



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

Tel: (01453) 754 351/754 321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

## COUNCIL MEETING

20 February 2020

7.00 pm – 8.45 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

# 3

### Minutes

#### Membership

|                  |   |                 |   |                        |   |
|------------------|---|-----------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Martin Baxendale | P | Nick Hurst      | P | Nigel Prenter          | A |
| Dorcas Binns     | A | George James    | P | Skeena Rathor          | A |
| Catherine Braun  | A | Julie Job       | A | Sue Reed               | P |
| Chris Brine      | P | Haydn Jones     | P | Mark Reeves            | P |
| Miranda Clifton  | P | John Jones      | P | Steve Robinson*        | P |
| Nigel Cooper     | P | Norman Kay      | A | Mattie Ross            | P |
| Doina Cornell    | P | Darren Loftus   | P | Tom Skinner            | P |
| Gordon Craig     | P | Stephen Lydon   | P | Nigel Studdert-Kennedy | P |
| Rachel Curley    | P | John Marjoram   | P | Haydn Sutton           | P |
| Stephen Davies   | P | Phil McAsey     | A | Brian Tipper           | P |
| Paul Denney      | P | Karen McKeown   | A | Chas Townley           | P |
| Jim Dewey        | P | Jenny Miles     | P | Jessica Tomblin        | A |
| Jonathan Edmunds | P | Dave Mossman    | A | Ken Tucker             | P |
| Chas Fellows     | A | Gill Oxley      | A | Martin Whiteside       | P |
| Colin Fryer      | P | Keith Pearson   | P | Tim Williams           | A |
| Lindsey Green    | P | Simon Pickering | P | Tom Williams           | P |
| Trevor Hall      | A | Gary Powell**   | P | Debbie Young           | A |

\*\*Chair \*Vice-Chair P = Present A = Absent

#### Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive

Democratic Services & Elections Manager

Strategic Director of Resources

Interim Head of Legal Services and

Monitoring Officer

Interim Accountancy Manager

#### CL.055 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Binns, Braun, Fellows, Hall, Job, Kay, McAsey, McKeown, Mossman, Oxley, Prenter, Rathor, Tomblin, Tim Williams and Young.

#### CL.056 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer declared an interest in Agenda Item 8, Extension to Designation of Monitoring Officer and would leave the Council Chamber before this item was discussed.

**CL.057      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the minutes of the Council's meeting held on 16 January 2020 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**CL.058      ANNOUNCEMENTS****Chair**

Members were reminded to complete the Independent Remuneration Panel survey regarding the current scheme of allowances.

**Leader**

The Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 March 2020 had been cancelled because several reports had now been moved to future meetings. The next meeting would be held on 16 April 2020.

**CL.059      GLOUCESTERSHIRE RESOURCES AND WASTE PARTNERSHIP**

Councillor Pickering, the Chair of Environment Committee outlined the background to the above report. The Joint Waste Committee had been disbanded on 13 December 2019. Neither Stroud District Council nor Gloucester City Council were members of this committee. It was agreed that a more informal committee was formed with no executive powers and would try to work together to improve waste reduction across the county. There are no overt budget implications to this Council.

In response to Members' questions he could not answer whether there was a standard collection service throughout the county. By 2024 we aim to have an agreed collection system across the county. The success of our collection system may result in other Council's doing the same collection system. The County Council is the Waste Disposal Authority and it is viewed that there are different ways of doing things. In the run up to the opening of the incinerator it was believed the cost of moving waste to the incinerator would be cost neutral, however, in Cheltenham for various reasons there is no transfer station set up where refuse could be bulked up for carriage to the incinerator. This means that Cheltenham have to take their waste to the incinerator in their collection lorries.

The report was seconded by Councillor Whiteside.

When put to the vote, the Motion was unanimously carried.

**RESOLVED** 1. To authorise Stroud District Council's membership of the new Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership; and  
2. To delegate authority to the Head of Community Services to approve the final Terms of Reference in consultation with the Chair of Environment Committee.

**CL.060      ADOPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE (IHRA) WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM**

Councillor Cornell, the Leader thanked Members for attending the Council's Holocaust Memorial Event which was dedicated to the remembrance of those who had suffered in the holocaust and genocide. She hoped that this would be an annual event in the

Council's calendar. The Secretary of State had sent a letter to all Councils requesting them to adopt the IHRA. The adoption of the IHRA had cross-party support and would send a statement out to all communities.

The report was seconded by Councillor Davies who endorsed the Leader's comments.

When put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED To adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism with immediate effect.**

**CL.061      DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 85 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Councillor Davies presented the above report for a dispensation for Councillor David Mossman, who was currently unable to carry out Council duties due to ill-health.

The report was seconded by Councillor Cornell who sent best wishes on behalf of Members.

When put to the vote, the Motion was unanimously carried.

**RESOLVED To authorise Councillor David Mossman to be absent from all meetings of the Authority until the end of the Municipal Year.**

The Monitoring Officer left the Council Chamber.

**CL.062      EXTENSION TO DESIGNATION OF MONITORING OFFICER**

The Strategic Director of Resources outlined the purpose of the report which was to ensure that the Council had a Monitoring Officer in place after 31 March 2020 and until a permanent Monitoring Officer had been appointed. The current Monitoring Officer was overseeing the transfer of the legal service on 1 April 2020 to One Legal, who were based in Tewkesbury, provided that there was a satisfactory business case.

In response to Councillor Studdert-Kennedy's question the Strategic Director confirmed that the post of Monitoring Officer was a statutory post and the Council would have their own permanent in-house Monitoring Officer, who would be part of the new Policy Team.

The report was proposed by Councillor Townley and seconded by Councillor Pearson who stated that he was happy with the advice that he had received from the current Monitoring Officer.

When put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED To extend the designation of Patrick Arran as Monitoring Officer pending a permanent appointment being made to the Monitoring Officer post.**

The Monitoring Officer returned to the meeting.

**CL.063          RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**a. Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Medium Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2020/21

Councillor Williams, Vice-Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee outlined the above report which was agreed by Committee at their meeting on 28 January 2020. The main policy change made this year was where long term investments were made. This had been the subject of much discussion.

In response to Councillor Townley's question, the Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that a small proportion of our investment may be invested in multi-asset funds but we would not wish to directly invest in these.

Councillor Cooper inquired about the governance of the more risky investments making reference to the Icelandic banks and was concerned about the security/liquidity of investments rather than their return. Councillor Williams confirmed that the Council had a defined and very limited number of funds that they would be investing in.

Councillor Hurst inquired about the Capital Expenditure and the Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that the figures were consistent within the budget report and any changes would be reported.

The report was seconded by Councillor Pearson.

When put to the vote the Motion was carried.

- RESOLVED 1. To adopt the prudential indicators and limits for 2020/21 to 2022/23;**
- 2. To approve the treasury management strategy 2020/21, and the treasury prudential indicators;**
  - 3. To approve the investment strategy 2020/21, and the detailed criteria for specified and non-specified investments; and**
  - 4. To approve the MRP Statement 2020/21.**

**Strategy and Resources Committee – 30 January 2020**b. The Fair Pay and Senior Pay Policy Statement 2019/20

Councillor Cornell presented the above renewal of the annual Fair Pay and Senior Pay Policy Statement which was seconded by Councillor Townley.

When put to the vote it was unanimously carried.

**RESOLVED That the Statement is approved.**

c. Stroud District Council Capital Strategy

Councillor Cornell presented the Council's updated Capital Strategy that had been discussed at Strategy and Resources Committee on 30 January 2020.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Whiteside.

In accordance with the Council Standing Orders, a recorded vote was taken, the results of which are as follows: -

**FOR: 36 votes, AGAINST: 0 votes, ABSENTION: 0 votes**

Councillors

|                  |                 |                        |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Martin Baxendale | Lindsey Green   | Sue Reed               |
| Chris Brine      | Nick Hurst      | Mark Reeves            |
| Miranda Clifton  | George James    | Steve Robinson         |
| Nigel Cooper     | Haydn Jones     | Mattie Ross            |
| Doina Cornell    | John Jones      | Tom Skinner            |
| Gordon Craig     | Darren Loftus   | Nigel Studdert-Kennedy |
| Rachel Curley    | Stephen Lydon   | Haydn Sutton           |
| Stephen Davies   | John Marjoram   | Brian Tipper           |
| Paul Denney      | Jenny Miles     | Chas Townley           |
| Jim Dewey        | Keith Pearson   | Ken Tucker             |
| Jonathan Edmunds | Simon Pickering | Martin Whiteside       |
| Colin Fryer      | Gary Powell     | Tom Williams           |

When put to the vote, the Motion was unanimously carried.

**RESOLVED To approve the Capital Strategy at Appendix A.**

d. The General Fund Budget 2020/21, Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Plan and Council Tax Charges

Councillor Cornell summarised the key headlines, the revenue budget of £14.7m and capital investment of nearly £100m over the next 5 years. The increase in council tax of 2.4% equated to approximately an increase of 10p per week. The District Council's precept was less than the precept for Gloucestershire County Council, the Police Authority and all Town/Parish Councils; only 11% of the total of council tax goes to Stroud District Council. The Government funding review had been delayed by a year. The fees and charging policy makes it transparent what charges the Council would make.

Members' attention was drawn to the additional papers that had been circulated prior to the meeting; Appendix I – Details of Council Tax Charges and the replacement pages 66 and 67 for Appendix H – Stroud District Fees and Charges for Planning Strategy.

Assumptions had been made on the amount of funding received from business rates but the expectation was that the amount of funding would decrease. This was a realistic and relatively prudent budget from Officers. There were growth items included e.g. the canal and the unlocking of brown field sites. Staff at Stratford Park Leisure Centre will be paid the living wage. Bearing in mind of the uncertainty, Councillor Cornell was happy to recommend this budget.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Whiteside.

In response to questions from Councillor Lydon, Councillor Cornell confirmed that she had regular meetings with both of our local MPs and would use every means she could to put pressure on both of them to lobby Government on the Council's behalf regarding business rates. She was also in regular contact with the LGA and would also ask for their assistance.

In reply to a question from Councillor Davies regarding paragraph 3.7, the Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that this was a technical area and contributions were split into two parts. It was the deficit contribution that was going down and the percentage for current staff going up. Officers needed to be cautious and this would continue to be reviewed.

During debate Councillor Davies gave credit for the hard work undertaken by the officers for a budget that works. He was however concerned by the lack of detail, stating that the budget lacked ambition. The Council needed to do more towards carbon neutrality; we do not seem to be doing enough.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy made the point that pensions vary all of the time.

Councillor Lydon asked Councillor Davies why the Conservative Group had not proposed its own budget and why they had not brought projects forward regarding carbon neutral.

Councillor Pickering made reference to the energy performance of private houses and the Council's housing stock. The new cycling path made from recycled rubber from Nailsworth to Stonehouse took nearly 2 years of negotiation. During that time we built partnerships with many organisations and bodies. A project like this does take a lot of planning.

In summing up Councillor Whiteside stated that there was ample scope in this budget to be ambitious.

Councillor Cornell stated that the budget set the ground work for the next 4 years. Regarding climate change there are items within the budget that will affect our carbon emissions. Finally, she commended the budget.

In accordance with the Council Standing Orders, a recorded vote was taken, the results of which are as follows:-

**FOR: 23 votes**

Councillors

|                  |                 |                        |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Martin Baxendale | Colin Fryer     | Steve Robinson         |
| Chris Brine      | George James    | Mattie Ross            |
| Miranda Clifton  | Stephen Lydon   | Nigel Studdert-Kennedy |
| Doina Cornell    | John Marjoram   | Chas Townley           |
| Rachel Curley    | Jenny Miles     | Ken Tucker             |
| Paul Denney      | Simon Pickering | Martin Whiteside       |
| Jim Dewey        | Gary Powell     | Tom Williams           |
| Jonathan Edmunds | Sue Reed        |                        |

**AGAINST: 2 votes**

Councillors

|            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| John Jones | Haydn Sutton |
|------------|--------------|

**ABSENTIONS: 11 votes**

Councillors

|                |               |              |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Nigel Cooper   | Nick Hurst    | Mark Reeves  |
| Gordon Craig   | Haydn Jones   | Tom Skinner  |
| Stephen Davies | Darren Loftus | Brian Tipper |
| Lindsey Green  | Keith Pearson |              |

When put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED (Subject to the Government's final settlement announcements)**

- 1. To approve the updated Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in Appendices A-E;**
- 2. To increase the council tax by £5 p.a. to £212.52 at Band D, an increase of less than 10p per week for the services provided by Stroud District Council;**
- 3. To note the uncertainty around the impact of changes to local government funding in 2021/22;**
- 4. To approve the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix E;**
- 5. To approve the planned changes to the reserves as set out in Section 4 of the report and Appendix F;**
- 6. To approve the fees and charges policy and list of Council fees and charges as set out in Appendices G and H.**

**In addition to the recommendations from the Strategy and Resources Committee,**

**RESOLVED 7. To approve the Council Tax Charges for the District as set out in Appendix I.**

- e. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Revised 2019/20 and Original 2020/21 Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24

Councillor Townley, the Chair of Housing Committee outlined various paragraphs and tables within the report that had been agreed at both Housing Committee and Strategy and Resources Committee. Rent charges had not been increased for the past 4 years. Because of a change in the contract for district heating, charges would be reduced.

The new in-house repairs and maintenance contract was on track; no savings were expected for 2020. The quality in service to our tenants would be improved because it would be in-house.

Planning permission had been granted on a housing site in Nailsworth and we will be seeking permission on two sites in Minchinhampton and Eastington in the future.

There is a new budget of £1.3m to offset the loss of rent for the properties to be used for temporary accommodation. We are trying to use Council housing and reduce relocating out of the district.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Pickering who stated that we are the only local authority with its own housing stock, had a building programme and are improving our existing housing stock.

Councillor Townley confirmed that a budget to buy land needed to be available when this land became available, it was a timing issue. On 31 March 2020 the Council would be purchasing a site in Wotton-under-Edge and discussions were being held regarding the Ship Inn site. The budget clearly set out projects that had been agreed at Housing Committee.

The Strategic Director of Resources confirmed that Members had already agreed the budget principles underpinning this report in the earlier report and as such the decision had already been made. The HRA report was more detailed.

Councillor Robinson stated he was pleased that the Council were building at Ringfield Close, Nailsworth. These would be the first Council houses built in Nailsworth for 40 years. Insulation had already started on 40 non-traditional houses.

Councillor Hurst requested Members to vote on block but to separate item 4, but did not propose a motion to that effect.

In response to a question from Councillor Pearson regarding the poor performance of Contractors Councillor Townley confirmed that there had been problems with the commissioning process of outside contractors. Problems could be resolved swiftly when there was direct control in-house, Officers would be able to respond to issues as and when they arise.

Work is currently being undertaken to develop a strategy to buy back former Council owned properties. A report would be presented to June Housing Committee.

Councillor Davies stated he had an issue with the execution of the budget, some of the numbers were fanciful and unrealistic. It was not a bad budget but disappointing.

Councillor Cornell confirmed she was pleased that the Cambridge House modernisation scheme had been included within the report. Also that the 5 year Council house building programme had been delivered on time and on budget. The Council had a good track record.

In accordance with the Council Standing Orders, a recorded vote was taken, the results of which are as follows:-

**FOR: 22 votes**

Councillors

|                  |                 |                  |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Martin Baxendale | Colin Fryer     | Steve Robinson   |
| Chris Brine      | George James    | Mattie Ross      |
| Miranda Clifton  | Stephen Lydon   | Chas Townley     |
| Doina Cornell    | John Marjoram   | Ken Tucker       |
| Rachel Curley    | Jenny Miles     | Martin Whiteside |
| Paul Denney      | Simon Pickering | Tom Williams     |
| Jim Dewey        | Gary Powell     |                  |
| Jonathan Edmunds | Sue Reed        |                  |

**AGAINST: 2 votes**

Councillors

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Gordon Craig | Nick Hurst |
|--------------|------------|

**ABSENTIONS: 12 votes**

Councillors

|                |               |                        |
|----------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Nigel Cooper   | John Jones    | Tom Skinner            |
| Stephen Davies | Darren Loftus | Nigel Studdert-Kennedy |
| Lindsey Green  | Keith Pearson | Haydn Sutton           |
| Haydn Jones    | Mark Reeves   | Brian Tipper           |

When put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

- RESOLVED**
- 1. The revised HRA revenue budget for 2019/20 and original budget 2020/21 are approved.**
  - 2. The movement to and from HRA balances and capital reserves as detailed in Appendix B and section 9 are approved.**
  - 3. That from 1 April 2020:**
    - i) Social rents and affordable rents are increased by 2.7%, in line with national rent guidance.**
    - ii) Garage rents are increased by 2.7%.**
    - iii) Landlord service charges are increased by 2.7%, except district heating charges which are decreased by an average of 21%. As detailed in Appendix A.**
  - 4. That the HRA Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2023/24, as detailed in Appendix C, be included in the Council's Capital Programme.**

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Chair