



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

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Members of the Public's Questions to Strategy and Resources.

Questions from Steve Willetts

Question 1

What costs and potential liabilities associated with the local plan have been included in the budget and what impact does that have on other priority spend that was planned?

Reply 1

A proposed budget for the Planning Strategy Team and the Local Plan of £446k was recommended by the Environment Committee on December 7th 2023 and is included for consideration in the Committee Papers this evening. This has formed part of the standard budget setting process and there is no impact on other area of spending within the overall Council budget. The budget at this stage is based on Central Government's Provisional settlement, and final budget proposals for full Council will be based upon the latest information on government funding and potential Council costs, including on the Local Plan.

Question 2

What are the risks (likelihood and impact) in delivering a sound local plan or having to withdraw the plan, how are they captured in the risk register and has that status changed since the August letter from the Examiners?

Reply 2

The draft Local Plan is still at Examination and the Council is waiting for the Inspectors to confirm if they are granting a six month pause. This would allow the Council and other parties to address the issues raised by the Inspectors with the Strategic Road Network and progress with the Examination.

The local plan is included in the operational risk register for Planning Strategy as the process as a whole does carry known risks. If the draft Local Plan were to be withdrawn there is a risk that by not having an up to date adopted Local Plan, Stroud District will not have a 5 year housing supply as required by the Government. This would result in 'planning by appeal' where promoters could propose new housing sites contrary to the 'out of date' 2015 plan or the sites in the draft Plan. This could result in the Council losing control of where new housing sites are located, the policies shaping the new development and the joined up strategic approach to providing infrastructure. The risk will be further reviewed upon the receipt of a response from the Inspectors and may be transferred to the Strategic Risk Register at that stage.

Question 3

An answer by the CE to a public question previously stated there were no resource issues in the Strategy and Economic Development Team or impact on work. However resource issues were pointed to at the Extra Meeting given the work on the local plan, that it is a small team and the apology for not publishing the Q&A sooner. Has the situation on resources changed and will there now be an impact on work?



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Reply 3

The answer previously given (at Strategy and Resources Committee on 23 November, 2023) outlined the interim staffing arrangements that are in place to support the Local Plan examination and other areas of work in the Strategic Planning and Economic Development Team. The staffing arrangements remain unchanged since 23 November 2023, and although peaks of work will naturally arise in the team, these arrangements continue to operate effectively.