



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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COUNCIL

21 October 2021

7.00 - 8.55 pm

Council Chamber

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Steve Robinson (Chair)

Councillor Paula Baker
Councillor Natalie Bennett
Councillor Chris Brine
Councillor Martin Brown
Councillor Doina Cornell
Councillor Stephen Davies
Councillor Christopher Evans
Councillor Victoria Gray
Councillor Lindsey Green
Councillor Nicholas Housden
Councillor Steve Hynd
Councillor George James
Councillor Christopher Jockel
Councillor Beki Aldam
Councillor Catherine Braun
Councillor Gordon Craig
Councillor Laurie Davies
Councillor Jonathan Edmunds
Councillor Colin Fryer
Councillor Nick Hurst
Councillor Haydn Jones
Councillor Norman Kay
Councillor Dave Mossman
Councillor Nigel Prenter
Councillor Brian Tipper

*= Absent

Councillor Trevor Hall (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Robin Layfield
Councillor Loraine Patrick
Councillor Martin Percy
Councillor Keith Pearson
Councillor Mattie Ross
Councillor Mark Ryder
Councillor Lucas Schoemaker
Councillor Haydn Sutton
Councillor Ashley Smith
Councillor Ken Tucker
Councillor Tricia Watson
Councillor Rich Wilsher

* Councillor Martin Baxendale	*
* Councillor Jason Bullingham	*
* Councillor Kate Crews	*
* Councillor Katrina Davis	*
* Councillor Helen Fenton	*
* Councillor Jessie Hoskin	*
* Councillor Julie Job	*
* Councillor John Jones	*
* Councillor Jenny Miles	*
* Councillor Gill Oxley	*
* Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy	*
* Councillor Chloe Turner	*

Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive
Strategic Director of Resources

Monitoring Officer
Senior Democratic Services & Elections Officer

CL.012 Apologies

The Chair asked everyone to stand for a minute silence to remember Sir David Amess.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aldam, Braun, Baxendale, Bullingham, Craig, Crews, Laurie Davies, Trina Davis, Edmunds, Fenton, Fryer, Hoskin, Hurst, Job, Haydn Jones, John Jones, Kay, Miles, Mossman, Prenter, Oxley, Studdert-Kennedy, Tipper and Turner.

CL.013 Declaration of Interests

There were none.

CL.014 Minutes

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2021 were approved.

CL.015 Announcements

The Chair congratulated the Tenant Service's apprentices Lucy Hanman, who was named Outstanding Apprentice of the Year for Public Services, and Connor Ward who was a finalist at the Gloucestershire Apprentice Awards.

CL.016 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

CL.017 Memberships

The Chair announced the following changes to Committee memberships:

- **AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE** – Councillor Cornell was replaced by Councillor Baker. Councillor Chris Brine was replaced by Councillor Ashley Smith.
- **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** – Councillor Davis was replaced by Councillor Sutton.
- **POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** – Lead Member Councillor Chris Brine was replaced by Councillor Martin Percy. Substitute Member Councillor Martin Percy was replaced by Councillor Chris Brine.

RESOLVED To NOTE The above Committee membership changes.

CL.018 Appointment to the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Leader, Councillor Cornell, introduced the report and confirmed that Stroud District Council currently shared its panel members with Gloucester City Council but that the panels remained separate. Following a resignation of a panel member, interviews of new applicants were undertaken and 2 new panel members were now being suggested for appointment to the panel. The Leader drew members attention to section 1.7 of the report which laid out the experience of each proposed panel member.

In the absence of any questions or comments, Councillor Brine proposed and Councillor Cornell seconded.

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

RESOLVED The following were appointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of three years from October 2021 to October 2024:

**Ms Kim Hawkins
Mr Chris Markley
Mr John Morris
Mr Graham Russell**

CL.019 Appointment of Monitoring Officer

The Interim Monitoring Officer left the Council Chamber whilst the report was discussed.

The Strategic Director of Resources introduced the report and advised that the appointment of a Monitoring Officer was a Council appointment, it was stated that the Council were being to asked to ratify the emergency decision of the Chief Executive to appoint Jodie Townsend as an Interim Monitoring Officer until the 29th September 2021 and Stephen Taylor up until the 21st October 2021. The Council was also being asked to agree to designate Stephen Taylor as Monitoring Officer until a permanent replacement is found, and for the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Group Leaders, to be authorised to begin the process of recruitment for a Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Davies thanked Patrick Arran for his work as Monitoring Officer and welcomed Stephen Taylor.

Councillor Cornell proposed and Councillor Pearson seconded.

The Leader, Councillor Cornell, offered her support for the appointments. Councillor Pearson gave thanks for the work that Patrick Arran undertook with the Constitution Working Group.

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

- RESOLVED**
- a) **To note that the Chief Executive took an urgent decision on 6th August 2021 to appoint Jodie Townsend as Interim Monitoring Officer for the period 14th August 2021 until 29th September 2021 and Stephen Taylor from 30th September to the date of this meeting.**
 - b) **Stephen Taylor be designated Monitoring Officer for the Council in accordance with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with effect from the date of this meeting for an interim period until such time as a permanent replacement is appointed.**
 - c) **The Chief Executive be authorised to begin the process of recruitment of a Monitoring Officer including such sharing arrangements as they deem appropriate, in consultation with all Group Leaders.**

CL.020 Hear by Right Participation Pledge and Award Programme

The Chair of Community Services and Licensing Committee, Councillor Brine, introduced the report and confirmed that the decision had been agreed by the Community Services and Licensing Committee. They confirmed that the Council had been very supportive of young people and that they had already been asked to input into the Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Equality and Diversity Policy. The endorsement of the

decision by Council would be the start of the journey, once the Council had signed up to the pledge, work on the self-assessment would begin.

Councillor Jockel proposed and Councillor Davis seconded.

Councillor Davis stated that she hoped this would be the start of bringing young people into the formal council process. Councillor Smith stated that he would like the work of Hear by Right to help encourage more young people to stand for District Council elections.

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

RESOLVED To endorse the decision made by the Community Services and Licensing Committee to make the Hear by Right Participation Pledge; and commence the award programme process with the support of a cross Council officer and member group.

CL.021 Review of the Council's Constitution

Councillor Pearson, Chair of the Constitution Working Group (CWG), introduced the report and advised that Strategy and Resources has agreed in December 2019 to reconvene the CWG. The CWG had looked at several issues and had suggested amendments to many sections of the Constitution, proposed changes could be found in Appendices A-I. It was confirmed that the CWG was a cross-party group and that for most items they had reached a unanimous agreement.

Councillor Pearson also confirmed in response to an email received from Councillor Wilsher that the Parental Leave Policy was in line with the Staff parental leave policy and that allowances would be reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Councillor Davies proposed and Councillor Ross seconded.

Councillor Davies thanked those Members and Officers who had worked on the amendments and stated that the Constitution was an important part of how they make decisions. He also welcomed the Media Protocol and advised that the Covid Pandemic had shown that communication with our communities was important.

Councillor Cornell thanked Patrick Arran for his work with the CWG on the constitution. Councillor Ross thanked Councillor Pearson for his chairing of the CWG and that the group had taken part in heated debate and good discussions.

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

RESOLVED

- a) **Adopt the documents attached to this report, together with the amendments as recommended in this report in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.9, or as may otherwise be agreed by Council, and incorporate them into the Constitution with immediate effect**
- b) **Note that the Audit and Standards Committee will be asked at its next meeting to consider the addition of a reference to ‘Gifts and Hospitality’ in the Members Code of Conduct, as set out in paragraph 1.12 of this report**
- c) **Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution**

CL.022 **The Draft Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Equality Action Plan 2021 - 2025**

Councillor Bennett introduced the report on behalf of Councillor Kay, it was confirmed that in March 2021 the Council approved the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for public consultation. The consultation was held in the summer and promoted widely, Members attention was drawn towards Appendix A of the report which outlined the large number of organisations that were invited to respond to the consultation and Appendix D that contained the responses that had been submitted. The 2022/23 Action Plan would be brought to Council for approval in the Spring of 2022 and the activity that had arisen because of this consultation would be clearly identified. They invited Members to be vigilant and to recognise their own unconscious assumptions, to support the campaign against racism and to ensure that our services are free from prejudice and discrimination

Councillor Bennett proposed and Councillor Hynd seconded.

Councillor Hynd stated that it was great to see how many groups were approached to respond to the consultation and that it was important for the Council not to work in silo.

Councillor Davies thanked those who had worked on the policy and stated that it was important that we don't become complacent and stated that the training Members had undertaken in the induction was better than had been available previously but asked if it could be made more locally based with organisations such as Stroud Against Racism.

Councillor James identified areas of the constitution where the pronouns used were only he or his and suggested that pronouns should be changed to they/them/theirs to ensure that language was inclusive going forward.

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

RESOLVED To approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Equality Objectives 2021 – 2025 following public consultation. (Appendices B and C to this report).

Recommendations from Other Committees

CL.023 **Draft Council Plan 2021 - 2026**

The Leader, Councillor Cornell, introduced the report and advised that the Council Plan had been through the Service Committees and had been recommended for adoption by Council. It was confirmed that the Council Plan set out the priorities and objectives for the Council over the next 5 years. The Chair drew the Committees attention to the 3 themes included in the Council Plan:

- Environment & Climate Change.
- Community Resilience & Wellbeing.
- Economy, Recovery & Regeneration.

It was confirmed that robust performance management was essential for the successful delivery of the plan, the performance management framework was being developed and would be taken to Strategy and Resources Committee for approval.

Councillor Davies asked whether the printed version would include the annotation to show whether the Council was a lead authority or would be working in conjunction with

partners. Councillor Cornell advised that this would be taken on board for the published electronic version.

Councillor Cornell proposed and Councillor Hynd seconded.

Councillor Davies confirmed that one concern had been addressed in that it was going to be made clear that the Council were not responsible for everything in the plan and that the lead authority would be highlighted. However, he stated that he would not be supporting the plan as there were no clear measures contained within the plan.

Councillor Pearson stated that the plan contained a lot of aspirations but didn't think the plan was achievable.

Councillor Hall stated that they were happy to support the Council Plan and that it was an excellent document.

Councillor Ross stated they would be supporting the Council Plan and that it was aspirational. She drew Members' attention to the need to be cautious with Retrofit as the funding needed to come from the HRA which tenants would have to pay for.

Councillor Patrick questioned what support the armed forces champion would receive. Councillor Cornell advised that they would continue to provide support in conjunction with authorities from across the County.

Councillor Watson stated that she was surprised and impressed with the collaborative efforts that went on prior to publishing the Council Plan and before it was discussed at Committee. They also confirmed that they would rather the plan was ambitious than the Council didn't try at all.

Councillor Cornell summarised and stated that even if the Council managed to achieve half of what was in the plan, they would have made important, significant and positive differences to their communities. It was also confirmed that the plan contained a higher level of detail than proceeding plans and included a clear link to Committees, Lead Officers and Working Groups.

On being Put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

RESOLVED To adopt the draft Council Plan 2021 – 2026 as recommended by Strategy and Resources Committee.

CL.024 Budget Strategy

Councillor Cornell presented the Budget Strategy report which was recommended for approval from Strategy and Resources Committee. The following areas were highlighted:

- The budget strategy was being set before the Governments Spending Review which was expected on 27 October 2021.
- There were no specific budget amendments suggested at that point.
- The Council was also asked to approve the extension of the Business Rates pooling agreement.
- The budget strategy includes an assumption of a Council Tax rise of £5 for a Band D property.
- Table 2 showed the impact of a delay to the rates reset.

- Inflation for September had been confirmed at 3.1% and a 4.1% will be considered for rent rises at Housing Committee during the budget setting process.
- The pay award had not yet been agreed for this year.
- The level of inflation was expected to increase which could impact contract costs.
- Fees and charges including car parks would be increased by 3% unless there was a significant exemption.

Councillor Cornell proposed and Councillor Brine seconded.

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

RESOLVED a) **Approve the Budget Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26 as set out in this report and appendices**
 b) **Continue with the Business Rates pooling agreement, until such time as the Section 151 Officer may determine as recommended by Strategy and Resources Committee.**

CL.025 REVIEW OF STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL'S STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT 2005 FOR COMMENCEMENT 31st JANUARY 2022

Councillor Pearson left the meeting.

Councillor Brine, Chair of Community Services and Licensing Committee, introduced the report and advised Members that the statement had to be reviewed every 3 years.

Councillor Brine proposed and Councillor Schoemaker seconded.

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

RESOLVED **To adopt the Revised Statement of Principles (Appendix A) as recommended by the Community Services and Licensing Committee.**

CL.026 Tenant Representatives on Housing Committee

Councillor Ross, the Chair of Housing Committee, introduced the report and confirmed that 2 new tenant representatives and 2 deputy tenant representatives were proposed for approval. She stated that there were many applications received and the Council did great work with tenants and commended the report to Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Davies, Councillor Ross advised that they were unsure how much the recruitment process had cost, but it was important that we recruited tenant representatives. She confirmed that she would be able to find out the exact figure.

Councillor Ross proposed and Councillor Jockel seconded.

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

RESOLVED a) **Approve the two new tenant reps – Becky Adams and Mike Richter and**
 b) **Approve the two new deputy tenant reps – Trish Betteley and Carol Wise**

CL.027 **Member Questions**

Member questions were submitted. They were asked by Councillor Ryder and Councillor Davies. Supplementary questions were also asked and answered by Councillor Brine, Chair of Community Services and Licensing Committee, Councillor Ross, Chair of Housing Committee and Councillor Cornell, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee. (Refer to the [Council's recording](#) and [Agenda Item 13](#)).

Notice of Motions**CL.028** **A motion regarding Creation of a Partnership between Local Government and National Government for urgent action on Climate Change is proposed by Councillor Chloe Turner and seconded by Councillor Robin Layfield.**

Councillor Turner was unable to attend the meeting and therefore Councillor Hynd was invited to propose the Motion on their behalf.

Councillor Hynd advised that there was a growing threat from climate change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had made it clear that global warming would exceed the 1.5°C and 2°C rise without urgent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. They confirmed that national government had declared a climate emergency like Stroud District Council and that local government could have a role to play. He explained that the Motion was encouraging partnership working between national and local government.

Councillor Davies stated that they were happy to support the Motion and that he supported the partnership working between the LGA, national government and local government.

Councillor Layfield stated that it was important to raise awareness prior to COP26. They stated that the Council had been commended for its forward-thinking response to the climate and ecological emergency and that the council should show leadership by supporting the Motion.

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

- RESOLVED**
- a) **Add our voice in this the year of COP26, to calls by the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport& others for a joint local & national government Task Force to plan action to reach 'net zero' emissions. Such a partnership can set appropriate regulations, benchmarks and targets and create the much needed long-term funding mechanisms to enable local communities and economies to decarbonise whilst remaining resilient and sustainable.**
 - b) **Write to Alok Sharma MP, President for COP26, the Prime Minister, and the Leadership Board of the LGA, informing them of our support for a joint Local/National Government Climate Change Partnership Taskforce and asking for one to be established as soon as possible.**

CL.029 A motion regarding Local Electricity Supply is proposed by Councillor Laurie Davies and seconded by Councillor Paula Baker.

Councillor Davies was unable to attend the meeting and therefore Councillor Cornell was invited to propose the Motion on their behalf.

Councillor Cornell drew Members attention to key points including:

- The Local Electricity Bill recognises the benefits, both economically and environmentally, of empowering communities to be able to create and distribute their own renewable energy locally.
- Would result in local green jobs, more affordable electricity for communities and would help us to work towards our target of lowering our carbon emissions.
- Elected representatives have a responsibility to show solidarity and show support for solutions that would change situations in relation to fuel poverty and climate change.

Councillor Baker stated that the Bill had potential to meaningfully open the door for community electricity suppliers to play a part in reducing carbon emissions. It was specified that over 40% of the electricity we use was produced from natural gas and this was happening at a time when we were all committed to reducing carbon emissions and facing unprecedented rises in fuel costs. The Local Electricity Bill would remove the barriers that were preventing local energy suppliers from flourishing.

Councillor Jockel stated that he supported the Bill and that it was a logical rational and fair action that was being proposed and that community renewables had been stifled and it was urgent that it was changed.

Councillor Davies also confirmed that they were supporting the Motion, he stated that there would still be technical challenges with the grid but hoped that by supporting the Bill this could be improved.

Councillor Layfield gave 3 reasons as to why Members should support the bill:

- Economy – This would enable a local ecosystem of small energy suppliers to flourish.
- Independence – why purchase energy from elsewhere when we could generate it locally
- Resilience – fuel bills were rising and we needed to give our communities the opportunity to build resilience.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.

RESOLVED a) **Acknowledges the efforts that this Council has made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;**
 b) **From Oct 1, half a million more households are at risk of Fuel Poverty, having to choose between heating their home and putting food on the table.**
 c) **As the costs of fossil fuels soar this autumn, everyone is being hit by rising bills. Many are already desperate, and over 1.5 million people have also been affected by their energy supplier going bust. Meanwhile Universal Credit is being cut. Over three million people in the UK live in fuel poverty and this will increase by**

another 500,000 households when the Price Cap is raised on 1st October. Rising fuel bills will affect over 6000 households in Stroud District.

Further recognises

- d) that very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so,**
- e) that making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for local companies and community groups to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations, if they wished, and**
- f) that revenues received by such local companies or community groups that chose to become local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities and to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions;**
- g) Notes that the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, as a result of its 2021 Technological Innovations and Climate Change inquiry, recommended that a Right to Local Supply for local energy suppliers be established to address this;**
- h) Accordingly resolves to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 266 MPs and which, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply which would promote local renewable electricity supply by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply company; and**

Further resolves to

- i) inform the local media of this decision,**
- j) write to our local MPs, Siobhan Baillie and Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, asking them to support the Bill, and**
- k) write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at Camden Collective, 5-7 Buck Street, London NW1 8NJ or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing its support.**

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chair