

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

13 October 2016

7.00 pm – 10.15 pm
Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

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Minutes

Membership:

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

P = Present A = Absent

Other Members in attendance:

Councillor John Marjoram

Officers Present:

Chief Executive	Property Manager
Head of Asset Management	Revenue and Benefits Manager
Accountancy Manager	Canal Project Manager
Accountant	Democratic Services Officer

Before the meeting started the Chair allowed announcements to be made.

Members wished Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy a speedy recovery after a short stay in hospital.

Business survey results were very positive and the Chief Executive would circulate figures following the meeting.

Councillor Mattie Ross commented on a negative press report on the state of the Council's sheltered housing stock and also the outstanding work carried out by staff following a fire at a sheltered housing property in Willow Road, Stonehouse.

SRC.023

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Nick Hurst,

SRC.024 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Debbie Young declared an interest in Agenda Item 8a, minute SRC.030, she would leave the Council Chamber and take no part in the item.

SRC.025 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2016.**

SRC.026 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions were received.

SRC.027 **WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2016/17**

The Chair reminded members that this was an evolving programme. The following item was added:

Update on Subscription Rooms – 12 January 2017.

RESOLVED **To AGREE the Committee's Work Programme 2016/17.**

SRC.028 **MEMBER REPORTS****(a) Performance Monitoring Representatives**

A report had been circulated to Members. Councillor Keith Pearson highlighted a few points such as Gossington Depot and Brimscombe Port, a further meeting had taken place which would be reported to a future meeting.

(b) Stroud Concordat

Councillor Simon Pickering had been unable to circulate his report, but would do so following the meeting. He highlighted projects such as the digital high street, car parking, land at Wallbridge, and salmon in the river at Salmon Springs.

(c) Planning Review Panel

A report had been circulated to Members.

(d) Housing and Development Panel

Councillor Steve Lydon gave a verbal report.

(e) Member Development Task and Finish Group

A report had been circulated to Members.

Constitution Working Group

The final report had been circulated with the Agenda. The group had looked at a number of issues, recommending updates of the Constitution as necessary. Members thanked the Legal Services Manager and the cross party support of Members for their input during this work.

RECOMMENDED To Council that relevant amendments be made to the Council's Constitution to ensure that as from 1st December 2016 the Housing Committee's terms of reference comprise "public and private housing issues affecting the Council's housing authority role and housing policy.

RESOLVED The workloads of the Community Services & Licensing Committee and the Environment Committee be kept under review in 2016/17 as outlined in paragraph 6(b) of the report.

SRC.029 **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

The Revenue and Benefits Manager presented the report outlining the background and options for the support scheme. Consultation had been carried out and work is taking place with other districts in the County on a new scheme for 2017/18.

RECOMMENDED To Council that it adopts the current Local Scheme as the scheme for Stroud District Council for the period 01 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Councillor Debbie Young left the Council Chamber and took no part in the debate or the vote on the following item.

SRC.030 **ASSET MANAGEMENT**

(a) **Advance notice of proposed use of compulsory purchase powers at Brimscombe Port, Thrupp.**

The Head of Asset Management presented the report explaining background to the potential redevelopment and the principle of compulsory purchase of the land in the vicinity of Brimscombe Port.

HCA funding had been agreed, the Council would invest a sum of money from its own reserves. Members asked for a briefing note to be circulated setting out the terms of the HCA agreement.

RESOLVED To support the principle of compulsory purchase of land in the vicinity of Brimscombe Port and instructs the Head of Asset Management to return to this committee at the earliest opportunity with a land acquisition plan and detailed proposals for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) resolution, should that be considered necessary.

(b) Land at Wallbridge, Stroud

The Head of Asset Management presented the report which set out options for future uses of the site. The land transfer to the Council from Gloucestershire County Council is due to take place in the near future. Members felt that this piece of land could become a good gateway to the town.

RESOLVED That the Head of Asset Management progresses discussions with Stroud Town Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Ecotricity on the design, costs and funding of a landscaping scheme for the land at Wallbridge and implements a scheme in consultation with those parties and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Community Services and Licensing Committee and Environment Committees.

(c) Asset Reviews

The Property Manager presented the report on the programme of Asset Reviews.

Stroud Cemetery, Bank Gardens & Sims Clock, Stroud

The management agreement with Stroud Town Council had expired in March 2016. This was extended for 12 months for discussions to take place. The proposal was to transfer the land to the Town Council with a capital payment (dowry) of £115,000. Members questioned the cost of upkeep and why a payment had to be made to the Town Council.

Councillor Martin Whiteside proposed an amendment to the resolution, to change the amount of payment to the Town Council from £115,000 to £130,000. This was seconded by Councillor Simon Pickering.

The Mayor of the Town Council, Councillor Kevin Cranston spoke on behalf of the Town Council, who considered that a figure of £130,000 was more appropriate for upkeep and the land transfer would be subject to satisfactory surveys.

RESOLVED To note the terms agreed for the disposal of Stroud Cemetery, Bank Gardens and Sims Clock and approve a capital payment of £130,000 to Stroud Town Council.

Cemetery Chapel

The management agreement did not include the Chapel, although the Town Council have been using this property free of charge as a depot, it has a guide price of £175,000, in its current condition. First refusal would be given to Stroud Town Council when the property is put on the open market, which would not be until April 2017 at the earliest.

RESOLVED To dispose of the former Cemetery Chapel on the open market on terms to be agreed by the Head of Asset Management in consultation with the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee, subject to first refusal being given to Stroud Town Council to purchase with a time limit of 3 months to make a decision.

Subscription Rooms

A cross party task and finish group of Members will look at the options and report to this Committee in January 2017 and Community Services and Licensing Committee in February 2017.

RESOLVED To set up a Task and Finish Group to look at how Stroud Subscription Rooms can best serve the diverse needs of the wider Stroud community on a cost effective basis with the understanding that the current level of subsidy is not sustainable. To bring an initial report back to Strategy and Resources in January 2017 and Community Services and Licensing Committee in February 2017. The terms of reference to be agreed by Group Leaders.

SRC.031 **CANAL PROJECT UPDATE**

The Canal Manager gave a presentation to Committee, updating Members on the project. The Chair thanked the Canal Manager, staff and volunteers for their work on this project.

SRC.032 **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2016/17 – QUARTER 1**

The Accountancy Manager presented the report which provided the first monitoring position statement for the financial year 2016/17. Detailed variations were explained which would have an impact on balances set for the original budget and the revised budget.

RESOLVED (a) To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund Revenue budget and Capital Programme.
(b) That the proposed Capital Budget changes for 2016/17 are incorporated into the updated Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2020/21 to be presented to the committee in January 2017.

SRC.033 **BUDGET STRATEGY REPORT 2017/18 – 2020/21**

The Accountancy Manager presented the report which set out the current position of the General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan. He highlighted that in 2017/18 the Council will receive the last Revenue Support Grant from the Government and in 2019/20 the Council will, currently, pay £549,000 back to the Government.

Members discussed the multi-year settlement and expressed concern at the offer being put to the Council. The Council needed to respond by 14 October 2016 to the offer.

RESOLVED To submit an application for a multi-year settlement and, if deciding to do so, delegates authority to the Chief Executive and Interim Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee, to make a suitable application.

Councillor Keith Pearson apologised and left the meeting at this point.

Further discussion took place on Right to Buy Receipts and the New Homes Bonus Scheme.

- RESOLVED**
- (a) To approve the Budget Strategy 2017/18-2020/21 as set out in this report, and
 - (b) to authorise the disposal of unused Right to Buy (RTB) receipts in the form of Grant Funding to Registered Providers for projects meeting the RTB 1-4-1 grant criteria. If deciding to do so, delegates authority to the Strategic Head (Development Services) and the Strategic Head (Tenant and Corporate Services), in consultation with the Chief Executive, Interim Section 151 Officer, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee and the Chair of Housing Committee,
- RECOMMENDED**
- (c) to Council that Stroud remain in the Business Rates Pool from April 2017 if to do so maximises the retention of business rate income in Gloucestershire.

SRC.034

LEADERSHIP GLOUCESTERSHIRE & DEVOLUTION

The Chief Executive would circulate information to Members.

SRC.035

BOUNDARY COMMISSION PROPOSALS AFFECTING PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN STROUD DISTRICT

The Chief Executive explained that the consultation period was still in force and there would be a motion on the Full Council Agenda for 27 October 2016.

SRC.036

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

A question relating to the sale of HRA property was received from Councillor Stephen Davies, a reply was given by Councillor Steve Lydon.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm.

Chair