



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

3 October 2019

7.00 pm – 10.40 pm
Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

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Minutes

Membership:

Councillor Doina Cornell (Chair)	P	Councillor Steve Robinson	P
Councillor Martin Whiteside (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Mattie Ross	P
Councillor Nigel Cooper	A	Councillor Tom Skinner	P
Councillor Stephen Davies	P	Councillor Chas Townley	P
Councillor Nick Hurst	P	Councillor Ken Tucker	P
Councillor Keith Pearson	P	Councillor Debbie Young	P
Councillor Simon Pickering	P		

P = Present A = Absent

Other Member Present:

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy

Officers Present:

Chief Executive	Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Interim Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer	Revenue and Benefits Manager
Director of Development	Democratic Services and Elections Officer
Principal Accountant	
Canal Manager	

Others Present:

Dev Chakraborty, Deputy Chief Executive, GFirst LEP
Katie Jenkins, Director of Local Industrial Strategy, GFirst LEP

SRC.028

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cooper. Councillor Young would be arriving a little late to the meeting.

SRC.029

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Young declared an interest at the beginning of Agenda Item 10 - Proposals for a District Lottery because she had community interests as a Director of Severn View Food Project and was also on the Youth Club Management Committee. Both of these organisations would probably apply to access funds from the lottery in the future and she felt that it would be inappropriate for her to be present when this item was being presented.

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer advised that at this stage there would not be an interest for any Members and that, in his opinion, there was no need to declare an interest as this was to agree the principle of the lottery.

SRC.030 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2019.**

SRC.031 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

SRC.032 **LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP)**

Katie Jenkins, Director of Local Industrial Strategy, GFirst LEP gave a powerpoint presentation on the Local Industrial Strategy. The main focus of the strategy would be on how to improve productivity within the county and the importance to also align with all other strategies.

The question was asked of Committee, are you comfortable to put the SDC logo onto this document once it had been completed? It was hoped that all district councils would buy into the strategy, which would be an important statement for Gloucestershire to get behind before it was submitted to Central Government. The strategy was currently out for consultation until 31 October 2019. Comments would be welcomed on the link within their website.

In reply to questions the following answers were given:-

- It would not be easy to get people around our rural area, a rail strategy was being explored and also other technologies are in the pipeline that would help.
- Local Plans would fit in with the draft Local Industrial Strategy.
- There is currently no funding available for the missing motorway link.
- Working together, perhaps with co-operatives would be the way forward because of the big changes that would be happening in agriculture in the future.

Councillor Cornell stated that the Council could make their response collectively.

SRC.033 **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

The Head of Revenue and Benefits outlined the above report, drawing particular attention to protecting the most vulnerable. He confirmed that Members would be involved in the remodelling of the current scheme next year.

Councillor Cornell suggested that there was an additional paragraph added to the decision box, "That during 2020/21 a full review and modelling would be carried out." This was supported by Members and on being put to the vote, the Motion was unanimously carried.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. That it adopts the current default scheme for 2020/21, keeping the scheme unchanged.
2. That during 2020/21 a full review and modelling would be carried out.

SRC.034**ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE PROPOSED USE OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS FOR COTSWOLD CANALS CONNECTED ('PHASE 1B')**

The Canal Manager outlined the purpose of the report which would give the Council the power to use compulsory purchase powers, if required. In the past negotiations had taken place with various landowners resulting in no action having to be taken. To have the power in place was important to safeguard the Council and also mitigate risks.

The Chair thanked Members, the Canal Manager, staff and all of the volunteers for their hard work.

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

RESOLVED

- 1. To support the principle of compulsory purchase of land including (and in the vicinity of) the proposed route of the reinstated canal between Stonehouse and Saul Junction (Cotswold Canals Connected – Phase 1b).**
- 2. To instruct the Head of Property Services to return to this Committee with detailed proposals for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) resolution, should that be considered necessary.**
- 3. To authorise the Head of Legal Services in consultation with the Head of Property Services to engage the services of Counsel as considered appropriate with regard to the preparation and processing of a CPO to confirmation.**

SRC.035**LEGAL SERVICES OPTIONS**

The Interim Legal Services Manager outlined the recommendation to Committee confirming that the options appraisal had been discussed with the Legal Team.

The following replies were given to Members' questions:-

- If there were a conflict of interest One Legal would instruct a solicitor. One Legal already had a Conflict of Interest Policy in place.
- As much work as possible would be undertaken in-house but there would always be a need to instruct for external advice.
- The option to join One Legal was not about cost saving but resilience.
- Currently there was not a business case, only in principle.

The Chief Executive confirmed that One Legal would not undertake the possibility of working with Legal Services, if the Council were not serious about the option. It would take over 6 months to agree what would be right for Stroud. A Monitoring Officer would be maintained in Stroud, the feasibility of other officers being located here would be explored.

Councillor Young stated that she would like to see a detailed business case at Committee. The Chief Executive explained that she could bring back to Committee the business case and emphasised this has got to be financially worthwhile for the Council.

The Interim Head of Finance gave reassurance to Members that if the business case required extra money it would have to come back to Committee. The decision made tonight would give One Legal the assurance that we are serious about the option of Stroud joining them.

The Leader confirmed that if she had any concerns with the business case in the future she would bring a further report back to Committee.

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer stated that a further report would contain sensitive information. He also said that the Legal Team need certainty of what is happening for their future and it would not be in their interests to prolong the uncertainty with a further report to Committee.

The Interim Head of Finance confirmed that the business case would at least start from a similar level as the current budget

The Leader proposed an amendment to the decision box to include the Group Leaders, instead of just herself as consultees on the business case. This amendment was supported by Members and on being put to the vote, the Motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED **Subject to the approval of a detailed Business Case (including the financial case) by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Group Leaders:**

1. To approve, the joining of the Stroud District Council's legal services with Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council (One Legal).
2. To transfer Stroud District Council's legal services staff to Tewkesbury Borough Council under the principles of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) on a date to be agreed by the Chief Executive.
3. To delegate Stroud District Council's legal service functions to Tewkesbury Borough Council, as host authority, in accordance with section 101(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.
4. To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Group Leaders, to enter into the Section 101 Agreement, any other legal documentation and to take all necessary steps to implement the above-mentioned resolutions.

SRC.036

BUDGET STRATEGY 2020/21 TO 2023/24

The Interim Head of Resources outlined the above report which was based on assumptions highlighting the uncertainty in the levels of future pay awards, no increase in the pension scheme and no further funding for UBICO. He drew attention to Appendix C clarifying that the Equilisation Reserve had been set up by Council a few years ago and would be used to buy ourselves time. A review of the costs of services to our customers through recharging through fees and charges would be carried out, with a list being compiled.

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

RECOMMENDED **To approve the Budget Strategy 2020/21 to 2023/24 as set out**
TO COUNCIL **in this report.**

Councillor Young left the meeting.

SRC.037 PROPOSALS FOR A DISTRICT LOTTERY

The Interim Head of Resources explained the proposal for a district lottery and in response to Members' questions clarified the following points:-

- We did not need to go out to tender for the setting up of the lottery, the proposal was looked at in depth and Gatherwell were the only feasible ELM hence the request to appoint them in the recommendations.
- There would be a small setting up cost and also costs for promoting the lottery for the Council.
- Local charities and community groups could apply for funding.
- There is no financial risk to the Council if ticket sales end up being low

The Leader proposed a change to the decision box by amending paragraph 3. by deleting the words 'Interim Director of Resources' and replacing with the words 'Section 151 Officer'. This amendment was accepted by Committee.

In debate a few Members stated that they were against gambling. The Leader reiterated that it would be small local organisations within the District that would benefit, not the Council.

The Chief Executive stated that at her previous authority the community lottery was very successful. Tickets are usually purchased by direct debit and are carefully regulated. There would be a competition for Members and staff to come up with a name for the lottery.

The amendment was supported and on being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

- RESOLVED**
- 1. To agree to implement a community lottery for the benefit of good causes within the district.**
 - 2. To appoint Gatherwell Limited as the External Lottery Manager to run the lottery on behalf of the Council.**
 - 3. To delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to carry out the process of applying to the Gambling Commission for the appropriate licenses.**
 - 4. To agree the conditions at Appendix A for those organisations wishing to join the lottery.**

SRC.038 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2019/20 TO 31 AUGUST 2019

The Interim Accountancy Manager confirmed that the format of the report was different. Quarter 2 would be reported at December's meeting. Key areas within the report were highlighted and confirmation was given that the Council was in a positive position.

In response to a Member's question on the ICT underspend, confirmation was given that the consultants had submitted a report and work was being carried out.

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

- RESOLVED**
- 1. To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund Revenue budget and Capital Programme.**
 - 2. To note the outturn forecast for the Housing Revenue Account.**

SRC.039**CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN PROGRESS**

The Chief Executive stated that progress on the Corporate Delivery Plan was readily available to Members through Excelsis and the report was a snapshot of progress at the end of Quarter 1. Excellent progress was being made in most areas. But CDP.8 was not currently looking good, despite staff making every effort with the Salvation Army. In future a progress report will be provided at each Committee meeting.

RESOLVED **To note the progress made in Quarter 1 on the Corporate Delivery Plan Key Actions for 2019-20, as set out in Appendix 1 and highlighted in this report.**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution (Section 3: paragraph 6) Members voted to continue with the meeting after 10.00 pm.

SRC.040**LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN PROGRESS**

The Chief Executive confirmed that interviews for the Directors posts would be taking place on 8, 9, 23 and 24 October 2019. Some of the candidates were internal and if successful may take up their post immediately. But it was expected that all of the Directors would be in place in the New Year when further progress on the action plan could be made.

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

RESOLVED **To note the progress made in Quarter 1 on implementing the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.**

SRC.041**VISION 2050 SEVERN VALE DELIVERY BOARD**

In presenting the above report the Chief Executive outlined the background to the setting up of the board and its terms of reference in Appendix 1.

The following replies were given to Members' questions:-

- There was no hard and fast boundary.
- Updates would be given to Members' as and when projects emerged from other boards.
- More clarification was needed on 2050.
- The board sits below Leadership Gloucestershire.

The Council were taking a leading role and the key was what the benefits to community life and our residents would be. How can residents get around the District by public transport and not a car. The Environment Agency would be involved, along with other agencies. The third bridge presented the Council with opportunities.

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

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL **1. That the Terms of Reference for the Severn Vale Board set out at Appendix 1 are agreed; and**
2. Stroud District Council participates in the activities of the Board.

SRC.042**USE OF LAND AT SALMON SPRINGS, STROUD FOR THE PLANTING OF WOODLAND AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL CARBON OFFSETTING SCHEME**

The Director of Development outlined the above report to use Council owned land to plant trees to form a woodland. Individuals had already contacted him volunteering to make a cash contribution.

In reply to Members' questions the following points were made:-

- Giving the public access could be harmful and costs could escalate, eg managing a car park, providing dog bins and regular surveys being carried out.
- The Wildlife Trust had been contacted to achieve optimum use of the land.
- Gloucestershire City Council were encouraging each household to plant a tree.

Councillor Pickering said that this would be a starting point in looking at land management; woodland planting was important. The District of Stroud had 12% of woodland cover and could be increased to 24%-25%. Tree planting was a long term project.

Councillor Whiteside encouraged community involvement and recognised that there would be a need for a balance of access for the community. Work with other landowners, enablers, including the Town and Parish Councils could be undertaken.

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

RESOLVED

- 1. To repurpose land at Salmon Springs for the planting of woodland to store carbon, reduce the rate of surface water runoff, enhance biodiversity and provide a local amenity.**
- 2. To instruct the Head of Property Services to identify other areas of land within Council ownership to provide for further climate change mitigation and adaptation schemes.**
- 3. To bring forward proposals for the establishment of a locally based offset fund to provide further opportunities.**

SRC.043**WORK PROGRAMME**

Constitution Working Group - At a future meeting of the Group Leaders a steer of what should be reviewed would be discussed.

Cotswold Canal Project – Bid to National Heritage Lottery Fund – report would be added onto the Agenda for the meeting on 30 January 2020.

SRC.044**MEMBER OFFICE REPORTS**

- a) Performance Monitoring – a meeting had taken place on 26 September 2019 and a report had been circulated via email prior to the meeting. Councillor Pearson confirmed citrix would be coming to the end of its life in January 2020. 290 laptops had been purchased to replace the thin client citrix boxes. Updates on the canal and Brimscombe Port were also given.
- b) Investment and Development Panel – Councillor Cornell gave an update from the meeting held on 2 September 2019. There were discussions on Brimscombe Port, May Lane, Dursley and the Gloucestershire Investment Pipeline. The next meeting would be held on 28 October 2019.

- c) Leadership Gloucestershire Update – the Chief Executive updated on the July meeting. Councillor Cornell confirmed that there would be a meeting at Waterwells next week. The local transport plan was being revised and would be out for public consultation next year.
- d) Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) and Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Whiteside confirmed that they had met a few weeks ago. The next meeting would be held on 30 October 2019 at Ebley Mill. All Members would be invited to attend.

SRC.045

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were none.

The meeting closed at 10.40 pm.

Chair