



COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 22 June 2023

7.00 pm - 8.32 pm

Council Chamber

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Beki Aldam (Chair)

Councillor Paula Baker
 Councillor Gordon Craig
 Councillor Kate Crews
 Councillor Jonathan Edmunds
 * Councillor Steve Hynd
 *Absent

Councillor Trevor Hall (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Julie Job
 Councillor John Jones
 Councillor Gill Oxley
 Councillor Nigel Prenter
 Councillor Ken Tucker

Officers in Attendance

Strategic Director of Communities
 Strategic Director of Resources
 Head of Community Services
 Physical Activity & Health Development
 Manager

Licensing Manager
 Democracy & Information Governance
 Officer

CSLC.055 Apologies

The Chair, Councillor Aldam welcomed Councillor Baker and Hynd to their first Community Services and Licensing Committee She gave her thanks and support to the previous Chair of Committee, Councillor Chris Brine.

Apologies were received for Councillor Hynd.

CSLC.056 Declaration of Interests

There were none.

CSLC.057 Minutes

Councillor Tucker asked for an amendment to be made to paragraph CSLC.0.47 and advised that 'could not be amended' should read 'should not be amended' and that he asked that when a completion date had been exceeded that a new date for completing should be added into the notes section.

CSLC.058 Public Questions

There were none.

CSLC.059 Member Questions

There were none.

CSLC.060 Performance Monitoring Q4

Councillor Tucker advised that he had queried previously the accurateness of the report and RAG status with the use of incorrect markings allocated. He provided the following examples:

- CW1.4.1 – listed as not started, however this was 6 months past the deadline, therefore should be listed as overdue.
- CW1.4.3 – listed as on target, however, this was 8 months past the deadline.

Other examples included CW3.1.1, CW3.2.1, CW3.2.2, and CW3.2.3. He explained that the report currently listed 1 and 0 overdue on the milestones but it should list 13 completed, 31 on target, 2 not started and 13 overdue. The report provided an inaccurate reflection on the progress being made and he asked to see a more up to date report at the next meeting.

The Head of Community Services advised that it was due to the migration over to the new performance system. She explained that some of the key milestones were being revised and if Councillor Tucker had anything in particular, he wanted to look at she would arrange a meeting outside of Committee.

Councillor Tucker re-emphasised his concern regarding the report not accurately showing items as being overdue.

The Head of Community Services explained the dates were set in 2021 and in July 2023 a review of the milestones was being undertaken to be able to accurately reflect the progress and would provide a clearer picture in September.

Councillor Tucker concluded that a manual look through the report could be undertaken and that the initial deadline should not be changed and instead should have an additional column with a revised deadline and reason for being overdue.

Councillor Job commented that an overriding factor on some of the dates was the Cost of Living Crisis and changes to staff which had not helped, however she took on board Councillor Tucker's comments regarding dates.

CSLC.061 Adoption of Revised Street Trading Policy

The Licensing Manager introduced the report and advised she was seeking approval for the introduction of a new decision-making process for contentious applications or where the Council were looking to revoke someone's trading consent. The new policy recommended a hearing panel to allow for better transparency and fairness. The policy also included minor changes on public liability insurance and a new condition on behaviour of street traders. Consultation had been undertaken between 3 April and 19 May 2023 where no objections were received, if adopted the policy would come into force on the 1 September 2023.

Councillor Tucker asked about the number of consultee responses received. The Licensing Manager advised that approximately 3 or 4 Parish/Town Councils responded to the consultation.

Councillor John Jones questioned whether other authorities in the County held hearings for contentious applications. The Licensing Manager confirmed all Gloucestershire authorities have a hearing process as do most authorities nationally.

Councillor Craig asked whether finding volunteers for the hearing panels would be an issue. The Licensing Manager advised that it can be challenging however she did not anticipate a major increase in the number of hearings, however, did plead to Members of Committee to respond to requests for panels.

Proposed by Councillor Prenter and seconded by Councillor John Jones.

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

RESOLVED **a. to adopt the revised street trading policy in Appendix A**
 b. implement the revised street trading policy from 1 September 2023

CSLC.062 Stroud District Council Taxi Fares 2023

The Licensing Manager advised the report was to consider a recommendation by the Taxi Task and Finish Group (T&F) to increase taxi fares for 2023. Stroud District Council (SDC) could set the maximum fares for taxi's only (not private hire) which could be charged in the district. The three different rates and each rate then had subsequent rates which could be applied, such as the starting rate, meter running fee (yards) and waiting rate in addition to extra's that could be applied, such as additional people and luggage.

The Licensing Manager reminded Committee that if the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was more than 2.5%, a review of fares would automatically be triggered as agreed by Committee in 2022. In March 2023, the CPI reached 8.9% which triggered the review and taxi representatives were invited to provide proposals for the T&F group to consider. One proposal was received which could be found under 2.8 – 2.12 of the report which then subsequently went out for public consultation where 10 responses were received.

If Committee agreed the decision for approval, a public notice would be published and come into force on the 24 July 2023 with delegated authority to the Director of Place if any objections were received.

The Licensing Manager and Chair, Councillor Aldam gave thanks to the T&F group.

In response to Members questions, the following answers were provided by the Licensing Manager:

- A significant increase occurred in 2022 and the T&F group did not want taxi's to be considered unaffordable/a luxury with another significant rise.
- Reminders had been sent out regarding the consultation and she would've expected those who had concerns to respond to the consultation.
- SDC had been quite high previously in ranking on fares however with the 6% increased proposal, SDC would be in line with Cheltenham.
- School contracts were set by Gloucestershire Country Council (GCC) and therefore they wouldn't be impacted by SDC's proposal.

Proposed by Councillor John Jones and seconded by Councillor Prenter.

Councillor Prenter advised that the recommendation was a good balance of increasing fares with a viable taxi trade and urged Committee to support.

Councillor John Jones advised the T&F group asked the Licensing Manager to seek additional information on if it were possible for meters to change rates mid journey. The Licensing Manager advised there were two different types of meters, calendar meters which automatically selects the relevant rate and manual meters which required the driver to select the relevant rate at the beginning of the journey. Manual meters cannot change between rates mid journey however calendar meters did have scope for this functionality however if SDC imposed that rates had to be changed mid-journey this would impact those drivers with manual meters requiring additional costs to the drivers to change to a calendar meter and required a policy change.

Councillor Crew asked if SDC could write to taxi drivers to change between the rates out of good will. The Licensing Manager advised that meters were set by the meter companies and that SDC couldn't have different meter processes (one for calendar and one for manual).

Councillor Craig congratulated the T&F group on balancing affordability of rates and improved income requirements of taxi drivers.

Councillor John Jones advised that the T&F group came to a good compromise and taxi drivers had reassurance that an option of an annual review of rates was available.

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

RESOLVED:

- a) **To approve amendments to Stroud District Council's taxi fare table in accordance with the recommendations of the Taxi Task and Finish Group detailed in Appendix B.**
- b) **If (a) is resolved, or any variation on the recommendation, approve the procedure and delegation for giving public notice and implementing the fare increase as detailed in paragraph 3.2 of the report.**

CSLC.063 Strengthening Local Communities Grant

The Physical Activity & Health Development Manager advised in March 2023, SDC were awarded £150K from Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) to support the work of the Stroud & Berkeley Vale Integrated Locality Partnership to deliver on their priorities of Children and Young People's Mental Health and Dementia, Frailty and Carers. The recommendation was for the grant to be divided into the six key programmes with a respective steering group for each.

In response to Members questions, the following answers were provided by the Physical Activity & Health Development Manager:

- A Service Level Agreement and Key Performance Indicators would be set for each grant awarded and a briefing paper or report would be provided throughout the year to report on progress to Committee.

- No assurance had been given to suggest the funding would be reoccurring however SDC would be looking to support existing projects and the work the ICB had developed and that there would be an application process based on data sight.

Proposed by Councillor Crews and seconded by Councillor Edmunds.

Councillor Baker advised the Equality Impact Assessment suggested a positive impact on disabilities and young people, however older people were not mentioned. The Physical Activity & Health Development Manager advised it was due to additional funding being received from the ICB which better related with priorities under the Health, Wellbeing and Physical Action Plan.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously

- RESOLVED**
- To approve the allocation of the Strengthening Local Communities Grant.**
 - Delegate Authority to Strategic Director of Communities in consultations with the Chair & Vice Chair of Community Services and Licensing on any amendments to the proposed allocation value.**

CSLC.064 Leisure Management Recommendation

The Head of Community Services introduced the report and advised that the report to recommend approval of the LATC was due to be considered by Committee in March 2023, however due to a change in the VAT ruling on Local Authority leisure provision, SDC Officers and consultants decided to re-compare the LATC Business Case against other Leisure Management Options to ensure the most financially viable and appropriate option was presented to Committee for approval.

The change in ruling meant that leisure provision was now considered a non-business activity and therefore SDC would be able to keep a larger proportion of the VAT charged on income. In this case a saving of £190K per year on goods and services on leisure facilities. The change to VAT meant bringing the leisure provision in house became the preferred Leisure Management option over the LATC and Appendix C showed an operational advantage of £45K and setup cost saving of £71K for the in-house model. A £73K contingency budget had been set and there were savings in the Central Report Team. Pension, salary and uplift in salary costs had also been factored into the costings, in addition to £183K in National Non Domestic Rates which despite these, in-house still demonstrated to be more financially advantageous.

The Head of Community Services gave her thanks to the T&F group, Shadow Board and Members and Officers who explored the LATC concept and explained that it was an Officer decision to change the Leisure Management recommendation based on the impact of the VAT changes.

She advised that a Leisure Services Manager would be recruited to ensure targets and ambitions to develop Lifestyle Choice Centres were delivered and Key Performance Indicators created. A commitment would be made to invest in the workforce to benefit the community, to develop lifestyle centres to achieve the ambitions in the Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, continuing to develop strong partnerships with health, sport and the voluntary sector and obtain grants to reduce health inequalities across the district.

In response to Members questions, the following answers were provided by the Head of Community Services:

- She could not guarantee the security of the in-house provision however it would be unlikely HMRC would revert their decision and whilst the VAT change made significant financial benefits, both inhouse and LATC had similar advantages and disadvantages at the options appraisal based on members priorities
- The priorities of the T&F had not changed, however the change in finance meant a new business analysis was undertaken and presented to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) who made the decision that the LATC option was no longer a feasible option due to the risk and financials under the new VAT ruling. The T&F group and all Members were informed of the Officer recommendation not to continue with the LATC option and explained the financial detail.
- The Strategic Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer explained that it was the Statutory Officers duty to inform Members and Committees and whilst the scoring for LATC and In-house were similar and the priorities had not changed, the change in VAT meant that the in-house option now had a financial advantage. Councillor Prenter advised that when the decision was brought back to the T&F group, no questions were raised on the logic of the officer recommendation.
- A Leisure Service Manager would be recruited who would have leisure and commercial industry experience and the expertise of the staff already at Stratford Park Leisure Centre (SPLC).
- The in-house was the better and most cost effective option to deliver the T&F groups priorities, however it was not subsidy free.
- To get the right caliber of individuals to apply to the Leisure Services Manager role, the use of the word 'Leisure' would need to be used.

Proposed by Councillor Crews and seconded by Councillor Baker.

Councillor Tucker explained that due to the HMRC change in VAT ruling, he felt the non-financial potential benefits had not been granted enough weighting when considering the in-house vs LATC. He continued to advise that he had significantly questioned the proposals suggested by Officers to bring SPLC in-house, however now believed that the scrutiny undertaken was valid and his previous doubts had mainly been dealt with. He concluded that he was in support of the recommendation and due diligence had been undertaken in the recommendations provided.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Hall, advised that he would be supporting the and that the proposed in-house was the best model. He explained that the staff and employees would be protected and enhanced with a better service provided to the community and thanked the Officers for their hard work.

Councillor Craig advised it that it would have been proper procedure for the decision to have gone back to the T&F group to make the final decision, however after having listened to Councillor Tuckers' assurances, he would also be supporting the recommendation.

Councillor Jones explained that he was sceptical initially if an in-house option would work, however he thanked Councillor Tucker for his input and on balance stated that the in-house model should be supported.

Councillor Prenter explained that the decision would be good for Stroud and the employees who work there and that leisure had been being subsidised regardless of who was running SPLC.

Councillor Edmunds advised that he would be supporting the report and that there was the necessary expertise already present within SDC and the Pulse.

Councillor Crews concluded by advising that it had been an emotional journey with a lot of passion/expertise shown and excellent communication with the community.

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

- RECOMMENDED TO:**
- a) **Strategy & Resources and Full Council to bring Stratford Park Leisure Centre inhouse operating both leisure centres and creating a Leisure Service for Stroud District Council as the preferred option as identified in the management options appraisal and business case.**
 - b) **Full Council to delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Communities in consultation with the chair of Community Services and Licensing to set up the service within an agreed operating framework, quality assurance programme and reporting mechanism.**
 - c) **Strategy & Resources to ringfence the required element of the 2022/2023 Stroud District Council gain from the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool for the set up costs of the inhouse provision.**
 - d) **Full Council to delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Communities in consultation with the Chair of Community Services and Licensing to produce a detailed capital investment plan to support the development of the existing centres and future provision within the district. This plan would then be considered by Council for inclusion within the capital programme when required.**
 - e) **Full Council delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to update the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Standards Committee to enable them to receive relevant assurances in relation to internal control and risk management within the inhouse option.**

CSLC.065 Appointments

a) Performance Monitoring Representatives

Nominations were received from Councillor Job and Prenter who were appointed as Performance Monitors.

b) Outside Bodies

The following appointments were approved:

Cowle Trust (Museum in the Park)	Councillor Nick Hurst
Kingshill House Charitable Trust	Councillor Trevor Hall
Stroud Citizens Advice	Councillor Gary Luff (main) Councillor Paula Baker (substitute)
Stroud Festival Limited	Councillor Beki Aldam
Woodchester Park Mansion	Councillor Steve Robinson
Community Safety Partnership	Councillor Beki Aldam

SDC Youth Council	Councillor Nigel Prenter
Homestart	Councillor Natalie Bennett

Councillor Tucker informed the Committee that the Stroud Road Safety Liaison Group was set up by GCC who disbanded Road Safety Groups over a year and a half ago and no feedback had been received on reinstating them. He continued and advised he wrote to Cabinet Member GCC Councillor Dave Norman and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Chris Nelson on their intentions and had not received a response back and asked if Committee would support him in being a link between Committee and the PCC and Cabinet Member for Transport to report any progress updates. Committee were in support of this.

Older Persons Forum and SDC Know your Patch did not receive any appointments and would be left vacant.

CSLC.066 Member/Officer Report (To Note)

a) Museum in the Park (Cowle Trust)

The Member report had been circulated prior to Committee. There were no further questions raised.

b) Police and Crime Panel

The Member report had been circulated prior to Committee. Councillor Tucker advised that Councillor Percy would not be able to attend the 7 July 2023 meeting and he would be attending as substitute.

c) Cost of Living Information Sheet

The Member report had been circulated prior to Committee. There were no further questions raised.

d) Salix Project Update

The Member report had been circulated prior to Committee. There were no further questions raised.

e) Update on Play Review Spending Allocations Information Sheet

The Member report had been circulated prior to Committee. There were no further questions raised.

f) Safer Street 4 Funding Information Sheet

The Member report had been circulated prior to Committee. There were no further questions raised.

g) Safeguarding Information Sheet

The Member report had been circulated prior to Committee. There were no further questions raised.

CSLC.067 Work Programme

Councillor Crews asked if the Lido had been added to the Work Programme. The Head of Community Services advised it was listed in the Council Plan and briefing papers could be brought to Committee. The Chair, Councillor Aldam, continued that it would be added to the agenda for the upcoming T&F group instead.

RESOLVED To note the above update to the Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 8.32 pm

Chair