves

Why is this important?

The Council must decide the level of general reserves it wishes to maintain before it can decide the level of council tax. Reserves are maintained as a matter of prudence. They enable the Council to provide for unexpected events and thereby protect it from overspending, should such events occur. Reserves for specific purposes may also be maintained, such as the purchase or renewal of capital items.

B5.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall advise the Strategy and Resources committee and/or the full Council on prudent levels of reserves for the Council, and shall take account of the advice of the external auditors in this matter.

B5.2 The Strategic Director of Resources will allocate funds to reserves as part of the year-end financial closedown process and report their decisions to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

B5.23 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members ~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~, Heads of Service and nominated budget holders should ensure that reserves are used only for the purposes for which they were intended.

B5.4 The Strategic Director of Resources can approve allocations from reserves on the purposes for which they were established, in consultation with the Chief Executive and relevant Committee Chair.

B5.53 Strategy and Resources ~~committee~~ Committee can approve the use of the capital reserve, and the Major Repairs Reserve for the HRA, for variation on capital schemes subject to there being sufficient funds available in the reserve and a limit per scheme of £250,000 and is no more than 50% of the original capital scheme budget. A joint report by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources and the ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Member must specify the proposed additional expenditure, and must explain the implications in the current and future financial year.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF RESOURCES

C1 Risk Management and Insurance

Why is this important?

All organisations, whether private or public sector, face risks to people, property and continued operations. Risk is the chance or possibility of loss, damage, injury or failure to achieve objectives caused by an unwanted or uncertain action or event. Risk

management is the planned and systematic approach to the identification, evaluation and control of risk. Its objectives are to secure the assets of the Council and to ensure its continued financial stability and good reputation. In essence it is, therefore, an integral part of good business practice.

C1.1 The Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services), in consultation with the other ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team Members~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~, shall prepare and promote the Council's risk management policy statement, and develop risk management controls.

C1.2 The Strategic Leadership Team is responsible for ~~maintaining~~ maintaining a Strategic Risk Register with each Head of Service, or Service ~~m~~Manager being responsible for maintaining their own service based risk register.

C1.3 The Audit and Standards Committee is responsible for oversight of risk management arrangements, including approval of the Risk Management Framework.

C1.~~32~~ The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources shall include all appropriate employees of the Council in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.

C1.~~34~~ The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of ~~sha~~Resources shall effect corporate insurance cover, through external insurance and internal funding, and negotiate all claims, in consultation with other officers where necessary.

C1.~~45~~ Staff and elected members shall notify the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of ~~immediately~~Resources immediately of any loss, liability or damage that may lead to a claim against the Council, together with any information or explanation required by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of ~~or~~Resources or the Council's insurers.

C1.~~56~~ Staff and elected members shall take responsibility for risk management where appropriate, having regard to advice from the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of ~~and~~Resources and other specialists (eg crime prevention, fire safety and prevention, and health and safety).

C1.~~67~~ ~~Corporate-Strategic Leadership~~ Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that there are regular reviews of risk within their service areas.- This should include any risks associated with the operation and expiry of contracts within their service areas to ensure continued or appropriate service delivery without interruptions or additional costs. They must also ensure that all employees:

- are aware of their responsibilities for risk management and insurance

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- receive adequate support and training to carry out their responsibilities
- comply with the council's standards of financial management
- are personally protected from risk

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C1.78 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources must be notified promptly of all new risks requiring insurance, new properties and vehicles, and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

C1.8 Staff and elected members should not admit liability or make any offer to pay compensation that may prejudice the assessment of liability in respect of any insurance claim.

C2 Internal Controls

Why is this important?

The Council requires internal controls to manage and monitor progress towards its strategic objectives. The Council also has statutory obligations, and, therefore, requires internal controls to identify, meet and monitor compliance with these obligations. Additionally, the Council faces a wide range of financial, administrative and commercial risks, both from internal and external factors, which threaten the achievement of its objectives. Internal controls are necessary to manage these risks.

C2.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall advise on the establishment of an appropriate control environment and effective internal controls which provide reasonable assurance of effective and efficient operations, financial stewardship, probity and compliance with laws and regulations.

C2.2 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members and Heads of Service shall establish formal processes to check at least annually that established controls in their service areas are being adhered to and to evaluate their effectiveness, in order to be confident of the proper use of resources, achievement of objectives and management of risks.

C2.3 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members and Heads of Service shall review existing controls in the light of changes affecting the Council and establish and implement new ones in line with guidance from the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources. They are also responsible for removing controls that are unnecessary or not cost or risk effective – for example, because of duplication. In such cases the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources must be consulted before removing any controls.

C2.4 ~~Corporate Team Strategic Leadership Team Members~~ Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that staff have a clear understanding of the internal controls which they are required to operate and comply with, and appreciate the consequences of a lack of control.

C2.5 Internal Audit shall be informed immediately if any officer or elected member believes that there has been or may be a breach of internal controls.

C3 Internal Audit

Why is this important?

The requirement for an internal audit function for local authorities is implied by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which requires that authorities “make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs”. The Accounts and Audit Regulations more specifically require that a “relevant authority must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance”.

C3.1 Internal Audit shall have the authority to:

- (i) access all Council premises at reasonable times
- (ii) access all assets, records, documents, correspondence and control systems
- (iii) receive any information and explanation from any officer or elected member of the Council considered necessary concerning any matter under consideration
- (iv) require any employee or elected member of the Council to account for cash, stores or any other Council asset under his or her control
- (v) access records belonging to third parties, such as contractors, when required
- (vi) directly access the Chief Executive, and any –Committee of the Council.

C3.2 The internal audit function should operate in accordance with the CIPFA's Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom, the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (UK and Ireland) Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, and with any other statutory obligations and regulations

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C3.3 Internal Audit shall provide an independent, objective, assurance and consulting activity for the review of the council's system of internal control.

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C3.4 The Head of Internal Audit is responsible for providing a written report to those charged with governance, which includes an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's control environment

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C3.52 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources, in consultation with ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members and the Audit and Standards Committee, shall approve the risk based Internal Audit Annual Plan prepared by the Internal Audit Manager..

C3.63 The ~~Internal Audit Manager~~ Head of Internal Audit shall ensure that effective procedures are in place to investigate promptly any alleged fraud or irregularity.

C3.74 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members and Heads of Service shall:

- (i) consider and respond promptly to recommendations in Internal Audit reports
- (ii) ensure that any agreed actions arising from Internal Audit recommendations are carried out in a timely and efficient fashion
- (iii) notify Internal Audit immediately of any suspected fraud, theft, irregularity, improper use or misappropriation of the Council's property or resources
- (iv) ensure that new systems for maintaining financial records or records of assets, or changes to such systems, are discussed with and agreed by the Internal Audit Manager prior to implementation.

C4 External Audit

Why is this important?

~~The Audit Commission who were responsible for appointing external auditors to each local authority in England and Wales were abolished as a result of the introduction of the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014. From 1 April 2015 a transitional body, Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA), established by the Local Government Association (LGA) as an independent company, had the responsibility to oversee the Commission's audit contracts until their expiry date in 2017 (or 2020 if extended by DCLG). Following this date the appointment of the external auditor will be the responsibility of the local authority in accordance with the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014. The external auditor has rights of access to all documents and information necessary for audit purposes.~~

The external auditor has a statutory responsibility for providing an opinion on the Statement of Accounts and the Value for Money opinion of the Council.

C4.1 External auditors shall be given access at all reasonable times to premises, personnel, documents and assets that they consider necessary for the purposes of their work.

C4.2 Staff should ensure that all records and systems are up to date and available for inspection by external audit if required.

C5 Preventing Fraud and Corruption

Why is it this important?

The Council will not tolerate fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether internal or external. The Council's expectation of propriety and accountability is that elected members and staff at all levels will lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices. The Council also expects that individuals and organisations (eg. suppliers, contractors, service providers) with whom it comes into contact will act towards the Council with integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud and corruption.

C5.1 The Internal Audit Manager shall maintain and keep up to date the Council's anti-fraud and corruption policy.

C5.2 The Monitoring Officer shall maintain and keep up to date the Council's whistle-blowing policy.

C5.3 Staff and elected members shall report any suspected irregularities immediately to Internal Audit.

C5.4 Should any irregularity reported to Internal Audit be thought to warrant police involvement, the police shall be contacted by the ~~Internal Audit Manager~~[Head of Internal Audit](#) after consulting with the Chief Executive and/or the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~[Director of Resources](#).

C5.5 Staff and elected members shall comply with the requirements of the relevant Codes of Conduct relating to making declarations of gifts and hospitality, and private interests.

C6 Security

Why is this important?

The Council holds assets in the form of land, property, vehicles, equipment, furniture and other items worth many millions of pounds. It is important that assets are safeguarded and used efficiently in service delivery, and that there are arrangements for the security of both assets and information required for service operations. An up-to-date asset register is a prerequisite for proper fixed asset accounting and sound asset management.

C6.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~[Strategic Director of](#) ~~shall~~[Resources shall](#) ensure that an asset register is maintained in accordance

with good practice for all fixed assets with a value in excess of £20,000. The function of the asset register is to provide the authority with information about fixed assets so that they are:

- (i) safeguarded
- (ii) used efficiently and effectively
- (iii) adequately maintained.

- C6.2 Any use of Council property or equipment other than for direct service delivery should be supported by documentation identifying terms, responsibilities and duration of use.
- C6.3 ~~Legal Services~~One Legal shall hold and provide for the safe custody of all deeds, leases and similar documents relating to the ownership of land and buildings.
- C6.4 Staff and elected members shall not use any Council asset or item of equipment for personal use without proper authority.
- C6.5 Staff and elected members shall ensure the safe custody of monies, vehicles, equipment, furniture, inventories and other property belonging to the Council.
- C6.6 ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that their service areas maintain a register of moveable assets and equipment in accordance with arrangements defined by the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Director of Resources.
- C6.7 ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that assets and equipment are identified, their location recorded and that they are appropriately marked as Council property and insured.
- C6.8 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources shall be consulted in any case where security is thought to be defective or where it is considered that special security arrangements may be needed.
- C6.9 Cash holdings on premises shall be kept to a minimum.
- C6.10 Keys to safes and similar receptacles shall be carried on the person of those responsible at all times; loss of any such keys must be reported to the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources as soon as possible.
- C6.11 The disposal or part exchange of assets over £20,000 in value should normally be by public auction or open market sale.

- C6.12 Staff and elected members have a personal responsibility with regard to the protection and confidentiality of information, whether held in manual or computerised records. Information may be sensitive or privileged, or may possess some intrinsic value, and its disclosure or loss could result in a cost to the Council in some way, or may be in breach of Data Protection legislation.
- C6.13 ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Managers shall ensure that inventories are maintained at reasonable levels, are adequately recorded and safe-guarded, and are subject to a regular independent physical check. All discrepancies should be investigated and pursued to a satisfactory conclusion.
- C6.14 ~~Corporate Team~~If required for the production of the annual statement of accounts, Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall arrange for independent stock takes at the 31st March each year, and shall provided a certified stock valuation certificate to the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources in accordance with the timetable specified ~~for the production of the annual statement of accounts.~~
- C6.15 Heads of Service may authorise for write off or disposal redundant stocks and equipment up to a total value of £52,000 after consultation with ~~Internal Audit~~the Strategic Director of Resources. Where any items disposed of have a financial value, appropriate measures must be taken to achieve value for money. Where the value of items to be written off or disposed of exceeds £52,000, authorisation of the appropriate ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team member must be obtained, and disposal should be by competitive quotations or auction, unless, following consultation with the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Director of Resources, the relevant ~~Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team member decides otherwise in a particular case.

C7 Treasury Management

Why is this important?

Many millions of pounds pass through the Council's hands each year. Treasury Management procedures aim to provide assurance that the Council's money is properly managed in a way that balances risk with return, but with overriding consideration being given to security.

- C7.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange the borrowing and investments of the authority in such a manner as to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Council's treasury management policy statement and strategy.

- C7.2 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall report at least twice yearly on treasury management activities to Audit and Standards Committee, as well as setting an annual Treasury Management Strategy.
- C7.3 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall operate such bank accounts as are considered necessary. Opening or closing any bank account shall require the approval of the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources. All bank accounts shall be in the name of the Council.
- C7.4 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall be responsible for ordering all cheques and any other instruments of payment, and shall make adequate arrangements for their safe custody.
- C7.5 All investments of money shall be made in the name of the Council or in the name of nominees approved by the full Council.
- C7.6 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall effect any borrowings that may be required, which shall be in the name of the Council.
- C7.7 No loans shall be made to third parties nor any interests acquired in companies, joint ventures or other enterprises without the approval of the Strategy and Resources Committee, following consultation with the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources.
- C7.8 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange for all trust funds to be held, wherever possible, in the name of the Council. All officers acting as trustees by virtue of their official position shall deposit securities, etc relating to the trust with the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources, unless the deed provides otherwise.
- C7.9 Where an officer of the Council becomes responsible for the safe-keeping or administration of any monies, funds or valuables which are not the property of the Council, but which, save for their employment by the Council the officer would not otherwise have responsibility for, that officer must take all reasonable steps to ensure the monies, funds or valuables involved are properly safe-guarded and accounted for. The officer should inform their line manager of the circumstances relating to any such instances.

C8 Imprest Accounts (Petty Cash)

C8.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall approve the provision of any petty cash imprest accounts to meet minor expenditure on behalf of the Council and shall prescribe rules for operating these accounts.

C8.2 Officers operating a petty cash imprest account shall:

- (i) obtain and retain vouchers to support each payment from the imprest account. Where appropriate, an official receipted VAT invoice must be obtained
- (ii) make adequate arrangements for the safe custody of the account
- (iii) produce upon demand by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources or Internal Audit cash and all vouchers to the total value of the imprest amount
- (iv) record transactions promptly
- (v) reconcile and balance the account at least monthly; reconciliation sheets to be signed and retained by the imprest holder
- (vi) provide the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources with a certificate of the value of the account held at 31 March each year
- (vii) ensure that the float is never used to cash personal cheques or to make personal loans and that the only payments into the account are the reimbursement of the float and change relating to purchases where an advance has been made
- (viii) on leaving the authority's employment or otherwise ceasing to be entitled to hold an imprest advance, an employee shall account to the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources for the amount advanced to him or her.

D. SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES

D1 General

Why is this important?

Service areas have many systems and procedures relating to the control of the Council's assets, including purchasing, costing and management systems. They are increasingly reliant on computers for their financial management information. The information must therefore be accurate and the systems and procedures sound and well administered. They should contain controls to ensure that transactions are properly processed and errors detected promptly. The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources has a professional responsibility to ensure that the Council's financial systems are sound and should therefore be notified of any new developments or changes.

- D1.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall make arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, including:
- (i) issuing advice, guidance and procedures for officers and others acting on the Council's behalf
 - (ii) determining the accounting systems, form of accounts and supporting financial records
 - (iii) establishing arrangements for audit of the Council's financial affairs
 - (iv) approving any new financial systems to be introduced
 - (v) approving any changes to be made to existing financial systems.
- D1.2 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members ~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~, Heads of Service and Service Manager shall establish appropriate controls to ensure that, where relevant:
- (i) all input is genuine, complete, accurate, timely and not previously processed
 - (ii) all processing is carried out in an accurate, complete and timely manner
 - (iii) output from systems is complete, accurate and timely.
- D1.3 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members ~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~ and Heads of Service shall ensure that the organisational structure provides an appropriate segregation of duties to provide adequate internal controls and to minimise the risk of fraud or other malpractice.
- D1.4 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members ~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~ and Heads of Service shall ensure that systems are documented and staff trained in operations.
- D1.5 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members ~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~ shall, subject to approval from the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources, establish a scheme of delegation identifying officers authorised to act upon their behalf in respect of payments, income collection and placing orders, including variations, and showing the limits of their authority, and shall supply lists of authorised officers, delegated limits, to the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources together with any subsequent variations.
- D1.6 ~~Information Services~~ The Head of Technology shall ensure that effective contingency arrangements, including back-up procedures and disaster recovery, exist for computer systems. ~~Wherever possible, back-up information should be securely retained in a fireproof location, preferably off site or at an alternative location within the building.~~

D1.7 All staff shall comply with Data Protection, computer misuse and copyright legislation and, in particular, shall ensure that only software legally acquired and installed by the Council is used on its computers.

D2 Income

Why is this important?

Income can be a vulnerable asset and effective income collection systems are necessary to ensure that all income due is identified, collected, receipted and banked properly. It is preferable to obtain income in advance of supplying goods or services as this improves the Council's cashflow and also avoids the time and cost of administering debts.

D2.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of sha#Resources shall agree arrangements for the collection of all income due to the Council and to approve the procedures, systems and documentation for its collection.

D2.2 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of sha#Resources shall order and supply all receipt forms, books or tickets and similar items and establish the arrangements for their control.

D2.3 The Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Accountancy Manager ~~Director of Resources~~ shall approve all debts to be written off in accordance with the authorisation limits as set out in the table below, and shall keep a record of all sums written off and will adhere to the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations currently in force. **Are the amounts set out in the table below now appropriate?**

Amount/Limit	Authorisation process
Amounts not exceeding £250	Senior Accounting Technician in consultation with the Accountancy Manager.
Amounts greater than £250 but not exceeding £10,000	Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) <u>Accountancy Manager</u> Director of Resources <u>Accountancy Manager</u> in consultation with the relevant Corporate Team <u>Strategic Leadership Team</u> Member or Head of Service.
Amounts greater than £10,000 but not exceeding £2050,000 <u>£2050,000</u>	Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) <u>Accountancy Manager</u> Director of Resources <u>Accountancy Manager</u> <u>Director of Resources</u> in consultation with the relevant Corporate Team <u>Strategic Leadership Team</u> Member or Head of Service.
	Write-offs must be reported retrospectively to the relevant delegated Committee.

Amounts greater than £2050,000	These should only be written-off with the approval of the Strategy and Resources Committee.
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- D2.4 Where small debt or credit balances for Council Tax and Business Rates are lower than the cost of court fees to make a claim, these can be written off by a senior revenues officer and reported within an annual report summarising write-offs on the Collection Fund.
- D2.5 The Strategic Director of Resources or Accountancy Manager shall approve credit balances on closed accounts to be written off after a reasonable effort to return the credit balance.
- ~~D2.6 Corporate Team Members and Heads of Service shall~~The Strategic Director of Resources shall establish a ~~charging fees and charges~~ policy for the supply of goods or services, including the appropriate charging of VAT, and to review it ~~regularly~~annually, in line with corporate policies. This shall be approved by full Council annually each February.
- ~~D2.57~~ Strategic Leadership Team members and Heads of Service are responsible for recommending to the Strategic Director of Resources the fees and charges to be set for goods or services falling within their control, apart from those charges fixed on a statutory basis.
- ~~D2.55 Corporate Team~~Strategic Leadership Team members~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~ and Heads of Service must seek to recover sundry debt outstanding in accordance with Debt Recovery Policy as approved by the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Director of Resources.
- ~~D2.6-9~~ Corporate Team Members~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~ and Heads of Service are responsible for the collection of income within their area of responsibility shall establish and initiate appropriate recovery procedures, including legal action where necessary, for debts that are not paid promptly.
- ~~D2.7-10~~ Staff shall issue official receipts or ~~to~~ maintain other documentation as approved by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources for all income collected.
- D2.811 At least two employees shall be present when post is opened, and money received by post shall be properly identified and recorded.
- D2.9-12 All income shall be paid fully and promptly into Cashiers or to the Council's designated security collection agency. Appropriate details should be recorded on paying-in slips to provide an audit trail.

D2.103 Income collected shall be paid in intact, and shall not be used to cash personal cheques or make payments, except where specifically permitted by the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Director of Resources

~~D2.14 Heads of Service shall supply the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) with details relating to work done, goods supplied, services rendered or other amounts due, to enable the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) to record correctly the sums due to the Council and to ensure debtor accounts are sent out promptly. To do this, established performance management systems should be used to monitor recovery of income and flag up areas of concern to the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services). All staff have a responsibility to assist the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) in collecting debts that they have originated, by providing any further information requested by the debtor, and in pursuing the matter on the Council's behalf.~~

D2.142 A record shall be kept of every transfer of money between employees of the Council. The receiving officer must sign for the transfer and the transferor must retain a copy.

D2.153 Once raised, no bona fide debt may be cancelled, except by full payment or by its formal writing off. A credit note to replace a debt can only be issued to correct a factual inaccuracy or administrative error in the calculation and/or billing of the original debt.

D2.164 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources shall be notified of outstanding income relating to the previous financial year as soon as possible after 31 March in line with the timetable determined by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~Strategic Director of Resources and not later than 30 April.

D3 Ordering and Paying for Work, Goods and Services

Why is this important?

Public money should be spent with demonstrable probity and in accordance with the Council's policies. The Council has a statutory duty to achieve best value, in part through economy and efficiency. The Council's procedures should help to ensure that services obtain value for money from their purchasing arrangements.

These procedures must be read in conjunction with the Council's Procurement and Procedure Rules relating to contracts.

D3.1 Every officer and member of the Council has a responsibility to declare any links or personal interests that they may have with suppliers and/or contractors if they are engaged in contractual or purchasing decisions on behalf of the Council, in accordance with the relevant Codes of Conduct.

D3.2 Official orders must be in a form approved by the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources. Official orders must be issued for all work, goods or services to be supplied to the Council, except for supplies of utilities, periodic payments such as rent or rates, petty cash purchases or other exceptions specified by the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources.

D3.3 Each order must conform to the guidelines approved by the Council ~~on central purchasing contracts and the standardisation of supplies and materials and the Procurement and Procedure rules.~~

D3.4 Payments will be made by the Council within 30 days of the receipt, or other mutually agreed terms, of goods or services. Heads of Service must consult with the Strategic Director of Resources before agreeing any non-standard terms.

D3.4 Apart from petty cash, Government Procurement Card, and payments made from cash advances, the normal method of payment shall be by ~~cheque or~~ BACS, drawn on the Council's bank account by the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources. Cheque payments will only be made in exceptional circumstances. The use of direct debit for any payment shall require the prior agreement of the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources.

D3.5 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources will give authorisation for an Officer to use a Government Procurement Card. When the card has been issued the Officer must follow the regulations set out in the Conditions of Use and procedures Manual. In particular a VAT invoice should be obtained for each transaction.

- D3.6 Official orders must not be raised for any personal or private purchases, nor must personal or private use be made of Council contracts or purchasing arrangements.
- D3.7 The authoriser of a purchase order should be satisfied that the goods and services ordered are appropriate and needed, that there is adequate budgetary provision and that quotations or tenders have been obtained if necessary. Best value principles should underpin the Councils approach to procurement. Value for money should always be achieved.
- D3.8 Goods and services shall be checked on receipt to verify that they are in accordance with the order. This check should, where possible, be carried out by a different officer from the person who authorised the order.
- D3.9 Payment shall not be made unless a proper VAT invoice has been received, checked, coded and certified for payment, in accordance with the procedures specified by the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources. Invoices shall not be amended; if any invoice is found to be incorrect, a replacement shall be requested from the originator.
- D3.10 Payments shall not be made on photocopied or faxed invoices, statements or any documents other than the formal invoice which may be received via email. ~~Where an original document cannot be supplied, due to it having been lost or not received, copies must be duly certified as such in accordance with the procedures specified by the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services).~~
- D3.11 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange for such checks and requests for explanation as are considered necessary before any payment is made. Payment may be withheld if the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources considers that to make such payment may be illegal or improper.
- D3.12 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall be notified of outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year as soon as possible after 31 March in line with the timetable determined by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources and, in any case, not later than ~~30-7~~ April or the date specified in the Closure of Accounts Guidance.
- D3.13 Where any contract exceeds £~~4520~~4520,000 in value, details of the proposed list of contractors to be invited to tender shall be provided to Financial Services for vetting of their financial status.

D3.14 With regard to contract management and monitoring, the following requirements must be complied with:

- (i) payment to contractors shall only be made on a certificate issued by the responsible officer in accordance with the contract, which shall show the estimated value of work to date, the balance remaining, and the percentage of retention money if any,
- (ii) any variation to a contract shall be authorised by the supervising or responsible officer who shall, where possible notify the contractor in writing prior to the work being done. All verbal variations to a contract must be confirmed by a written variation order in accordance with the requirements of the contract,
- (iii) any variation shall be reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee where a substantial change in the specification of any works or additional expenditure is involved which is likely to result in exceeding the original project budget by 5% or by £4050,000 (whichever is the greater),
- ~~(iv) Where the final value of a contract exceeds £100,000 Internal Audit shall be notified at practical completion stage, and they shall undertake such checks on the contract as they consider necessary before a final account is agreed with the contractor.~~

D3.17 Nothing in these Financial Regulations shall prevent the ~~Strategy and Resources Committee~~ Authority from incurring expenditure which is essential to meet any immediate needs created by a sudden emergency or which is referable to Section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972 Emergency Regulations.

D3.18 When an event is deemed to be an emergency by the County Emergency Planning Team any one of the following officers shall be permitted to authorise expenditure up to £100,000:

- Chief Executive
- Strategic ~~Heads~~ Directors
- ~~• Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~

In the unlikely event that none of these are available, the most senior officer present is expected to authorise such expenditure as is necessary to quickly and effectively respond to the emergency. Appropriate records and audit trails must be kept, and all expenditure must be made through the ~~Co-ordination Team. The~~ team leading the emergency response.

D4 Payments to Employees and Members

Why is this important?

Staff costs are the largest item of expenditure for most Council services. It is therefore important that payments are accurate, timely, made only where they are due for services to the Council and that payments accord with individuals' conditions of employment. It is also important that all payments are accurately and completely recorded and accounted for and that members' allowances are paid in accordance with the scheme adopted by the full Council.

D4.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall arrange and control secure and reliable payment of salaries, wages, compensation or other emoluments to employees, in accordance with prescribed procedures, on the due date.

D4.2 The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the maintenance of proper national insurance, income tax and other statutory pay records and for the accurate and timely payment of pension contributions and other deductions to third parties

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D4.3 No new appointments or changes to arrangements for existing employees are permitted without adequate budget provision or approval from the Strategic Director of Resources/Strategic Leadership Team. All appointments shall be made in accordance with the Council's rules and approved establishments, grades and scales of pay.

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~~D4.42~~ The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall make arrangements for paying members travel or other allowances upon receiving the prescribed form, duly completed and ~~authorised~~ authorized within the required timescales. ~~The Strategic Director of Resources has the discretion in making payments outside of those timescales.~~

~~D4.53~~ ~~Corporate Team Members~~ Members of the Strategic Leadership Team and Heads of Service shall ensure that appointments are made in accordance with the regulations and policies of the Council and the approved staffing establishment, grades and scale of pay and that adequate budget provision is available.

~~D4.64~~ The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources and Human Resources shall be notified immediately of all appointments, terminations (including proposed redundancies and early retirements), or variations which may affect the pay or pension of an employee or former employee, ~~in the form required by the Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services).~~

~~D4.75~~ Officers authorising travel and subsistence claims and other allowances shall satisfy themselves that journeys were on Council business and expenses were properly and necessarily incurred, and that reimbursement is properly due from the Council, ensuring that cost-effective use of travel arrangements is achieved.

D4.~~86~~ Officers authorising travel claims must satisfy themselves that the vehicles used for council business are properly insured, taxed and roadworthy.

D4.~~79~~ Officers authorising payments shall satisfy themselves that work claimed for has actually been undertaken and/or in the case of goods that they have actually been received.

D4.~~108~~ The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) Strategic Director of~~ Resources shall be notified of the details of any benefits in kind received by employees, to enable full and complete reporting in accordance with Inland Revenue requirements.

D5 Taxation

Why is this important?

Like all organisations, the Council is responsible for ensuring its tax affairs are in order. Tax issues are often very complex and the penalties for incorrectly accounting for tax are severe. It is therefore very important for all officers to be aware of their role.

D5.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) Strategic Director of~~ Resources shall arrange for the correct completion and submission of all HM Revenue and Customs returns regarding PAYE.

D5.2 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) Strategic Director of~~ Resources shall arrange for the completion an accurate monthly return of VAT inputs and outputs to HM Revenue and Customs.

D5.3 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services) Strategic Director of~~ Resources shall arrange for the submission of all required details to the HM Revenue and Customs regarding the construction industry tax deduction scheme.

D5.4 Staff shall ensure that the correct VAT liability is attached to all income due and that all VAT recoverable on purchases complies with HM Revenue and Customs regulations, in accordance with guidance and instructions issued by the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources.

D5.5 Staff shall ensure that, where construction and maintenance works are undertaken, the contractor fulfils the necessary construction industry tax deduction requirements.

D5.6 Capital Schemes – There are VAT implications for de minimus exempt income calculation. There is a need to consult with the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and~~

~~Business Services) Strategic Director of on Resources on~~ VAT implications of all new schemes.

D5.7 Under no circumstances shall an Officer or Member use the auspices of the council to purchase goods or services for their own private purposes to avoid paying VAT. To do so may result in disciplinary action.

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D6 Partnerships

Why is this important?

Partnerships play a key role in delivering community strategies and in helping to promote and improve the well-being of the area. The Council is continually working in partnership with others – public agencies, private companies, community groups and voluntary organisations, in order to mobilise investment, bid for funds, champion the needs of the area and harness the energies of local people and community organisations.

D6.1 The main reasons for entering into a partnership are:

- (i) the desire to find new ways to share risk
- (ii) the ability to access new resources
- (iii) to provide new more efficient ways of delivering services
- (iv) to forge new relationships.

D6.2 A partner is defined as either:

- (i) an organisation (private or public) undertaking, part funding or participating as a beneficiary in a project or
- (ii) a body whose nature or status give it a right or obligation to support the project.

D6.3 Partners participate in projects by:

- (i) acting as a project deliverer or sponsor, solely or in concert with others.
- (ii) acting as a project funder or part funder.
- (iii) being the beneficiary group of the activity undertaken in a project.

D6.4 Partners have common responsibilities:

- (i) to be willing to take on a role in the broader programme appropriate to the skills and resources of the partner organization.
- (ii) to act in good faith at all times and in the best interests of the partnership's aims and objectives.
- (iii) be open about any conflict of interests that might arise.

- (iv) to encourage joint working and promote the sharing of information, resources and skills between public, private and community sectors.
- (v) to hold confidentially any information received as a result of partnership activities or duties that is of a confidential or commercially sensitive nature.
- (vi) to act wherever possible as ambassadors for the project.

D6.5 Where the Council's total financial commitment to any partnership project in terms of funding in cash or in kind is anticipated to exceed £2400,000, the following requirements must be agreed with the Strategic ~~Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Director of Resources.

- (i) a scheme appraisal for financial viability in both the current and future years.
- (ii) risk appraisal and management.
- (iii) resourcing, including taxation issues.
- (iv) audit, accounting, security and control requirements.
- (v) carry-forward arrangements.

D6.6 Partnership agreements and arrangements should not be entered into where they may impact adversely upon the services provided by the Council.

D6.7 Partnership agreements and arrangements shall be properly documented, in a format agreed by the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources and the Monitoring Officer.

D6.8 Where a partnership involves the procurement of goods or services, the requirements of the Council's Procurement and Procedure Rules relating to contracts and Financial Regulations must be followed in the selection of partner organisations and the workings of partnerships when Stroud District Council is the lead authority on procurement. Where the normal tendering arrangements are not appropriate the ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall agree a Service Level Agreement between the organisations involved.

D6.9 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of Resources shall be entitled to request sufficient information relating to any partnership agreement or arrangement to make entries in the Council's accounting records or any disclosure in the Council's statement of accounts which may be required.

D7 External Funding

Why is this important?

External funding is potentially a very important source of income, but funding conditions need to be carefully considered to ensure that they are compatible with the

aims and objectives of the Council. Local authorities are increasingly encouraged to provide seamless service delivery through working closely with other agencies and private service providers. Funds from external agencies such as the National Lottery and the Home Office provide additional resources to enable the Council to deliver services to the local community. However, in some instances, although the scope for external funding has increased, such funding is linked to tight specifications and may not be flexible enough to link to the Council's overall plan.

- D7.1 The ~~Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)~~ Strategic Director of ~~shall~~Resources shall be notified in advance of all funding to be received from external bodies and shall make arrangements for the proper receipt and recording of such funding in the Council's accounting records.
- D7.2 ~~Corporate Team~~ Strategic Leadership Team Members ~~Members of the Strategic Leadership Team~~ and Heads of Service shall ensure that bids or applications for external funding are only made where they can be justified in terms of the Council's aims and objectives, and that suitable and sufficient resources can be allocated to comply with any funding, administration and accounting requirements without adversely impacting upon the Council's existing services.
- D7.3 Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring compliance with all grant conditions placed by external funders upon grant income received. This includes appropriate liaison with Internal Audit and the relevant member of the Strategic Leadership Team, as required, to ensure sign off requirements are met.

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STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2022

Report Title	Parish and Town Council Charter			
Purpose of Report	To adopt the Parish and Town Council Charter between Stroud District Council and Parish and Town Councils within the Stroud district.			
Decision(s)	The Council RESOLVES to: a) Adopt the Parish and Town Council 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.			
Consultation and Feedback	All Town and Parish Councils in the Stroud district, The Leadership and Management Team and District Councillors.			
Report Author	Hannah Barton, Policy & Projects Officer Email: hannah.barton@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	An alternative option is to not adopt the Charter and SDC and Parish and Town Councils continue to work together on an ad hoc basis, without a framework that provides support and guidance, and without any centralised monitoring and review.			
Background Papers	None.			
Appendices	Appendix A – Parish and Town Council Charter Appendix B – Annual schedule of events Appendix C – Protocol for using Parish and Town Council Hub Appendix D – Equality Impact Assessment			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	Yes	No

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 There are 51 Parish and Town Councils and two Parish Meetings in the Stroud district. They are responsible for an array of services to meet local needs ranging from litter bins to community safety schemes. Parish and Town Councils have a depth of insight into their local communities that may not be achievable for Stroud District Council (SDC), whilst SDC can provide the scale and resources to bring local goals to fruition.
- 1.2 One of the key activities outlined in the Council Plan (CW3.3) is to ‘work with Town and Parish Councils to develop, agree and implement a new strategic approach for partnership working between district, towns and parishes, including specific support for rural communities.’
- 1.3 The importance of this piece of work was reinforced by the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge as one of the recommendations from their March visit was to ‘consider the pace of working with town and parish councils.’

PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL 'WORKING BETTER TOGETHER' WORKING GROUP

- 1.4 At the beginning of this year all Parish and Town councils in the district were contacted to join a working group to explore how we can work together more effectively in partnership. 23 Parish and Town Councils registered an interest in joining the working group, and the first working group meeting took place on 10 February 2022.
- 1.5 There have been six working group meetings in total, with the agendas set in collaboration with working group members and including topics highlighted by Parish and Town Councils as being of particular importance and relevance. Alison Robinson, the Chief Executive of the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC) has also attended all the working group meetings.
- 1.6 During the initial working group meetings, a 'Consideration Log' was maintained which consisted of feedback and comments from working group members on the way in which Parish and Town Councils and SDC work together.
- 1.7 The feedback collated using the Consideration Log was largely across five key themes:
 - consultation,
 - communication,
 - working in partnership,
 - engagement, and
 - resources.

This feedback has been used to inform the development of the Parish and Town Council Charter (Appendix A and section 2).

- 1.8 Other key outcomes from the working group have been the annual schedule of events (Appendix B and section 4) and the Parish and Town Council Hub (section 3).

2. PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL CHARTER

- 2.1 The Parish and Town Council Charter has been developed to provide a clear and mutual understanding of roles and expectations of officers and members of both SDC and Parish and Town Councils. It promotes partnership working and co-operation between SDC and Parish and Town Councils beyond statutory frameworks and will assist with developing improved working relationships between councils.
- 2.2 By creating a Charter that sets out how SDC and Parish and Town Councils will work effectively in partnership, the challenges faced by local communities can be better addressed, local decision making can be strengthened, and engagement with residents can be improved.
- 2.3 The Charter includes commitments that are split into the five key themes listed in paragraph 1.7. The commitments are set out so that for each commitment SDC makes to Parish and Town Councils, there is an equivalent commitment that Parish and Town Councils make to SDC. The working group felt it was important to use this layout to demonstrate that the commitments are reciprocal and have been developed collaboratively.

CONSULTATION

- 2.4 The Charter was initially presented to the Parish and Town Council working group in May, where feedback was received and incorporated into a second draft. This version received positive feedback from the working group and was agreed upon as the version to be put out for wider consultation.
- 2.5 This version of the Charter was presented to the Leadership and Management Team (LMT) in the summer to confirm that the SDC commitments within the Charter could be met, to ensure the Charter was not missing anything, and to seek general feedback. LMT were given several weeks to take these questions and the draft Charter back to their teams for consideration and input, and questions and concerns raised through this process were discussed at the three directorate manager meetings in September. Following this, feedback from officers was incorporated, and it was confirmed that all the SDC commitments included were achievable.
- 2.6 The revised version of the Charter was then consulted on with all SDC Members and all Parish and Town Councils, including those not involved in the working group. The four-week consultation period with SDC Members included a member briefing on 13 October, where questions and feedback were discussed. The Charter was positively received by SDC Members, with only one amendment to the Charter arising from this consultation. This was the addition of the commitment regarding copying District Councillors into important communication regarding their respective ward/s.
- 2.7 Consultation with all Parish and Town Councils took place over a six-week period, with responses being requested via a short survey. The questions included in the survey were:
- Are there any Town and Parish Council commitments that you think will restrict you from adopting the Charter because you are unsure whether or not you will be able to meet or deliver on these requirements?
 - Do you think there are any additional commitments Stroud District Council or Town and Parish Councils should be making in the Charter?
 - Do you think your Town or Parish Council will adopt the Charter?
 - If not, what changes would need to be made before your Town or Parish Council considers adopting the Charter?
 - Do you think there is anything else missing from the Charter that you would like to see included?
 - Do you have any other feedback on the Charter or is there anything that is unclear or requires further clarification?
- 2.8 27 Parish and Town Councils responded to the consultation. Of those who responded, 85% said they thought their Council would adopt the Charter. The remaining 15% said they were unsure, and no respondents said they thought their Council would not adopt the Charter.
- 2.9 The Parish and Town Councils who said they were unsure if they would adopt the Charter provided specific feedback on the reasons for this, and suggested changes that would encourage them to adopt it. Where possible these changes have been implemented. If there are still any Parish and Town Councils who are uncertain whether to adopt the Charter, the Corporate Policy and Governance team will be arranging a meeting with each Council individually to discuss concerns and questions and provide clarification and reassurance where necessary.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 2.10 The Charter will be reviewed annually with Parish and Town Councils and SDC officers to ensure the Charter remains fit for purpose and adaptable to the changing local government landscape. The annual review will include an invitation to all Parish and Town Councils to attend a meeting of the working group to provide their feedback.
- 2.11 Parish and Town Councils will monitor the effectiveness of the Charter and decide whether the Charter has been upheld by SDC. The working group will consider views put forwards by Parish and Town Councils as part of the annual review.
- 2.12 The annual review will also include a monitoring exercise conducted by SDC, who will review their relationship with Parish and Town Councils and their performance against the commitments set out in the Charter. The Alliance Leadership Team will be made aware of any feedback and changes made to the Charter through the annual review process.
- 2.13 The Charter will be updated to reflect the outcomes of the annual review and to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHARTER

- 2.14 If the Charter is adopted by Council, it will be circulated to all Parish and Town Councils to adopt. Through the consultation period it can be assumed that at least 23 Parish and Town Councils will adopt the Charter straight away. For the Parish and Town Councils who may be unsure if they would adopt the Charter, it is hoped that individual meetings to discuss how their concerns are being addressed and to provide reassurance will encourage them to also adopt the Charter. The Parish and Town Councils who have not engaged with the working group or the consultation on the Charter will be encouraged to adopt the Charter through communications that will outline the benefits of the Charter and the other outcomes of the working group. Meetings with these Parish and Town Councils will be arranged where requested or where further explanation or clarification is required.
- 2.15 SDC Members will be encouraged to be ambassadors of the Charter to encourage adoption in their area.
- 2.16 A comprehensive communications campaign will be rolled out to ensure all officers and Members are aware of the Charter and understand the commitments within it. This will include posts on the officer Hub, Members Hub and Parish and Town Council Hub, an item on an upcoming Proud of Stroud agenda, and information briefings. Awareness of the Charter has already been raised through the extensive consultation that has taken place.

3. PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL HUB

- 3.1 From the outset of the working group meetings, one of the main issues raised by Parish and Town Councils has been the inconsistency in communication from and with SDC. To address this and to easily share information tailored for Parish and Town councils, an online 'Hub' has been created.
- 3.2 The Parish and Town Council Hub is a website, accessed via a logon, that functions similarly to the Members' Hub. It will host information such as contact details, mapping tools, press releases and other relevant information and resources. It also includes the ability to post comments on posts and news items, enabling Parish and Town Councils to interact with each other and share knowledge, information, and good practice.

- 3.3 The Hub should enable collaboration and communication between SDC and Parish and Town Councils, as well as between Parish and Town Councils. It has been very well received by the working group, and two Parish Councils have tested the site and their feedback has been incorporated.
- 3.4 The Hub has been built internally using Sharepoint. As this is a product already used by SDC there is no cost associated with setting up this new site.
- 3.5 A protocol for using the Hub (Appendix C) has been developed which includes some principles and 'dos and don'ts' for using the Hub. By accessing the Hub, Parish and Town Councils agree to be bound by this protocol.
- 3.6 The Hub will be managed by the Democratic Services team in the same way as the Members' Hub is currently monitored and managed.

4. ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 4.1 The annual schedule of events has been developed to provide a useful resource that outlines key events and training opportunities relevant to Parish and Town Councils over the course of the year.
- 4.2 It is designed to be a useful tool to clearly show Parish and Town Councils all the events that are relevant for them over the year. This includes existing meetings like the Community Services Information Network meetings, and the new Strategic Forum meetings which will be an opportunity to showcase upcoming opportunities for SDC and Town and Parish Councils to work together, for example on policies or funding bids.
- 4.3 Training has been one of the most requested things from the Parish and Town Council working group meetings as Parish and Town Councils would like SDC to share their knowledge and expertise where possible. A list of requested training topics was compiled by the working group and cross-referenced with the training already provided by GAPTC to ensure topics were not duplicated.
- 4.4 At the beginning of each calendar year, service areas will be asked to consider what training from these topics their service area can provide, and if there are other training topics Parish and Town Councils could benefit from. These training opportunities will be included on the annual schedule of events that will be published at the beginning of the municipal year. Parish and Town Councils will also periodically be asked if there is any other training they would like provided, and the feasibility of providing training on these topics will be explored as they arise.
- 4.5 The Parish and Town working group have agreed they would be willing to pay a nominal fee for training, to cover the time and resources required to provide training. This would also put SDC in line with other training providers like GAPTC and South Gloucestershire Council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications from this decision. All of the work has been supported through existing budgets and resources.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources

Tel: 01453 754115 Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk

4.2 Legal Implications

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

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

4.3 Equality Implications

Parish and Town Councils work closely with and have a depth of insight into the needs of their local communities. Strengthening relationships between the District Council and Parish and Town Councils will assist with fulfilling the Public Sector Equality Duty including by eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Section 6 of the Charter includes a statement on the Council's and Parish and Town Council's commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and can be found at appendix D.

4.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL CHARTER



Between Stroud District Council and the Parish and Town Councils of the Stroud district.

1 Introduction

There are three tiers of local government in the Stroud district: Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud District Council, 51 parish councils and two parish meetings. Local councils are at the heart of the Stroud district community, and all tiers of local government share the same ambitions to serve our residents.

Local government is responsible for many vital services and in the Stroud district each tier has its own responsibilities. Some of the services Gloucestershire County Council is responsible for include social care, schools, and highways, and some of the services Stroud District Council is responsible for include housing, planning, waste collection, and licensing. Parish councils are responsible for an array of services to meet local needs ranging from litter bins to community safety schemes. It is recognised that it can be difficult to differentiate between the functions of each tier of government.

Agenda Item 10

Parish councils have a depth of insight into the needs of their local communities that may not be achievable for the County or District Council, whilst the County and District Councils can provide the scale and resources to bring local goals to fruition. It is recognised that greater partnership working between all tiers of local government can add significant value to the services we provide to the community. Parish councillors, their clerks and other officers have unparalleled knowledge of their communities, and by working together effectively we can strengthen local decision making and improve engagement with residents.

This Charter has the support of the Gloucestershire Association of Town and Parish Councils.

This Charter has been prepared by a working group of Stroud District Council officers and representatives from parish councils. Feedback and input from the following parish councils has contributed to the development of this Charter:

- Berkeley Town Council
- Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council
- Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council
- Cainscross Town Council
- Cam Parish Council
- Chalford Parish Council
- Dursley Town Council
- Eastington Parish Council
- Fretherne-with-Saul Parish Council
- Frocester Parish Council
- Hardwicke Parish Council
- Haresfield Parish Council
- Hillesley and Tresham Parish Council
- Hinton Parish Council
- Horsley Parish Council
- Kingswood Parish Council
- Leonard Stanley Parish Council
- Nailsworth Town Council
- Painswick Parish Council
- Rodborough Parish Council
- Slimbridge Parish Council
- Stonehouse Town Council
- Stroud Town Council
- Upton St Leonards Parish Council
- Whiteshill and Ruscombe Parish Council
- Woodchester Parish Council
- Wotton-under-Edge Town Council

1.1 Terms and definitions

In this Charter:

Consultation refers to seeking feedback and input on documents and/or policy, funding bids and/or services. It should have a clear beginning, middle and end. It is one form of engagement.

Engagement refers to a broader and ongoing process of working with communities and encouraging productive relationships.

Parish Council refers to all Parish Councils, Town Councils and Parish Meetings.

2 Aim

This Charter has been developed to provide a clear and mutual understanding of roles and expectations, develop good working relationships between councils, and promote partnership working within and beyond statutory frameworks.

By creating a framework for parish councils and Stroud District Council to work effectively in partnership, we can better address the challenges faced by our local communities and make the whole of the district a better place to live, work and visit for everyone.

3 Principles

Stroud District Council and parish councils in the Stroud district will:

- Work together to make the district a better place to live, work and visit for everyone.
- Value and respect the roles and responsibilities of our respective councils and understand that we have a common purpose to serve the residents of the district.
- Work in partnership to bring together the strengths that each council has for the good of local communities, as well as to address the challenges faced in the wider district.
- Recognise that Stroud District Council and parish councils within the district exist as separate bodies and have separate tax raising powers.
- Achieve the commitments in this Charter by:
 - Valuing the people and businesses that make up our communities;
 - Putting the people in our communities at the heart of everything we do;
 - Maintaining high ethical standards, respecting and valuing each other; and
 - Providing practical support to help each other wherever possible.



4 Commitments

The table below sets out the two-way commitments between Stroud District Council (SDC) and parish councils in the district:

		Stroud District Council will:	Parish Councils will:
Consultation		Coordinate consultation across the council to avoid duplication.	
		Adhere to statutory requirements for consultation and allow as much time as possible for parish councils to respond. The cycle of parish council meetings will be taken into account whenever possible and SDC will endeavour to involve parish councils at the earliest opportunity.	Respond to consultations within the timeframe (if a response is to be made) or request an extension in good time before the deadline. If required and where possible, additional council meetings will be convened or other mechanisms such as delegation to a committee will be considered to meet the consultation deadline.
		Provide a clear timeframe at the outset of any consultation, including a deadline for responses.	Provide a clear timeframe at the outset of any consultation, including a deadline for responses.
		Respond to consultations within the timeframe (if a response is to be made). Mechanisms such as delegation to a Strategic Director or Head of Service will be put in place to meet the consultation deadline.	Provide an appropriate period for consultation but always aim to provide a minimum of 6 weeks.
		Provide consultation documentation in an accessible format that can be easily shared at parish council meetings.	Share consultation documentation at parish council meetings where relevant.
		Consult parish councils on all planning applications in their town or parish and give appropriate weight to the local opinions they express when determining them.	Where appropriate, seek local opinion on planning applications in their town or parish and feed them back to SDC.
		Where appropriate, consult parish councils on all applications in their town or parish made under Tree Preservation Order regulations.	Where appropriate, provide comment on applications made under Tree Preservation Order regulations.

Communications

Notify parish councils of licensing applications in their parish.	Refer to the SDC website or contact the Licensing team if more information on specific licensing applications is required.
Be willing to seek a mutually satisfactory solution in areas of difficulty/disagreement.	Be willing to seek a mutually satisfactory solution in areas of difficulty/disagreement.
Adhere to the customer care principles set out in the Our Service Standards , including minimum expectations for response times.	Treat everyone using or providing council services politely and with respect.
Respond to emails received to shared service area email addresses in the timeframes outlined in Our Service Standards .	Utilise the shared service area email addresses as far as possible to streamline communications and ensure queries can be responded to by the most appropriate officer.
Answer and respond to phone calls in the timeframes outlined in Our Service Standards .	Direct phone calls to SDC Customer Services in the first instance, so the query can be passed onto the most appropriate team/officer.
Share organograms with shared service area email addresses.	Inform SDC's Democratic Services team of changes to councillors and clerks, including notifying them of vacancies and providing them with a copy of the Casual Vacancy Notice. Provide Democratic Services with up-to-date contact details, and if the Clerk is part-time, inform SDC of the most appropriate days/times to make contact.
Keep parish councils informed through the eNews, press releases and the Hub.	Use local newsletters and websites to disseminate information and consultations to local communities.
Ensure that service delivery changes are communicated.	Ensure that service delivery changes are communicated.

Working in Partnership

Acknowledge results of surveys conducted by parish councils and use data shared with SDC to inform service delivery where appropriate.

Seek to keep the residents in the town or parish informed of local government matters and seek to assess public opinion through meetings, newsletters and surveys that follow good practice where relevant. Where appropriate, make the results of surveys available to SDC.

Inform all staff and councillors of this Charter's commitments and ensure they uphold them.

Inform councillors, Clerks and any town or parish council staff of this Charter's commitments and request they uphold them.

Hold working groups or consultation events for the development of significant strategies and funding bids.

Aim to attend working groups or consultation events that are relevant to the town or parish and actively participate.

District/ward councillors will aim to attend parish council meetings in their ward.

Inform the district/ward councillor of town or parish meetings, particularly where topics to be discussed have relevance to the district council.

Copy the relevant Stroud District Councillor into communications of importance to parish councils.

Copy the relevant Stroud District Councillor into communications of importance to SDC.

Recognise the contribution of parish councils when working together and acknowledge partnership working in all publicity where practical.

Recognise the contribution of SDC when working together and acknowledge partnership working in all publicity where practical.

Support, provide information and work with parish councils wishing to undertake a neighbourhood plan under the Localism Act 2011.

Approach SDC's Planning Strategy team if their town or parish wishes to undertake a neighbourhood plan.

Communicate emergency plans with parish councils in a timely manner and work with parishes in response to emergencies.

Work with SDC in response to emergencies that affect their town or parish.

Engagement

Where appropriate, endeavour to involve parish councils at the beginning of discussions on Government initiatives, community planning, and funding opportunities.

Engage in discussions on Government initiatives, community planning and funding opportunities, where relevant.

Explore the development of joint framework agreements between SDC and parish councils, where relevant and appropriate.

Propose joint framework agreements where an opportunity for one is identified.

The Monitoring Officer will promote the [Civility and Respect Pledge](#) to maintain high standards of conduct and provide Code of Conduct training for councillors.

Councillors will attend Code of Conduct training and engage with the Monitoring Officer to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

Invite all parish councils to meetings and other events arranged for their benefit.

Aim to be represented at these meetings and events and actively engage in them.

Where possible, record meetings so the recording can be shared with parish councils unable to attend.

Share recordings and disseminate content where relevant.

When requested, senior officers will attend ward walks when there are specific major issues in a town or parish. Ward councillors will be invited to attend.

Invite officers and/or councillors to attend ward walks when there are specific major issues in a town or parish.

Invite all Parish councillors and clerks to a biannual Strategic Forum to receive briefings and presentations from SDC on key issues and developments and consider other issues of common interest to parish councils.

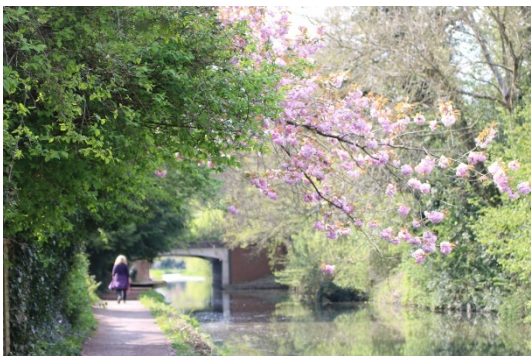
Aim to be represented at these meetings and events and actively engage in them.

Bring together representatives from all parish councils at an annual Town and Parish Council Working Group for the purposes of conducting an annual review of this Charter, formulating proposals for the Strategic

Aim to be represented at these meetings and events and actively engage in them.

	<p>Forums, encouraging networking and sharing of best practice amongst local councils.</p>	
<p>Resources</p>	<p>Provide resources and relevant information, events, and opportunities on the Town and Parish Council Hub.</p>	<p>Use the Town and Parish Council Hub as the first port of call for any information, support, or queries.</p>
	<p>Produce a schedule of training opportunities open to parish councils, working with GAPTC and training partners to avoid duplication of topics.</p>	<p>Aim to attend training events where relevant and make councillors and staff aware of training opportunities that may be beneficial.</p>
	<p>Make procurement templates and guidance available on the Town and Parish Council Hub and provide basic procurement training that gives an overview of procurement and public contract regulations, as part of the annual training programme. (Please note this is in addition to training provided by GAPTC and aims not to duplicate content). SDC cannot provide further advice on procurement.</p>	<p>Access the procurement resources available on the Town and Parish Council Hub if seeking procurement guidance from SDC.</p> <p>Seek independent legal advice for any guidance beyond what has been provided on the Hub.</p>

5 2030 Strategy



The district council and parish councils will always act as an example in the community and be an enabler and encourager of positive action to become carbon neutral by 2030. Through our services, policies and projects we will demonstrate leadership, doing everything in our power to collaboratively achieve ecosystem restoration and a just transition to a carbon neutral and resilient district.

6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The district council and parish councils are committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. This means treating people fairly, valuing differences and removing the barriers that prevent people from fully participating in public life and realising their full potential.



7 Information Governance

The district council and parish councils understand that sharing data responsibly is important to deliver our services and respect individuals' privacy. When sharing data, the councils agree to:

- Promote a more joined up approach to service delivery across the district by ensuring access to information is efficient, appropriate, and lawful.
- Be clear about the purpose of sharing information and share only the minimum and necessary information required to achieve the purpose.
- Provide information to individuals about why and how the councils process personal data.
- Ensure there are adequate technical and organisational measures in place to keep information secure and held only for as long as it is required.

More information on data sharing in local councils can be found on the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\) website](#).

8 Performance, Monitoring and Review

This Charter is intended to be flexible and adaptable to the changing circumstances and arrangements for local government. This will be achieved by an annual review of the Charter by a Town and Parish Council Working Group, to keep pace with developments.

The parish councils will monitor the effectiveness of the Charter. The parish councils will decide whether or not, on balance, the Charter has been upheld by SDC and will, as they consider

Appropriate to submit views for consideration by the Town and Parish Council Working Group as part of the annual review.

SDC will also conduct an annual monitoring exercise, reviewing from their perspective, their relationship with the parish councils and their commitments set out in the Charter.

9 Managing Relationships

All councils who have signed this charter will make every effort to resolve any disputes relating to this charter. The proposed method is as follows where the parties will focus on reaching a consensual resolution:

- If a parish council is dissatisfied with the actions of SDC then in the first instance, they should raise their concern with the relevant service area. If the parish council remains dissatisfied, they may submit a complaint to the service area in accordance with SDC's published procedure for dealing with complaints and compliments.
- If a parish council is dissatisfied with the actions of SDC arising from this Charter, but which are not specific to a service area, the parish council may submit a complaint to policy@stroud.gov.uk, where it will be investigated and arranged for an appropriate response to be submitted.

10 Related Documents

- [The Gloucestershire Charter \(2016\)](#) – A shared commitment between Gloucestershire County Council and the parish and town councils of Gloucestershire. If the Gloucestershire Charter is updated, the Stroud district Charter will be reviewed to ensure the two are aligned.
- [Statement of Community Involvement](#) – SDC's strategy for community involvement in the planning process.
- [Our Service Standards](#) – A document setting out SDC's customer service commitments to residents and communities.



Document Responsibility			Appendix A
Name	Document title	Service	
Hannah Barton, Policy & Projects Officer	Parish and Town Council Charter	Corporate Policy & Governance	

Document Version Control			
Date	Version	Issued by	Summary of changes
10 May 2022	1.0	Policy & Projects Officer	First draft
23 May 2022	1.1	Policy & Projects Officer	Updated following feedback from Corporate Policy and Governance Manager and Senior Policy and Governance Officer
27 May 2022	1.2	Policy & Projects Officer	Updated following feedback from Town and Parish Council working group meeting, and to include suggested statements on the 2030 strategy and ED&I
1 July 2022	1.3	Policy & Projects Officer	Updated following further consultation with Town and Parish Council working group members
27 July 2022	1.4	Policy & Projects Officer	Updated following Town and Parish Council working group meeting, and to include a section on information governance
12 August 2022	1.5	Policy & Projects Officer	Commitment regarding procurement added
16 September 2022	2.0	Policy & Projects Officer	Updated following consultation with Leadership and Management Team
31 October 2022	3.0	Policy & Projects Officer	Updated following consultation with Members
11 November 2022	4.0	Policy & Projects Officer	Updated following consultation with all Parish Councils and feedback from Monitoring Officer
18 November 2022	5.0	Policy & Projects Officer	New document format

Policy Review			
Updating frequency	Review date	Person responsible	Service
Annually	December 2023	Policy & Projects Officer	Corporate Policy & Governance

Document Review and Approvals		
Name	Action	Date
Name of staff member/committee that has reviewed and/or approved the policy	E.g. consulted, reviewed, approved	Date of review or approval

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ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS 2022-2023

PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

NAME OF EVENT	FREQUENCY	DATE/S
STRATEGIC FORUM MEETINGS	BIANNUAL	7 December 2022
COMMUNITY SERVICES INFORMATION NETWORK EVENINGS	BIANNUAL	TBC
MARKET TOWNS FORUM	QUARTERLY	TBC
PROCUREMENT WORKSHOP	ANNUAL	TBC
PLANNING TRAINING	ANNUAL	TBC
LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE TRAINING	ANNUAL	TBC
CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING	ANNUAL	TBC
GDPR TRAINING	ANNUAL	TBC
HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING	ANNUAL	TBC
ELECTIONS TRAINING	BEFORE ELECTIONS	TBC
AFFORDABLE HOUSING SITES	ANNUAL	TBC

DECEMBER 2022							JANUARY 2023							FEBRUARY 2023							MARCH 2023							APRIL 2023							MAY 2023						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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							30	31																																	

JUNE 2023							JULY 2023							AUGUST 2023							SEPTEMBER 2023							OCTOBER 2023							NOVEMBER 2023							
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							31																					30	31													



Protocol for using Town and Parish Council Hub

November 2022

Corporate Policy and
Governance

Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill
Stroud
GL5 4UB

Email: customer.services@stroud.gov.uk
Website: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/>
Telephone: 01453 766321

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and scope

- (a) This protocol outlines the expected conduct for using the Town and Parish Council Hub.
- (b) The protocol applies to all Town and Parish Councillors, Clerks and other staff who use the Town and Parish Council Hub.

1.2 Background

The Town and Parish Council Hub (“the Hub”) is an online site that has been created by Stroud District Council (SDC) to enable collaboration and communication between Town and Parish Councils in the Stroud District and SDC.

The Hub includes the ability to post comments on posts and news items, enabling Town and Parish Councils to interact with each other and share knowledge, information and good practice.

Please read this protocol carefully before accessing the Hub. By accessing the Hub, you agree to be bound by this protocol. Any use of the Hub, or the forum facility of the Hub, that goes against the conduct outlined in this protocol will result in access to the Hub being suspended or terminated.

2 PRINCIPLES

- The Hub is intended to be for the benefit of all Town and Parish Councils within the Stroud district, to enable them to make comments or seek (and offer) advice amongst themselves.
- As part of the Hub’s forum facility, users may post, upload or contribute content to the Hub. You are solely responsible for all content that you post.
- In posting or sharing content to the Hub, please keep in mind that this will be accessible by other users and may be used and re-shared. SDC is not responsible for what you post or share on the Hub.
- The Hub may only be used by Town and Parish Councillors, Clerks, other Town and Parish Council staff and SDC officers. Access must be requested through SDC’s Corporate Policy and Governance team, and a list of authorised users will be maintained.
- Access will only be given to Town or Parish Council domain email addresses e.g. @camparishcouncil.co.uk; and not to personal email addresses or email addresses that do not have a dedicated domain name.
- Any information posted in the forum is for the designated users of the forum only.

3 DOS AND DON'TS

3.1 Do

- Use the Hub as a tool for sharing information and knowledge with other Town and Parish Councils and SDC.
- Review the Hub for information you are looking for before raising a query with SDC officers.
- Treat other users of the Hub with respect and only make posts that are polite and inoffensive.
- Contact the Corporate Policy and Governance team to update the list of authorised users for the Hub when there is a change in Councillors or staff.
- Search to see if your topic has already been raised and answered before you start a new post.

3.2 Don't

- Post comments that you would not be prepared to make face-to-face.
- Use the Hub or forum facility of the Hub to insult, abuse, defame or otherwise make negative, offensive or discriminatory comments about Council staff, service users, their family or friends, colleagues, SDC or Town and Parish Councils.
- Publish the personal data of individuals unless you have their express permission to do so for that purpose.
- Use the Hub to discuss individual or specific cases that would not be of benefit to other users of the forum e.g. particular planning applications.
- Use the Hub to seek to mislead other users in any way.
- Disclose confidential information.

Any posts considered unsuitable for any of the above reasons will be moderated or removed.

4 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

Information on the Town and Parish Council Hub is held by Stroud District Council and therefore may be admissible as part of a relevant freedom of information or individual rights request.

Posts on the Hub will be kept for three years.

5 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Parish and Town Council Charter

Document Responsibility		
Name	Document title	Service
Policy & Projects Officer	Protocol for using Town and Parish Council Hub	Corporate Policy & Governance

Document Version Control			
Date	Version	Issued by	Summary of changes
3 August 2022	1.0	Policy & Projects Officer	First draft
26 September 2022	2.0	Policy & Projects Officer	Updated following officer feedback

Policy Review			
Updating frequency	Review date	Person responsible	Service
Annually	November 2023	Policy & Projects Officer	Corporate Policy & Governance

Document Review and Approvals		
Name	Action	Date
Name of staff member/committee that has reviewed and/or approved the policy	E.g. consulted, reviewed, approved	Date of review or approval

Equality Analysis Form

By completing this form you will provide evidence of how your service is helping to meet Stroud District Council's General Equality duty:

The Equality Act 2010 states that:

*A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have **due regard** to the need to –*

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are listed in Question 9

Stroud District Equality data can be found at: <https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/>

Please see Appendix 1 for a good example of a completed EIA.

[Guidance available on the HUB](#)

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Name(s): Hannah Barton	Telephone:
	E-Mail: hannah.barton@stroud.gov.uk
Service: Corporate Policy and Governance	Date of Assessment: 23 November 2022

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Parish and Town Council Charter

Is this new or an existing one? **New** (please delete as appropriate)

3. Briefly describe its aims and objectives

<p>This Charter has been developed to provide a clear and mutual understanding of roles and expectations, develop good working relationships between councils, and promote partnership working within and beyond statutory frameworks.</p> <p>By creating a framework for parish councils and Stroud District Council to work effectively in</p>
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partnership, we can better address the challenges faced by our local communities and make the whole of the district a better place to live, work and visit for everyone.

4. Are there external considerations? (Legislation / government directive, etc)

There are some statutory requirements for working and consulting with parish and town councils, and this Charter goes beyond those requirements.

5. Who is intended to benefit from it and in what way?

Both SDC officers and parish and town council clerks, staff and councillors should benefit from this Charter as it sets out clear roles and expectations for all parties.

6. What outcomes are expected?

- Greater awareness of the relationship between SDC and parish and town councils and the roles and expectations of each.
- Fostering good relationships between SDC and parish and town councils.
- Improved partnership working between SDC and parish and town councils.

7. What evidence has been used for this assessment?: (eg Research, previous consultations, Inform (MAIDEN); Google assessments carried out by other Authorities)

- Several working group meetings with parish and town councils where feedback on the current working relationship between SDC and parish and town councils was given and grouped into themes.
- Responses to the consultation held with LMT, Members and all parish and town councils in the district.
- Charters adopted by other local authorities, including GCC's [Gloucestershire Charter](#).

8. Has any consultation been carried out?

Yes

Details of consultation

The Charter was developed in collaboration with a parish and town council working group, including representation from the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC).

This draft of Charter was consulted on with SDC managers to ensure that the SDC commitments were achievable and there were not any missing.

An updated version of the Charter was then consulted on with Members and all parish and town

councils in the district, including those not involved in the working group. Feedback and comments from parish and town councils were collated using an online survey, and 27 parish and town councils responded to the consultation in total. Feedback from this consultation was incorporated into the current version of the Charter which is being submitted to Council for adoption.

If NO please outline any planned activities

9. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?

(Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure)

Protected Group	Type of impact, reason and any evidence (from Q7 & 8)
Age	The Charter will not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics.
Disability	Improving the relationship between the district council and parish and town councils will bring us closer to our communities and increase our awareness of issues affecting them. By working in partnership with parish and town councils we can then address these issues more effectively.
Gender Re-assignment	
Pregnancy & Maternity	
Race	
Religion – Belief	
Sex	
Sexual Orientation	
Marriage & Civil Partnerships (part (a) of duty only)	
Rural considerations: le Access to services; transport; education; employment;	Some parish and town councils represent rural areas that have limited access to services, transport and employment. Whilst the Charter does not specifically address these access issues, it does intend to standardise communication and engagement with parish and town councils, therefore ensuring that those in rural areas are not prohibited from being involved based on their location.

broadband;	
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10. If you have identified a negative impact in question 9, what actions have you undertaken or do you plan to undertake to lessen or negate this impact?


Please transfer any actions to your Service Action plan on Excelsis.

Action(s):	Lead officer	Resource	Timescale

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function * (delete those which do not apply) and where a negative impact has been identified, actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact.

We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment

Completed by: Hannah Barton	Date: 28 November 2022
Role: Policy and Projects Officer	
Countersigned by Head of Service/Director: 	Date: 6 December 2022

Date for Review: Please forward an electronic copy to eka.nowakowska@stroud.gov.uk