



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

# 3

8 October 2020

7.00 pm – 9.46 pm

Remote Meeting

### Minutes

#### Membership

<b>Councillor Doina Cornell (Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Keith Pearson	P
<b>Councillor Martin Whiteside (Vice-Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Simon Pickering	P
Councillor Chris Brine	P	Councillor Mattie Ross	P
Councillor Nigel Cooper	P	Councillor Tom Skinner	P
Councillor Rachel Curley	P	Councillor Ken Tucker	P
Councillor Stephen Davies	P	Councillor Debbie Young	P
Councillor Nick Hurst	P		

P = Present A = Absent

#### Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive	Strategic Director of Transformation and Change
Strategic Director of Resources	Strategic Director of Communities
Strategic Director of Place	Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring
Head of Community Services	Officer
Accountancy Manager	Property Manager
Canal Manager	Senior Democratic Services and Elections
Democratic Services and Elections Officer	Officer

#### Other Member(s) in Attendance

Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy.

The Chair announced a change to the order of the Agenda, the Committee agreed to take Agenda item 10 after Agenda Item 13.

#### SRC.030

#### APOLOGIES

There were none.

#### SRC.031

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hurst declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 due to being a shareholder in the company Stroud Water Navigation. The Monitoring Officer advised that Councillor Hurst could remain present during the discussion as there was no decision to be made on the report.

**SRC.032****MINUTES****RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 and 30 July 2020 are approved as a correct record.**

**SRC.033****PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

**SRC.034****IT STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT PROCESS**

The Strategic Director of Transformation and Change provided a verbal update on the progress on the investment that Committee approved to upgrade the infrastructure for the Council and drew Members attention to Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4. £1.8 million was allocated to a reserve to upgrade the IT infrastructure as this was one of the key areas that was identified as part of the Peer Challenge and Corporate Delivery Plan that needed upgrading to deliver digital ambitions.

Councillor Hurst raised a question regarding where the investment into The Pulse for Disaster Recovery had been spent. It was agreed that a written response was to be provided to Councillor Hurst outside Committee.

The Strategic Director of Transformation and Change answered questions from Members of the Committee confirming the following:

- Provided assurance that those who are not computer literate or do not have access to the internet can still access and operate the Council's services
- A need to review Members ICT and the IT allowance in which an ICT Members Working Group had been created. Any recommendations would go to the Independent Remuneration panel for consideration
- A 5-year Strategy is safe and anything exceeding this wouldn't incorporate any technological advancements
- The Council would be working with its partners and aligning joint outcomes

The report was proposed by Councillor Brine and seconded by Councillor Whiteside.

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

**RESOLVED**

**The Committee RESOLVED to note the report.**

**SRC.035****STROUD CEMETERY CHAPEL**

The Property Manager presented the report and advised that following a decision in October 2016 it was agreed to dispose of the Stroud Cemetery Chapel on the open market. Stroud Town Council was given first refusal to purchase the chapel before it was put on the open market but it decided not to proceed as the costs were too high. The proposed disposal was advertised publically in 2019 and Stroud Preservation Trust came forward with an initial proposal as set out in Appendix B of the report for a transfer of the site to them for £1 which would enable them to commit further time and expenditure on detailed feasibility studies and public consultation.

Councillor Hurst raised a question in relation to access to the site and whether any disposal would be leasehold or freehold. The Property Manager advised that the Chapel has reserved rights over the access road. Councillor Hurst raised a second question in relation to what

the annual maintenance costs would be to the Council. The Property Manager advised that a written response would be provided to Councillor Hurst outside of Committee to confirm the maintenance costs once checked.

The report was proposed by Councillor Pickering and seconded by Councillor Whiteside.

- RESOLVED**            **The Committee RESOLVED to agree terms for a transfer of Stroud Cemetery Chapel to the Stroud Preservation Trust for £1 subject to:**
- a. Detailed feasibility studies
  - b. Public consultation
  - c. A further report to a future meeting of the Strategy & Resources Committee
  - d. Compliance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act by securing the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area.

**SRC.036**                    **GENERAL FUND OUTTURN REPORT 2019/20**

The Accountancy Manager presented the report on the closing financial position for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme for 2019/20 and invited members to ask any questions.

Councillor Davies raised a question in relation to the withdrawal of funding from Ecotricity on the Wallbridge Gateway. The Accountancy Manager advised that a written response will be provided to Councillor Davies to confirm the reason for this outside of Committee.

The report was proposed by Councillor Hurst and seconded by Councillor Pearson.

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

- RESOLVED**            **The Committee RESOLVED to:**
- a) note the General Fund Revenue Outturn position for 2019/20, as shown in Table 1.
  - b) note the Housing Revenue Account outturn position for 2019/20, as shown in Table 4
  - c) to note the transfers to and from earmarked reserves for the year, as detailed in Sections 5 and 8 and Appendix E
  - d) to note the Capital Programme outturn position for 2019/20, as shown in Table 10
  - e) approve slippage of the Capital Programme budget into 2020/21, as shown in Table 10 and Appendix H

**SRC.037**                    **BUDGET STRATEGY 2021/22 TO 2024/25**

The Strategic Director of Resources presented the report and advised Committee that as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic the previous report on General Fund Outturn and the Budget Strategy report would normally be considered 4 months apart. The report outlines the budget process and assumptions that would be used to put together the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Strategic Director of Resources also advised that business rates provided an uncertain picture due to the decision the government was going to make about redistributed business rate growth and whether Stroud District Council chooses to continue

with the Gloucestershire Business Rates pool in 2021 but before the deadline of 23 October 2021.

Councillor Young asked a question in relation to what the Financial impact would be in relation to not paying the upfront costs listed in Paragraph 3.6 of the report. The Strategic Director of Resources advised an estimation of an annual saving of £150,000 however a written response would be provided to Councillor Young to confirm the amount. A second question was asked by Councillor Young in relation to what was included in the revenue loss in Paragraph 4.3 as a result of Coronavirus. A response was provided outlining the loss including car parking fees, the Pulse and Planning applications. Stratford Park Leisure Centre is not included as revenue goes to the Operator.

Councillor Davies enquired on the pressures, progress and unknown costs on the Housing Revenue Account in relation to Carbon Neutral 2030. The Strategic Director of Resources advised that the Accountancy Manager was working with Housing colleagues to foresee energy strategies and costings to include in the programme.

The report was proposed by Councillor Curley and seconded by Councillor Pickering.

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

- RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**
- a. **Approve the Budget Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25 as set out in this report and appendices**
  - b. **Continue with the Business Rates pooling agreement, subject to the recommendation of the Section 151 Officer Group**

## **SRC.038**

## **MEMBER/OFFICER REPORTS**

### Performance Monitoring

The member report was circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

### Investment and Development Panel

There had not been a meeting yet.

### Leadership Gloucestershire Update

The member report was circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

### Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC)

The Strategic Director of Resources attended the last meeting and advised the items discussed included details of Cheltenham's Golden Valley Development and the launch of their Cyber Central Park and a discussion took place on the work of the economic recovery boards.

### Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (GEGSC)

Councillor Pickering provided a verbal update and advised Committee that the last meeting was a joint meeting with the Environment Scrutiny Committee to discuss and receive a presentation on the Local Transport Plan (LTP). There were 1340 responses to the LTP - Stroud 22%, Forest of Dean 18%, Cheltenham 14%, Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester. 64% comments were on connectivity and public transport and 14% environment – 14% on cycling, 14% on public transport, 12% on rail, 10% on climate change and 9% on Highways. Gloucestershire County Council is trying to realign the LTP in response to consultation and the Government White Paper.

Brimscombe Port Project Board

The member report was circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions however Councillor Young declared an interest. The Monitoring Officer advised that Councillor Young could remain present during the item as the report is to note only and has no decision.

Corporate Delivery Plan Progress Update Q1

The member report was circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan Progress Update Q1

The member report was circulated prior to Committee. There were no questions.

Covid-19 Engagement Board

The Chair advised Committee that Cllr Lydon represents Stroud District Council on this board and provided an update to Community Services and Licensing Committee on 1 October 2020 alongside his report on the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and in the interim, will report back to the Group Leaders on any issues.

**SRC.039**                      **WORK PROGRAMME**

There were no comments.

**RESOLVED**                      **To note the above updates to the Work Programme.**

**SRC.040**                      **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Members questions were submitted by Councillor Young. They were answered by the Chair, Councillor Cornell. ([Refer to the recording of the meeting](#)).

**SRC.041**                      **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Monitoring Officer had advised that the report disclosed exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It was therefore proposed that, pursuant to the provisions of Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of this item at Agenda Item 10 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The decision to discuss Item 10 in exempt discussion was proposed by the Chair, Councillor Cornell and seconded by Councillor Pickering.

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

**RESOLVED**                      **That pursuant to the provisions of Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the matter detailed at agenda item 10 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

The Chair proposed a 10-minute adjournment to the meeting before considering the final agenda item. The meeting was adjourned at 9.06pm and Committee reconvened at 9.15pm.

Keith Person left the meeting.

**SRC.042**

**COTSWOLD CANALS CONNECTED PROJECT (PHASE 1B)  
UPDATE**

The Canal Manger presented the report and advised that the item was being considered under exempt conditions because the Lottery had required this, the decision was strictly embargoed until Friday 16 October.

The report outlined details of the amount of money being offered by the Lottery and the work being done to reconnect the last remaining miles of the restoration project to the National Network as part of the 9-10-mile regeneration corridor through Stroud District. The Canal Manager also advised Members that the project had a number of benefits which included improved Economic, leisure, heritage and biodiversity outcomes.

The project had committed continual support from staff and volunteers in addition to having cross party political support at Stroud District Council since 2008.

The report was proposed by Councillor Whiteside and seconded by Councillor Brine.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried with 11 For and 1 Abstention.

The meeting closed at 9:46 pm.

Chair