

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

3 December 2015

7.00 pm – 9.02 pm
Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

3

Minutes

Membership:

Councillor Geoff Wheeler (Chair)	P	Councillor Haydn Jones	P
Councillor Steve Lydon (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Keith Pearson	P
Councillor Chris Brine	P	Councillor Simon Pickering	P
Councillor Nigel Cooper	P	Councillor Mattie Ross	P
Councillor Paul Hemming	P	Councillor Martin Whiteside	P
Councillor Nick Hurst	P	Councillor Rhiannon Wigzell	P
Councillor Julie Job	A		

P = Present

A = Absent

Officers Present:

Chief Executive	Canal Project Manager
Head of Asset Management	Principal Procurement Officer
Accountancy Manager	Principal Policy Officer
Business Development Manager	Democratic Services Assistant

SRC.033

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Julie Job.

SRC.034

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

SRC.035

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2015 are approved and signed as a correct record.

SRC.036**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

None received.

SRC.037**WORK PROGRAMME (VERSION 3)**

The Committee agreed the Work Programme for 2015/16. Councillor Keith Pearson requested that all committee meetings on the Work Programme should also be itemised on the Civic Calendar.

RESOLVED**To note the Work Programme.****SRC.038****NEW HOMES AND REGENERATION PRESENTATION**

The Business Development Manager gave a presentation on the New Homes and Regeneration programme. Headlines were:

- (a) An original budget of £19.5 million was approved in January 2013 to deliver the New Homes and Regeneration programme. The objective was to deliver 150 additional Council homes within the next five years. An additional figure of £1.5 million was transferred to programme reserves to mitigate risks associated with increased build costs. Currently the programme is set to deliver 236 new and replacement homes.
- (b) SDC has been awarded £2.8 million of grant from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) from their 2015-18 National Affordable Housing Programme to deliver 132 homes.
- (c) Members were shown photographs of completed schemes at Minchinhampton and Littlecombe and photographs of works in progress on sites at Mankley Road, Top of Town and The Corriett.
- (d) The programme's considerable achievements include the first SDC council homes in over 30 years, the first shared ownership housing schemes for many years, a commendation in the Sunday Times British Homes Awards and a bronze award in the What House? Awards 2015.

In reply to Members' questions, the Business Development Manager replied:

- (e) Under the right to buy scheme, for new properties the cost floor, i.e. the costs of building the property are taken into account when calculating the discount to the tenant on the value of the property. When building on Council land the value of the land is not taken into account in the cost floor calculation.
- (f) Precise details on the rules and timescales for selling on properties under the right to buy scheme can be provided to Members after the meeting.

RESOLVED**To note the presentation.**

SRC.039**CANAL PROJECT UPDATE AND PHASE 1B FUNDING**

The Canal Project Manager presented a report on the progress of the Canal Project and to take forward a request from the Cotswold Canals Trust to manage the cash flow for Phase 1B.

During Members' questions, the issue of the Bowbridge Bridge towpath was raised. The Canal Project Manager confirmed that:

- (a) The towpath may not run under the new bridge; instead a potential pedestrian route has been identified to comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- (b) Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) is constructing the bridge with SDC canal project funds making a fixed contribution up to £250K. GCC carries the risk for any cost overrun and the fish spawning season could delay any work to the next financial year.

Councillor Simon Pickering suggested an amendment to the wording in the recommendation "SDC will cashflow finance Phase 1B of the Canal Project". This was seconded by Councillor Martin Whiteside and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED **To note progress in delivering the Canal Project.**

**RECOMMENDED
TO COUNCIL** **That subject to final discussions and a formal funding agreement SDC will assist in the management of Phase 1B of the Canal Project subject to a maximum exposure of £1 million in cashflow.**

SRC.040**REDEVELOPMENT OF BRIMSCOMBE PORT, THRUPP**

The Head of Asset Management presented a report on the Redevelopment of Brimscombe Port to seek approvals to matching funding and to support the development of the site. In summary:

- (a) SDC successfully secured £2 million of recoverable investment from the HCA who asked the Council to enter into a funding agreement by late November.
- (b) The Funding Agreement is predicated on the freehold interest in the site being transferred from Stroud Valleys Canal Company to SDC. Whilst not specifically requiring match funding, the Funding Agreement requires SDC to commit to deliver the key elements of infrastructure in the site; a new road bridge, access into the site and the canal line and basin.
- (c) The second resolution stipulates the circumstances for authorising the suspension of, or an exception from, the Procedure Rules Relating to Contracts without the need to automatically refer back to full committee.
- (d) Members asked that any exemptions made to these rules were reported back to Committee.

RESOLVED **1. That £1m of the private sector housing reserve be committed to delivering infrastructure at, and the redevelopment of, Brimscombe Port, Thrupp.**

2. That subject to compliance with EU Procurement Directives and to the overriding objective of ensuring best value under the relevant legislative requirements, to authorise the suspension of, or exception from, the Procedure Rules Relating to Contracts as may from time to time be appropriate in order to take best advantage of innovative procurement, frameworks, value engineering and opportunities to utilise other partners, and to facilitate progress on individual schemes within the overall project. In each instance, specific approval will need to be given by the Strategic Head of Finance and Business Services and the Legal Services Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee.
3. That the Council will consider the use of its Compulsory Purchase Powers to acquire land and property rights, subject to further detailed reports being brought back to Committee as necessary.
4. That should circumstances dictate and it being in the best interests of the taxpayer, the Head of Asset Management in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee be authorised to terminate the HCA funding Agreement and a report be brought back to Committee.

SRC.041

REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT ACTION PLAN

The Principal Procurement Officer outlined a report on the progress of the above. Following on from the development of an updated and strategic governance model for procurement and the production of a Forward Procurement Plan, a revised Procurement Strategy is to be approved by Council in January 2016.

During Members' questions the issue of fostering links with local suppliers was highlighted. The Principal Procurement Officer replied that developing engagement with local suppliers is part of the Procurement Strategy; local suppliers can register on a portal and receive email notifications for bid submissions.

RESOLVED

To note the progress made on the Procurement Action Plan.

SRC.042

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT

The Accountancy Manager gave an oral update on elements announced by the Chancellor in the Comprehensive Spending Review and issues likely to feature in the Local Government Settlement, which was due to be announced in the week commencing 14th December. The Government had announced the ending of revenue support grant and the retention of all business rates by local authorities by 2020. The Government would consult on a revised New Homes Bonus scheme but had already signalled that £800 million of the £1.2 billion funding would be redirected to social care authorities.

RESOLVED **To note the update.**

SRC.043 **MEMBER REPORTS**

(a) Performance Monitoring Representatives

Councillor Geoff Wheeler, the Leader of Council, informed the Committee that Councillors Keith Pearson and Rhiannon Wigzell would be conducting their quarterly performance monitoring review next week.

(b) Stroud Concordat

Councillor Simon Pickering gave an oral report on items discussed at the Stroud Concordat meeting held that morning. These included:

- (i) Parking issues, including parking meters and text notifications for pay and display ticketing.
- (ii) Consideration of the increased management costs for maintaining the public toilets in Kings Street.
- (iii) Refurbishment and improvement to the bus shelters in Stroud.
- (iv) Planned resurfacing of Stroud High Street.

(c) Planning Review Panel

Councillor Steve Lydon thanked Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy for acting as Panel Chair in his absence and gave a verbal update on the Local Plan. The Council had become the first and only council in Gloucestershire to have an approved and adopted Local Plan under the National Planning Policy Framework. The Panel would be looking at a voluntary code of practice for developers on build design, the development of an enforcement action plan and the planning application "call-in" process.

RESOLVED **To note the updates.**

SRC.044 **JOBS AND GROWTH PLAN 2015/16**

(a) Feedback on Member engagement with local businesses

Councillors Martin Whiteside and Rhiannon Wigzell provided some feedback on their visits to local businesses in their wards.

(b) Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee

The Leader gave a verbal update on the above:

- (i) Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee will meet on Wednesday, 9th December 2015 to recommend the projects on the Growth Plan to be referred to GFirst LEP board.
- (ii) The fourteen suggested projects have a total value of £75 million and include three in Stroud District.

RESOLVED **To note the update.**

SRC.045**DEVOLUTION UPDATE**

The Leader gave an oral update on the progress of the above:

- (i) Leadership Gloucestershire will meet on Wednesday, 9th December 2015 to consider the modification of the Devolution bid in response to recent issues raised by Greg Clark, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. These include governance and housing issues for county wide consideration.
- (ii) The draft scheme will go to public consultation in the New Year; this may be after the May 2016 elections.

RESOLVED**To note the update.****SRC.046****MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

None received.

Meeting closed at 9.02 pm.

Chair