



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## COUNCIL MEETING

17 December 2020

7.00 pm – 20.15 pm

Remote Meeting

### Minutes

#### Membership

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

P = Present A = Absent

#### Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive

Strategic Director of Place

Strategic Director of Change & Transformation

Monitoring Officer

Head of Community Services

Income & Systems Manager

Accountancy Manager

Senior Democratic Services & Elections Officer

Democratic Services & Elections Officer

#### CL.035

#### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Binns, Fellows, Hurst, Miles, Reed, Townley, Tim Williams and Young.

#### CL.036

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

**CL.037**                    **MINUTES**

The Chair advised that an amended version of the Minutes had been circulated to prior to the meeting; the minutes had been amended on the decision for the Motion to read "Upon the vote the Motion was carried by 15 votes for, 13 against and 11 abstentions".

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy requested that the minutes were amended at minute number CL.029 to add the word 'any' between 'No Member or Officer of Stroud District Council or any Parish/Town Council will participate in' and 'stage of the arrangements if he/she has or may have any conflict of interest in the matter.' It was agreed that the minutes would be amended accordingly.

**RESOLVED**            **That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2020 are approved as a correct record including the amendment outlined above.**

**CL.038**                    **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair announced that a response had been received from the Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution following the Motion at the last Council Meeting which asked the Chief Executive to write to government. The response had been circulated to Members.

The Leader thanked both Officers and Members for their hard work under difficult circumstances since the pandemic had begun. She also informed Council that the first vaccinations in the Stroud District had taken place earlier that day which provided hope for the district. The Chair also gave his thanks to Officers for their work during the pandemic.

**CL.039**                    **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Public questions were submitted. They were answered by the Chair of Housing Committee, Councillor Ross. (Refer to the [recording of the meeting](#)).

**CL.040**                    **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES****Recommendation from Housing Committee****a. Council Housing – Housing Management System Transformation**

Councillor Ross introduced the above report and advised that Tenant Services were overdue a systems upgrade to help reduce the number of systems they use, to help tenants to self-serve where possible and to improve the overall service provided to tenants.

The report was proposed by Councillor Ross and seconded by Councillor Kay.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy asked for clarifications of the savings reported in paragraph 6 of the report. The Income & Systems Manger advised that this was a resource saving, however, further savings would be made as the new system would replace 9 systems that have additional yearly costs. Councillor Studdert-Kennedy also asked whether the systems would integrate with all other council systems including accounting systems. The Income & Systems Manger advised that it would not integrate with the current accounts system for debtors and creditors but would be used to manage contractor costs, soft market testing would be carried out to ensure that the system could deliver what was required and interface with other appropriate Council systems.

Councillor Fryer stated that the system was needed to improve service delivery. Councillor Craig expressed concern regarding the relationship with tenants and the Council and asked that tenants were put first once the new system has been purchased. Councillor Davies advised that we had to embrace channel shift to allow residents access to services online and stated that he hoped that this went far enough to ensure that would be possible. Councillors Robinson and Fryer both expressed support for the purchase of the new system.

Upon the vote the Motion was carried.

**RESOLVED To approve an additional budget of £260,000 in 2020/21 to allow Tenant Services to invest in a single integrated housing management system encompassing the whole housing and repairs functions, as well as better integration with the wider Council, as recommended by Housing Committee**

**CL.041 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Member questions were submitted by Councillor Davies. They were answered by the Leader of Council, Councillor Cornell. Supplementary questions were also answered (Refer to the [recording of the meeting](#)).

**CL.042 MOTIONS**

a. Motion regarding Supporting Universal Basic Income proposed by Councillor Braun and Secoded by Councillor Hall

Councillor Braun presented the motion and advised that the health and wellbeing of residents was a top priority for the Council and universal basic income would help to improve both physical and mental health. She also stated that the Council has a direct role in providing financial benefits and Members will often support residents claim for the correct financial support, she believed that we needed to be part of the national conversation about universal basic income. Councillor Braun also advised that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, unemployment was increasing and those who were previously living in poverty were now facing greater difficulties. Universal basic income would ensure citizens received a modest sum that was not means tested to cover the cost of living.

Councillor Denney stated that many people were losing their jobs due to technological advances and that a universal basic income would allow citizens time to retrain. He also advised that the universal basic income would provide enough money for people trapped in domestic violence situations to escape the abuse they suffered, he stated that it was long overdue and had already been trialled in many other countries.

Councillor Davies advised that prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the country had seen the highest levels of employment that it had ever seen and that creating a dependency on government for money was not a direction that we should travel. He also stated that this was not something that Stroud District Council had control over.

Councillor Hall stated that since the Covid-19 pandemic began the furlough scheme had not helped enough people. He also advised that if universal basic income had been in place before the pandemic, citizens would not have had to make the choice between going into work whilst unwell potentially spreading Covid-19 and not receiving their full wage due to sickness.

Upon the vote the motion was carried by 23 votes for, 14 against and 1 abstention.

- RESOLVED** To ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the leader of the party in Government, their counterparts in all opposition political parties in parliament, our local MPs, and to Gloucestershire County Council to express the following:
- 1) That the current benefit system is failing citizens, with Universal Credit causing hardship to many communities in Stroud District;
  - 2) There is a danger of increasing numbers of people facing poverty as a result of the coronavirus crisis;
  - 3) Testing a UBI is needed, as a UBI has the potential to help address key challenges such as inequality, poverty, precarious employment, loss of community, and breach of planetary boundaries through:
    - i) Giving employers a more flexible workforce whilst giving employees greater freedom to change their jobs;
    - ii) Valuing unpaid work, such as caring for family members and voluntary work;
    - iii) Removing the negative impacts of benefit sanctions and conditionality;
    - iv) Giving people more equal resources within the family, workplace and society;
    - v) Breaking the link between work and consumption, thus helping reduce strain on the environment; and
    - vi) Enabling greater opportunities for people to work in community and cultural activities or to train or reskill in areas that will be needed to transition to a lower-carbon economy.
  - 4) The success of a UBI pilot should not be measured only by impact upon takeup of paid work, but also the impact upon communities and what the people within them do, how they feel, and how they relate to others and the environment around them; and
  - 5) Given its history of social innovation, wealth of expertise, and active networks across community, business and public services, Stroud District is ideally placed to pilot a UBI.

b. Motion regarding Food Poverty proposed by Councillor Lydon and Seconded by Councillor Pickering

The Chair confirmed that the proposer and seconder had agreed to an amendment to the Motion, and advised Members of the changes. The council was now being asked to resolve to:

- “8. Appoint food justice champions who will work with partners to tackle food justice locally and make a local contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 and that the food justice champions will work with partners to set up a food partnership and develop a food action plan to address the causes of food poverty and promote food justice.
9. Request officers bring a report to the appropriate Committee / Council to set out how these objectives might be achieved together with the resource implications for the Council.”

Councillor Lydon presented the Motion and advised that work by the Trussell Trust showed that during the first 2 weeks of March 2020, 4 times the number of people received food parcels as compared to the previous year and numbers had risen throughout the Stroud District. He also advised that we should be doing more to help facilitate strategic meetings between key organisations and food providers to come up with solutions to tackle food justice.

Councillor Davies advised that he was glad to see the amended version of the motion that requested a report to be brought back to a Committee or Council to look at how the objectives may be achieved.

Councillor Pickering advised that there was a longer term aspect that needed to be addressed in the report which should look at the next 10 or more years and how to provide food security. He stated that the Covid-19 pandemic had made us aware of the length of our food supply chain and Brexit may have implications also, only 48% of the food consumed in the UK is grown in the UK. It was also stated that having a strategy on food would have an effect on the health of adults and children and the vitality of our market towns and economy.

Upon the vote the motion was carried unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

### **To note:**

- 1. That Trussell Trust research shows 3m children are at risk of hunger during school holidays.**
- 2. Foodbank use has dramatically increased, the Independent Food Aid Network recorded a 59% increase in demand for emergency food support between February and March.**
- 3. That the government has committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 “To End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture “. The first target under Goal 2 being – “By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round”**
- 4. In the UK WRAP estimate 9.6 million tonnes of food is wasted of which 4.5 million tonnes of that is edible food - products that could have been eaten. Unless treated safely this food waste has the potential to generate 25m t of Greenhouse gasses**
- 5. The COVID – 19 pandemic has highlighted the risk of long supply chains on both the supply and cost of food**

### **To believe:**

- 6. No one in the UK should go hungry, not least the vulnerable, elderly and children. Food justice is about taking action on the causes of hunger such as affordability and availability of good nutritious food.**
- 7. Local Councils, local businesses and communities have played and continue to play a key role during the COVID - 19 pandemic and that should be recognised.**

### **To resolve:**

- 8. To appoint food justice champions who will work with partners to tackle food justice locally and make a local contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 and that the food justice champions will work with partners to set up a food partnership and develop a food**

**action plan to address the causes of food poverty and promote food justice.**

- 9. To request officers bring a report to the appropriate Committee / Council to set out how these objectives might be achieved together with the resource implications for the Council.**

The meeting closed at 20:15 pm.

Chair