



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

Tel: (01453) 754 351/754 321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 30 March 2023

7.00 - 8.52 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 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
2030 Strategy Manager
Civil Enforcement Supervisor
Community Services Manager
Democracy & Information Governance
Officer

Head of Community Services
Strategic Lead - Nature Recovery and
Biodiversity
Accountant

EC.039 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kay and Tipper.

EC.040 Declaration of Interests

There were none.

EC.041 Minutes

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

EC.042 Public Question Time

There were none.

EC.043 Member Questions

Environment Committee
Thursday, 30 March 2023

Subject to approval at
next meeting

There were none.

The Chair, Councillor Turner advised Item 6, 2030 Annual Report (2022-2023) would be moved down the agenda after item 10 as the Officer in question was in transit to the meeting.

EC.044 **Budget Monitoring Report Q3 2022/23**

The Accountant introduced the report outlining the forecast outturn at Q3 for the end of the financial year and advised paragraphs 3.7-3.12 outlined the detail around the variances for the Committee.

In response to Councillor H Jones questions, the following answers were provided:

- The £851k under paragraph 2.2 and top of page 55 under the Capital Programme were the same.
- There was additional money coming in from the Community Infrastructure Levy admin collection charge due to the number of increased projects.
- The variance of £420k overspend under paragraph 3.12 related to aging vehicles and the pay award contribution.

Proposed by Councillor Watson and Seconded by Councillor Brown.

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.045 **Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Rollout Strategy**

The Community Services Manager introduced the report and informed Committee the report was a project update and the final report would be brought to Committee at a later date with the final costings. He advised that there were delays with entering into the Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) however Stroud District Council (SDC) were still on target to rollout charges in the late Summer/early Autumn of this year.

In response to Members questions, the Community Services Manager provided the following answers:

- Consultation with Parish/Town Councils would be undertaken following the Committee and the Community Services Manager would contact the Wotton-under-Edge Town Clerk to identify if the proposal within the Chargepoint Rollout Strategy was suitable in terms of location. The framework from GCC is available to Parish and Town Councils which SDC is currently trying to obtain.
- The contractor Connected Kerb were liaising with the National Grid and have confirmed that there was enough electric capacity at the proposed sites within the Strategy, however work on the financial costs and accessibility to power sources was still to be determined.
- The location change from Castle Street car park in Dursley to May Lane was identified due to residents being required to charge for a minimum of 4 hours as per the Central Government Funding requirements which was not possible at Castle Street car park.

- Information had been included on the website for Parish and Town Councils about how they could access the contract framework.
- GCC have undertaken letter drops in areas where on street parking had been proposed and the Community Services Manager would relay Councillor Layfield's concerns around accessibility to the Project Manager at GCC. The Community Services Manager advised he would confirm to Councillor Layfield know outside of Committee as to whether the supply would be 100% renewable energy.
- He believed Berkeley Town Council had pushed back on GCC's on street parking proposal and instead pushed for car park charging. He would be meeting with the Clerk to discuss the Town's needs.
- Councillor Green asked if a proposal to the intended contractor could be made to promote more localised renewable source such as the solar power.
- Legal advice would need to be sought on whether the details of the Non-Disclosure Agreement between SDC and GCC could be shared but he would be looking to share as much of the legal detail as possible and envisage an exempt item at a future Committee.

The Chair, Councillor Turner in response to Councillor Sutton's question on Ebley Mill charging point using the water turbine from the River Frome advised she would speak with a previous councillor Simon Pickering on what was considered for Ebley Mill charging and come back to Councillor Sutton.

Proposed by Councillor Hynd and Seconded by Councillor Sutton.

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

- RESOLVED**
- i) **To approve the approach and recommendation to proceed, as outlined in the report**
 - ii) **To ratify the submission for funding, to the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (Office for Zero Emission Vehicles)**
 - iii) **To delegate authority to the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Place and the Chair of Environment Committee, to alter the proposed locations, if grid connection costs are deemed prohibitive**

EC.046 Interim Fleet Procurement Strategy - Ubico

The Community Services Manager outlined the report and advised that work had been undertaken to decarbonise the seven year old fleet (one small electric van for building and the cleaning maintenance team and industrial sweeper). The report outlined that whilst there was a need to continue to look at decarbonising the fleet, service risk failure was a significant risk to consider and therefore whilst options were explored, in the interim the use a transitional fuel of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) could be explored which would generate significant carbon savings as outlined in section seven of the report.

The Chair, Councillor Turner, advised that she was keen to pursue the electrification of fleet vehicles as soon as possible and had undertaken her own extensive research. She informed Committee that Stroud was ahead in terms of the progress being made to decarbonise our fleet compared to other authorities.

The Community Services Manager responded to Members questions with the following responses:

- He would provide the detail to Councillor Green outside of Committee on the total number of days the electric sweeper had been non-functional and the cost implications of this compared to value for money.
- The Chair, Councillor Turner, was keen for him to explore the use of hydrogen however refuelling and the cost of hydrogen was more problematic and expensive currently.
- SDC were looking to use recognised sources to obtain HVO however conversations could be had with Ubico regarding accessing HVO from other areas such as hospitality.
- SDC had currently been consulting with the Operations Manager at Ubico on HVO, however he was open to using local knowledge within the district such as James Hygate who was working on biofuels in Berkeley as Councillor Sutton suggested.
- HVO vehicles were good value for money in terms of carbon saving costs despite being more expensive.

Proposed by Councillor Watson and Seconded by Councillor Layfield.

Councillor Layfield welcomed the transitional step.

Councillor Hynd welcomed the pragmatic and progressive way forward and thanked the officer for contributing towards being a pioneering Council.

Councillor Watson concluded HVO was the most suitable solution at this time for carbon and air quality benefits as an interim solution to full fleet electrification.

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

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| RESOLVED | i) To approve the interim fleet procurement methodology |
| | ii) Approve the introduction and use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil as an alternative fuel and delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Resources to work with Ubico to outline an appropriate additional revenue budget as outlined in the report. |
| RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL | iii) Include £45k in the capital programme for HVO Tank |
| | iv) Increase the vehicle purchase budget in the capital programme by £152k to meet the higher cost of EV procurement. |

EC.047 Gloucestershire Nature and Climate Fund – Memorandum of Understanding

The Strategic Director of Place firstly introduced Members to the Senior Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Officer who was co-author of the report. The fund would allow the Council to influence positive enhancement of biodiversity in Gloucestershire and see net gain benefits locally. The requirements for the Fund were legislative which will be run as an organisational entity with all Planning authorities in Gloucestershire and will require all development to demonstrate at least a 10% improvement in biodiversity either within the site or England, ideally Gloucestershire.

A Project Manager post hosted by the GFirst LEP and Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership was in the process of establishing recipient sites for nature recovery and biodiversity net gain and whilst the Memorandum of Understanding was not legally binding, SDC wanted to encourage net gain requirements in Gloucestershire.

In response to members questions, the following answers were provided:

- Secondary legislation had not yet been published however planning approval would be accepted on the basis that the developers' ecologists had calculated the net gain which SDC Officers would then validate before payment due.
- Where possible the net gain should be added back into the development site or as close to it. However if the developer proposed for it to be offsite, SDC would be required to be satisfied with the developers assessment and subject to a 30 year conservation covenant.
- Legal requirement for monitoring and enforcement would sit with the local Planning Authority.
- Gloucestershire Nature and Climate Fund (GNCF) was established from the Local Nature Partnership as a broker between local authorities and developers and is the only group working with local authorities to identify strategic locations.
- There is currently the capacity within the SDC enforcement team however the Senior Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Officer had arranged a meeting to discuss capacity and resources with the Planning service.

Proposed by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Smith.

Councillor Watson reiterated the importance of the net gain being kept local and the positive impact on residents it would have.

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

RESOLVED To support the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) attached as Appendix A, with any comments and suggested amendments to be considered prior to its signature (under delegated powers) by the Strategic Director of Place.

EC.048 2030 Annual Report (2022-2023)

The 2030 Strategy Manager introduced the report explaining that it considered whether the Council was using its powers as an exemplar, enabler and encourager to deliver on its 2030 plan. She advised Stroud District Council (SDC) had halved its emissions compared to 2015 and continued to support decarbonisation projects such as at the Leisure Centre and Museum in the Park. She concluded that paragraph 2.2 of the report outlined the key achievements of SDC.

The following answers were provided to Members questions:

- We were carbon neutral in our direct main operations, such as at Ebley Mill however further scope emissions were being worked on to reduce emissions at our Leisure Centres and Social Housing.
- Berkeley Green had already received funding to deliver courses in Autumn this year on retrofit skills.

Proposed by Councillor Layfield, seconded by Councillor Hynd.

Councillor James gave thanks to the work being undertaken however advised that the language was difficult to understand and would benefit from an additional document for accessibility.

Councillor Brown advised Bisley Composting Scheme would have liked to have been accredited for the image use and that general composting schemes should be promoted more.

Councillor Watson suggested a comparison against SDC's anticipated and aspirational progress on the next report.

Councillor Hynd explained that the report was pleasing to read and it was important to reflect on how far SDC had come compared to other authorities.

Councillor Sutton commented that SDC used to provide a scheme for residents to apply for a reduced price on composting bins.

Councillor Layfield advised there was work that could be done with Parish/Town Councils on composting and that it was refreshing to see the work being undertaken across the organisation.

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

RESOLVED To note the and approve the 2022-2023 Annual Report for the 2030 Strategy and Master Plan.

EC.049 Member/Officer Reports (To Note)

a) Strategic Planning Advisory Board

The Chair, Councillor Turner, advised that the last meeting was cancelled as officers were undertaking examination of the Local Plan.

Councillor H Jones advised that he would like a conversation around the boards purpose as the Local Plan formed a significant part of the boards discussions. The Chair, Councillor Turner explained projects were upcoming such as biodiversity net gain, National Planning Policy Framework, habitat regulations and would be happy to pick up with Councillor H Jones outside of the meeting.

b) Stroud Regeneration Committee

Councillor Layfield provided a verbal update which included information about; establishing a Community Land Trust, parking survey, public engagement on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, new bridge at Capel's Mill, rise in graffiti, maintenance of street furniture and finally that the Chamber of Trades had been communicating with Stroud MP on the creation of a community banking hub.

Councillor James asked if the Committee were looking to engage with any youth groups regarding the graffiti. Councillor Layfield advised that the Regeneration Committee were looking at diversionary activities. Councillor James asked if the posters advising 'School is a Crime' had been discussed at the Committee. Councillor Layfield advised he would raise it at the next meeting.

c) Performance Monitoring

A report was circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

d) Cotswold National Landscape Board

Councillor Brown provided a verbal update on:

- The Boards draft Management Plan for 2023-2025 which had been sent to SDC for consultation and endorsement
- Draft renewable energy position statement
- Climate Action Working Group

e) Stroud Valleys Project Board

Councillor Brown provided a verbal update on:

- 5,000 tree's planted at Salmon Springs
- Sensory garden at Stratford Park
- Collaborative working with National Trust on Rodborough Common
- Capel's Mill project
- Financial status of the Board.

f) Climate Leadership Group

A report was circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

g) Gloucestershire Waste and Resources Partnership

A report was circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

h) Update on Single Use Plastics

A report was circulated prior to Committee.

Councillor Sutton asked if horticultural pots were being recycled. The Community Services Manager advised that they weren't as a result of the sorting process at the recycling centres.

EC.050 **Work Programme**

There were no questions or comments on the Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 8.52 pm

Chair