



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 8 December 2022

7.00 pm - 9.13 pm

Council Chamber

### Minutes

#### Membership

##### **Councillor Chloe Turner (Chair)**

Councillor Martin Brown

\* Councillor Christopher Evans

Councillor Lindsey Green

Councillor Steve Hynd

\* Councillor George James

\* Councillor Haydn Jones

\* Absent

##### **Councillor Robin Drury-Layfield (Vice-Chair)**

Councillor Norman Kay

Councillor Ashley Smith

\* Councillor Haydn Sutton

Councillor Brian Tipper

Councillor Tricia Watson

#### Officers in Attendance

Strategic Director of Place

Managing Director, UBICO

Finance Director, Ubico

Senior Community Infrastructure Officer

Community Services Manager

Accountant

Democracy & Information Governance Officer

#### Others in Attendance

Strategic Director of Communities

Head of Community Services

#### EC.025 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Evans, James, Jones and Sutton.

#### EC.026 Declaration of Interests

There were none.

#### EC.027 Minutes

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022 were approved as a correct record

#### EC.028 Public Question Time

Public questions were submitted. They were answered by the Chair, Councillor Turner. Supplementary questions were also answered. ([Refer to the recording of the meeting](#)) and [Item 4](#).

**EC.029**      **Member Questions**

There were none.

**EC.030**      **Ubico Annual Presentation**

The Managing Director and Finance Director of Ubico provided Members of the Committee with an update which included the respective timescales and process for the adoption of their Business plan and provided detail on the themes (People, Operational Excellence, Climate and Business Development) that underpinned their plan and supported Ubico's current vision. They advised they had been awarded a National Cycling awarded and would continue to develop their apprenticeship programme, to work with partners to evaluate climate opportunities and align Carbon Strategies and explore more opportunities for expanding services with Ubico's partners.

The following answers were provided to Members questions:

- Ubico had undertaken work to better understand their carbon emission and impact in relation to their fleet vehicles, which included electric vehicles and to explore where further learning was required.
- Ubico were about to seek support from their partners to launch a social media campaign relating to road safety for their workers and public.

**EC.031**      **Environment Committee Budget Monitoring Report Q2 2022/23**

The Accountant introduced the report and advised Committee of the forecast return as of the 30<sup>th</sup> September which included the recently agreed pay award. She continued and advised the most significant variance was on the Multi-Service contract as a result of fuel costs, vehicle hire and repair costs.

There were no questions from Members. Proposed by Councillor Watson and Seconded by Councillor Tipper.

Councillor Watson gave thanks to the Council for providing staff with sensible pay rises and supporting Ubico as a result of the Cost of Living Crisis.

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

**RESOLVED**      **To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund Revenue budget and the Capital Programme for this Committee.**

**EC.032**      **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REVENUE ESTIMATES – REVISED 2022/23 AND ORIGINAL 2023/24**

The Accountant informed Committee of a typo in paragraph 4.4 which should state 2023 instead of 2022 relating to the Local Plan. She continued and introduced the report highlighting key variances, any proposed budget adjustments and fees and charges growth of 5% from inflation (unless stated otherwise) in line with the Budget Strategy for 2023/24 which included the pay award. Contract increases of 9.9% were also applied with the Multi-Service (Ubico) contract being the most significant increase due to fuel and utility costs.

In response to Councillor Kay's question referencing paragraph 3.5 and table 2 of the report relating to the figures contained within the contract increases and whether Committee would be required to revise them at a later date. The Accountant advised that Ubico set their budget

in consultation with Stroud District Council (SDC) who challenged the proposed budget to ensure as part of the monitoring process the most accurate budget was reflected before being presented to Committee throughout the year. This was not including any anomalies that may occur during the year (such as changes to the Cost of Living Crisis).

Councillor Tipper queried whether a reserve of the reserve budget would be sensible relating to the Cost of Living and the contracts. The Accountant advised she would circulate more detail relating to what reserves had been put aside outside of Committee on this matter.

Proposed by Councillor Brown and Seconded by Councillor Watson.

Councillor Drury-Layfield proposed an amendment to include a point 'c' to the decision to include 'to recommend another £250K to the Walking and Cycling Budget'.

The amendment was proposed by Councillor Drury-Layfield and Seconded by Councillor Hynd.

Councillor Brown queried where the additional money would be funded from. The Accountant advised the proposed amendment would have to be considered by Strategy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Tipper expressed his concerns and queried how the £250K was calculated. The Chair, Councillor Turner advised the amendment had come from the Task and Finish Group to allow better value for money projects to be delivered across the district and that most of the existing budget had either already been spent or committed to projects within the next year. The additional £250K would help deliver more low carbon level projects and deliver the objectives within the Council Plan relating to improving active travel and working with Parish and Town Councils.

Councillor Green queried whether the £250K proposed was in addition to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bids that were being considered that evening relating to the Walking and Cycling Plan under 5.5 of the report. The Chair, Councillor Turner advised it was an addition to the budget and on the assumption that the projects in the Officer recommendation for CIL being considered that evening was approved by Committee which would either see the projects as a whole being moved to the Walking and Cycling budget or a partnership between this budget and CIL formed.

On being put to the vote to include the amendment, there were 7 votes for, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

Councillor Green informed Committee that she felt nervous about the process taken to obtain additional extra funding and advised she would be abstaining from the vote as a result of this, being new on the Committee and historical knowledge relating to the background of the Walking and Cycling projects.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried with 7 votes for, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

**RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

- a) **The revised Environment revenue budget for 2022/23 and original 2023/24 revenue budget are approved**
- b) **The Fee's and Charges list as shown at Appendix B is approved**
- c) **To recommend another £250K to the Walking and Cycling Budget.**

**EC.033 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - SPENDING ALLOCATIONS FOR 2023/2024**

The Senior Community Infrastructure Officer introduced the report and explained appendix C which listed the projects delivered by CIL to date and appendix B which identified infrastructure needs over the next 10 years. Submissions for funding opened in Spring 2022 where infrastructure providers were contacted on how they could apply for the £1M available in funding, what made a quality bid and what the purpose of CIL was. She continued and explained the bid funding closed in September 2022 and an all-Member information evening was held to assess the merits of the bids received. Finally the Community Infrastructure Officer went through each of the projects being recommended to Strategy and Resources Committee for funding commitments including detail around the decisions made relating to the funding.

Councillor Green asked for clarity on the Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Dudbridge to Ryeford Cycle Trail Bid what would happen if GCC did not match fund the additional £70K to make up their bid. The Community Infrastructure Officer advised she believed the £70K was needed to deliver the project therefore GCC would need to match fund the project as a funding condition, however Committee could choose to provide the full requested amount from CIL budget without the funding condition. Councillor Green asked if the surplus funds not spent from this year CIL allocation are rolled into the next CIL allocation year. The Community Infrastructure Officer confirmed that they would be.

Councillor Hynd asked if CIL could stipulate any conditions on building projects under CIL relating to SDC's policies such as the building needing to meet certain environmental standards. The Community Infrastructure Officer confirmed Members could stipulate specific funding conditions if they wished. Councillor Hynd also queried if the surplus funds are stored in an account accruing interest or delivering a return on investment or whether it would be more advantageous to spend the full allocation each year. The Community Infrastructure Officer advised she would provide a response outside of Committee once she had clarified with Finance.

Councillor Tipper informed Committee that there was no improved infrastructure in Cam, in particular around the Box Road area. The Community Infrastructure Officer responded advising no bids had been received from Cam Parish Council or any other infrastructure providers to deliver any further infrastructure in the area and would welcome receiving such bids in the future.

Councillor Watson explained the equality implications should also look at the positive equality implication and not just the negatives. The Community Infrastructure Officer responded she would take Councillor Watson's comment on board.

Proposed by Councillor Watson and Seconded by Councillor Green.

Councillor Green advised Committee she was pleased funding was being spread across the district.

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

**RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE That funding commitments are agreed according to the report.**

**EC.034**      **Member / Officer Reports**

## a)      Strategic Planning Advisory Board

The Chair, Councillor Turner advised the board met recently where an update was provided on the examination progress for the Local Plan and that the additional consultation had been completed and inspectors were likely due in Spring 2023.

## b)      Stroud Regeneration Committee

Councillor Drury-Layfield advised he had not attended the last two meetings however he did provide a summary of the minutes from October which included; shop frontages and absentee landlords in Stroud Town Centre, empty shop space to display art, Stroud Town Clerk to liaise with SDC enforcement for premises going into disrepair, Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership results from Stroud Station travel survey, communication strategy for the Neighbourhood Development Plan and finally commercial waste storage in Fawkes Place.

## c)      Performance Monitoring

The report had circulated prior to Committee. The Chair, Councillor Turner advised there was only one indicator in the red which related to recycling rate however it was being monitored closely. She continued and advised the Youth Council were also involved with the report and suggested they attend March 2023 committee under the 2030 Strategy annual report.

Councillor Watson requested that SDC make better use of campaigns with waste minimalisation.

Councillor Tipper asked if SDC had benchmarked against other authorities on recycling rates as the percentage rate has decreased. The Chair, Councillor Turner advised Stroud was the highest within the district and smaller bins has contributed to this. There is also a proposal within the budget for a Waste Education Officer.

**EC.035**      **Update on the Stroud Valley Natural Flood Management Project Information Sheet**

The report had circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

**EC.036**      **A Strategic Action Plan for the River Frome by the Severn Vale catchment Partnership Information Sheet**

The report had circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

**EC.037**      **Climate Leadership Group**

The report had circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

**EC.038**      **Work Programme**

Councillor Kay requested for an Air Quality Report in late 2023. The Chair, Councillor Turner proposed it be added to June 2023 Committee.

Councillor Watson requested for litter engagement work with retailers be added. The Chair, Councillor Turner proposed an information sheet for June 2023.

Councillor Hynd requested an update on single use plastics within SDC. The Chair, Councillor Turner advised this information sheet will be on the March 2023 agenda.

Councillor Tipper informed Committee that under his role as SDC representative for the Berkeley Site Stakeholder Group (SSG), each meeting he attended he was assured the Group maintain regulatory safety compliance relating to the nuclear site.

Councillor Drury-Layfield asked if water quality could also be explored at a future Committee. The Chair, Councillor Turner advised a GCC Task and Finish Group had recently concluded on River quality and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) currently have a project relating to water quality along the River Frome and proposed she and Councillor Drury-Layfield speak with GWT on how SDC could be involved.

Councillor Smith asked a question on frequency and missing member reports associated with the Committee. Democratic Services advised that if a member as a representative on an outside body would like to submit a member report for Committee to contact them ahead of the next Committee meeting or to raise during the Work Programme for inclusion. The Chair, Councillor Turner advised she would welcome reports from the other outside bodies.

**RESOLVED To note the above update to the Work Programme.**

The meeting closed at 9.13 pm

Chair