



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 24 November 2022

7.00 - 9.49 pm

Council Chamber

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Catherine Braun (Chair)

- * Councillor Chris Brine
- Councillor Doina Cornell
- Councillor Gordon Craig
- Councillor Stephen Davies
- Councillor Laurie Davies
- * Councillor Nicholas Housden
- * Absent

Councillor Natalie Bennett (Vice-Chair)

- Councillor Nick Hurst
- Councillor Martin Percy
- Councillor Keith Pearson
- Councillor Mattie Ross
- Councillor Ken Tucker
- Councillor Chloe Turner

Officers in Attendance

- Chief Executive
- Strategic Director of Resources
- Corporate Director (Monitoring Officer)
- Strategic Director of Place
- Canal Project Manager

- Senior Policy and Governance Officer
- Policy & Projects Officer
- Senior Economic Development Specialist
- Senior Democratic Services & Elections Officer

SRC.0118 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brine and Housden.

SRC.0119 **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

SRC.0120 **Minutes**

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meetings held on 29 September 2022 were approved as a correct record.

SRC.0121 **Public Question Time**

There were none.

SRC.0122 **Member Questions**

Strategy and Resources Committee
Thursday, 24 November 2022

Subject to approval at
next meeting

There were none.

SRC.0123 Stroud District Themes, Outcomes and Measures for Measuring Social Value

The Policy and Projects Officer presented the report which provided an update on the Social Value Portal, an online solution that allows organisations to measure environmental, social and economic activities delivered through procurement. The Portal used the National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (or TOMs) Framework which was developed by a national social value taskforce and had been certified by the Local Government Association. In 2022 the Social Value Portal updated their TOMs Framework in three ways:

- To make them simpler to use;
- To include more Environment outcomes and measures; and
- To enhance some existing measures to give clients better clarity on capturing social value.

It was advised that local authorities should move away from using the entire Framework, and instead use two tailored sets of TOMs. These two sets should be a master set that included measures relevant to SDC priorities, and a light set which was a smaller curated set of measures that could be used for smaller value contracts. To decide which measures would be included in both of these sets, the measures in the entire Framework were cross-referenced with the Council Plan, and the TOMs that would help achieve the key activities in the Council Plan were selected. The two new suggested sets of TOMs were available at appendix A. The Policy and Projects Officer also highlighted the first years progress update included within the report.

In response to Councillor Hurst, the Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that the financial implications had been considered when the decision was taken by Committee to implement the Social Value Portal in 2021.

Councillor Stephen Davies asked whether reports could be produced to highlight extra value that has come about since using the portal, he provided an example of knowing how many contractors had changed their processes to meet the TOMs by hiring local people. The Policy and Projects Officer confirmed that these reports would be available in December 2022.

In response to Councillor Cornell the Policy and Projects Officer confirmed that there was an ongoing review but they would be holding supplier engagement workshops in early 2023 to ensure they received feedback regarding what was and wasn't working well.

Councillor Cornell asked whether the TOMs could be checked again against the Council Plan as it was important that they aligned and wanted to ensure that Trade Unions were supported.

Proposed by Councillor Cornell and seconded by Councillor Turner.

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

RESOLVED To

- a) Approve the Stroud District TOMs to measure and manage social value through procurement and other projects.**

- b) Give delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Resources to make minor amendments to the Stroud District TOMs as necessary.**

SRC.0124 Annual Corporate Procurement and Contract Management Update

The Senior Policy and Governance Officer introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- A review of the procurement strategy would be carried out in line with the refreshed National Procurement Strategy in 2023.
- An assessment tool would be used to assess the level of maturity in relation to procurement activity.
- The Contract Management Framework had been agreed in January 2022 and they had been continuing to embed this across the authority.
- The Policy Team had begun reviewing contracts to make sure they were compliant with the framework.
- The annual spend analysis highlighted that local spend had reduced from 40% to 32% due to a number of reasons including the housing contract being moved inhouse.
- The total spend had increased from £29m to £37m due to the impact of inflation and the timing of the Capital Projects Programme.
- The Policy and Governance Team were planning to promote a campaign of 'Buy it Local' across the Council on influenceable spend.

In response to Councillor Stephen Davies the Senior Policy and Governance Officer confirmed that the EU Directives referred to in the appendix were the same as the Public Contract Regulations and had been transposed into UK law. It was also advised that the dashboards were provided to Managers and the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) for operational reasons and that they weren't currently provided to Committee Chairs. The Senior Policy and Governance Officer confirmed that training for staff had greatly improved and that a mandatory session was included in staff induction and they had provided additional training as required.

Councillor Pearson highlighted an error in the decision box and a friendly amendment was agreed to amend section a) to "NOTE the review of the Council's Procurement Strategy in line with the refreshed National Procurement Strategy which will be reported back to this committee on 20 April 2023."

Proposed by Councillor Turner and seconded by Councillor Pearson.

Councillors Pearson, Bennett, Hurst and Turner commended the report.

Councillor Stephen Davies supported the report but asked whether there would be value in Committee Chairs having sight of the dashboards to help review how procurement was being handled.

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

RESOLVED To

- a) NOTE the review of the Council's Procurement Strategy in line with the refreshed National Procurement Strategy which will be reported back to this committee on 20 April 2023.**
- b) APPROVE the campaign to promote the 'Buy It Local' for influenceable spend.**

SRC.0125 Performance Management Framework (PMF) Review

The Senior Policy and Governance Officer highlighted the following key points:

- A timetable had been created for Officers to know when to input updates into Excelsis so that performance monitors could consider relevant information.
- The Youth Council had been involved in the Performance Management meetings with Lead Officers and Committee Performance Monitors.
- A new web based performance management system called Pentana Risk had been procured which Councillors would have access to once it had been rolled out.
- Members would be kept up to date with the implementation of Pentana Risk.
- Actions had been included in section 3 to help improve the process further.

In response to Councillor Turner the Senior Policy and Governance Officer advised that all services would have a service plan however they may not all be inputted into excelsis, they would be working with services to ensure that plans were added to the new system once in place. It was also advised that she would look into the council plan objectives that sat at full council level and how they could best be reported as the full council did not have appointed performance monitors.

Councillor Stephen Davies asked when Pentana Risk would be implemented. The Senior Policy and Governance Officer advised that Pentana had proposed March 2023 however they were hoping that it may be earlier.

Councillor Ross asked whether the Youth Council would be able to present a performance monitoring update at Committee. The Senior Policy and Governance Officer confirmed that this would be possible if the Committee wanted to suggest this to the Youth Council Members at the next Performance Monitoring Meeting. The Chair agreed that it would be good to have further Youth Council participation.

Councillor Craig asked how they would ensure that updates were added to the new system regularly. The Senior Policy and Governance Officer confirmed that where updates were not completed it would be highlighted to Managers and SLT and that Officers would be encouraged to complete regular updates.

Proposed by Councillor Ross and seconded by Councillor Pearson.

Councillor Stephen Davies advised that if Officers know that Members are using the new system and looking for updates they would know that they needed to update them regularly, he asked Committee Chairs and Members to help by ensuring they used the system and reviewed risks.

Councillor Braun stated she was pleased to see the Youth Council involvement with the Performance Monitoring role.

Councillor Ross advised that she was pleased they were moving forward and improving monitoring.

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

RESOLVED To**a) Note the report**

- b) Agree that the Policy and Governance Team meet regularly with all the committee performance monitors to share any best practice and recommend improvements.**

SRC.0126 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

The Chief Executive introduced the report and provided a brief timeline of events. She drew Members attention to the following key points:

- The Pace of Activity recommendation was to help the Council slow down and consider what they needed to prioritise and deliver, they had worked hard to ensure this was carried out.
- A Member Development Working Group had been set up and had now met and were making progress.
- Lots of work had been carried out on recommendation 6 to help give consistency across the Council, training was being carried out for Values and Behaviours and a whole series of standards were being adopted.
- A charter to help improve the relationship with Town and Parish Councils was being drafted and work was ongoing on other initiatives including a Parish and Town Council Hub.
- The Action Plan for improvements to Housing Services hadn't made as much progress due to delays in recruitment however they had now appointed a Strategic Head of Housing.

Councillor Turner asked what measures would be used to measure progress on the service standards. The Chief Executive advised that as they had only been implemented in July it was too early to judge progress, but they had measures in place to check how the Council was performing. She confirmed that they hoped to improve on the standards in due course and that the digital platform would help to reduce turnaround times.

In response to Councillor Percy the Strategic Director of Resources advised that they had produced a mapping flowchart to identify how Fit for the Future linked with the MTFP and savings targets, and confirmed that he would be happy to share it with Members.

Proposed by Councillor Cornell and seconded by Councillor Turner.

Councillor Hurst identified ways in which links with Parish and Town Councils could be improved including sharing resources to allow economies of scale.

Councillor Pearson advised that there needed to be a greater degree of involvement between Parish and Town Councils and the District Council. He identified an example of Upton St Leonards receiving no support in campaigning to reduce the noise from the motorway. The Chair advised that although they were not the transport authority, she would be happy to speak with Councillor Pearson outside the meeting to see whether any further support could be provided.

Councillor Cornell stated that acknowledging the council's strengths and where improvements could be made had been invaluable.

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

RESOLVED To note the progress made with addressing the recommendations in the LGA Peer Challenge Action Plan prior to the Peer Challenge Team's revisit in January 2023.

SRC.0127 Rural England Prosperity Fund submission

The Senior Economic Development Specialist introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- Stroud District had been awarded £400k to boost and support rural businesses and communities over the next 2 financial years.
- The fund was only available to support Capital Projects.
- Engagement had been carried out to ensure the grant proposal was suitable.
- The fund would be made available from April 2023.
- They were considering a partnership approach with Forest of Dean District Council, Cotswold District Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council to help share the administrative burden.
- The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) were being considered to host the grant scheme with a percentage of the funding to support with food, farming and other land-based businesses.

In response to a question from Councillor Laurie Davies the Senior Economic Development Specialist advised that they could speak outside of the meeting to ensure that ideas like hers were covered in the grant criteria.

Councillor Stephen Davies asked that in press releases it was acknowledged that the funding came from Central Government. The Senior Economic Development Specialist assured Councillor Stephen Davies that this would be included.

In response to a question from Councillor Craig regarding advertising of the scheme the Senior Economic Development Specialist confirmed they were considering how best to market the idea to ensure good reach across the district. She confirmed that they would be contacting all Parish and Town Councils whose areas met the 'rural' criteria and would be speaking with partners and stakeholders such as the National Farmers' Union.

Councillor Cornell asked what support would be available for people completing applications. The Senior Economic Development Specialist confirmed that they would produce guidance including FAQs which contained examples of capital funding and would be happy to speak with people directly regarding the application process.

The Senior Economic Development Specialist advised in response to Councillor Turner that she would check whether organisations or businesses that had received funding previously outlined on page 141 would be able to reapply for funding for different projects.

Proposed by Councillor Turner and seconded by Councillor Bennett.

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

RESOLVED To

- a) **Approve the development of the Rural England Prosperity Fund Addendum**
- b) **Approve the next steps and outlined plan prior to submission of the plan**
- c) **Delegate Authority to the Strategic Director of Resources, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of this committee, to finalise the grant scheme.**

The meeting was adjourned for 8 minutes.

SRC.0128 Canal Project Update

The Canal Project Manager announced that since writing the report they had been awarded the Institute of Civil Engineers award for the Ocean Bridge and that it was due to be renamed the Jubilee Bridge. The Committee extended their congratulations to the whole team. The Canal Project Manager highlighted key information contained within the report including:

- The restoration of the canal would bring significant economic, environmental and community benefits to the local area.
- The project budget was set in early 2020 prior to the start of the Covid Pandemic and was based on a completion date of the end of 2024.
- Following the first lockdown in May 2020 a Covid Impact Assessment was drafted which stated that the situation could change if there were further impacts of Covid-19.
- There had been an impact on both project delivery and costs.
- Rising inflation had impacted energy costs and the cost and availability of materials. Costs had been outlined in Appendix A.
- A gap of approximately £10m had been identified.
- They were applying for £2.2m from National Highways and between £2m and £2.5m from the National Lottery Covid Fund.
- The remaining funds would be made up from other partners, fundraising and the sale of materials.
- If the Committee agreed to additional funding it would not be drawn down until after full Permission to Start was awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

In response to Councillor Hurst it was confirmed that there would be a significant amount of soil and clay removed which would be sold on for projects, they had already received requests from contractors for the materials and have provided quotations. The Canal Project Manager advised that the materials may be exchanged with a contractor for reduced rates.

Councillor Pearson asked how many people were employed by the Council on the project team. The Canal Project Manager advised that there was 17.3fte accounted for within the budget and that the main reason for the cost increase was due to extension of contracts for 13 months.

The Strategic Director of Resources confirmed in response to Councillor Craig that if the additional £1m wasn't used then it would remain in the council reserve.

Councillor Laurie Davies raised concerns regarding allocating a £1m during a cost-of-living crisis and asked whether there would be other projects that would require capital spend. The Strategic Director of Resources advised that there were a few largescale Capital Projects including Brimscombe Port but they were not seeking any additional funding for those projects at this time. He also confirmed that there were other projects within the HRA programme however these projects would not be eligible to use this fund as it was held within the General Fund not HRA. He further confirmed that there were not any currently identified Capital Schemes around the cost-of-living-crisis that the fund could be used on.

Councillor Stephen Davies stated that the lottery bid confirmed that the Councils ambition was to get from the Severn to the Thames and asked for this to be confirmed to the Lottery as the Canal Strategy didn't include the statement. The Canal Project Manager confirmed

that it was a wider aim of the Cotswold Canal Trust and they were discussing the vision with all of the councils along the canal to see what the position was.

Councillor Percy asked that the proposal to put a group together to consider ongoing costs was implemented to ensure that they keep within the parameters of the revised budget. The Canal Project Manager confirmed that they were looking at where cost savings and efficiencies could be made. Councillor Percy requested that the Committee had ongoing visibility of how the project was being managed financially and the schedule. The Chair confirmed that regular updates would be brought to the Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Braun and seconded by Councillor Pearson.

Councillor Pearson advised that he would continue to support the Canal project knowing that it would be monitored closely.

Councillor Stephen Davies offered support for the project and stated that it had real potential to provide benefits to communities within the district.

Councillor Turner confirmed that the additional funding was vital to deliver an extremely strategically important project.

The project was further endorsed by Councillor Cornell, Ross, Hurst, Percy, Craig, Bennett and Braun.

Councillor Laurie Davies advised that she understood the benefits that the Canal would bring to the district however advised that she was unable to vote in favour of additional funding during the difficult time.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried with 11 votes in favour and 1 against.

- RESOLVED**
1. To confirm Stroud District Council's commitment to the Cotswold Canals Partnership and to acting as the Accountable Body in managing the grant from the Lottery Fund and the overall management of the project
 2. To allocate £1 million from the Capital Reserve as a contribution to the Canal Partnership

- RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**
1. To increase the capital budget for the Canal Project by £10.187m, to be funded as set out in this report

SRC.0129 Member / Officer Reports (To Note)

a) Performance Management

Councillor Craig introduced the report and highlighted the 2 areas of concern which they considered in detail during the meeting including the Canal and objectives in ER4.1, ER4.1.1 and ER4.13. which hadn't been started.

In response to Councillor Turners question regarding the divestment of pensions the Strategic Director of Resources advised that the finance team had been concentrating on budget setting and closing the audit of accounts but they would make contact with Gloucestershire County Council again and he would provide an update as soon as possible.

Councillor Percy asked for new dates to be added to items where they have gone past the expected date or were not on track to meet the original deadline. The Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that it could be done and that they would meet with all Performance Monitors to ensure that the process was consistent.

b) Leadership Gloucestershire Update

The report had been included in the reports pack, there were no questions.

c) Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC)

The report had been circulated to Members and published on the website, there were no questions.

d) Regeneration and Investment Board

The report had been included in the reports pack, there were no questions.

e) Brimscombe Port Redevelopment

Councillor Hurst stated that the report suggested that St Modwen were going to carry out further ground investigation despite the Council already having provided detailed reports. The Strategic Director of Resources advised he would go back to the team for a response to the question.

Councillor Stephen Davies asked whether a date had been set for public consultation. The Strategic Director of Resources confirmed they would check for a date, the Strategic Director of Place advised that a more detailed update on Brimscombe Port was due to be provided at the next Regeneration and Investment Board meeting.

f) Fit for the Future Update

In response to Councillor Percy the Chief Executive confirmed that the first item they had used the digital platform on was garden waste and that it was chosen for many reasons including that it fit well into the timescales in terms of garden waste renewals.

g) Update on the Economic Development Strategy

Councillor Braun asked for further information regarding the item on skills and opportunities and the partnership with Stroud District Growth Hub. The Senior Economic Development Specialist confirmed they were looking at beginning outreach in the south of the District and would be carrying out a pilot in Dursley.

SRC.0130 Work Programme

Councillor Pearson advised Members that he had attended one of the exhibitions about the A417 missing link and advised Members to look at the National Highways website for further information and a video.

The meeting closed at 9.49 pm

Chair