

**COUNCIL (BUDGET MEETING)****25 February 2016****7.00 pm – 9.07 pm****Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud****3****Minutes****Membership:**

Liz Ashton	P	Colin Fryer	P	Mark Rees**	P
Martin Baxendale	P	Chas Fellows	A	Lesley Reeves	P
Dorcas Binns	A	Paul Hemming	P	Steve Robinson	P
Tim Boxall	A	Nick Hurst	P	Mattie Ross	P
Rowland Blackwell	P	Julie Job	P	Emma Sims	P
Chris Brine	P	Haydn Jones	P	Nigel Studdert-Kennedy	P
Miranda Clifton	P	John Jones	P	Haydn Sutton	P
Nigel Cooper	P	Stephen Lydon	P	Brian Tipper	P
June Cordwell	P	John Marjoram	P	Chas Townley	P
Doina Cornell	P	Russell Miles	A	Ken Tucker	P
Gordon Craig	P	Stephen Moore	P	Geoff Wheeler	P
Kevin Cranston	P	Dave Mossman	A	Martin Whiteside	P
Karon Cross	A	Keith Pearson	P	Rhiannon Wigzell	A
Stephen Davies	P	Elizabeth Peters	P	Tim Williams	P
Paul Denney	P	Simon Pickering	P	Tom Williams	P
Julie Douglass	P	Gary Powell*	P	Penny Wride	P
Jonathan Edmunds	P	Nigel Prenter	P	Debbie Young	P

\*\* = Chair of Council    \* = Vice Chair of Council    P = Present    A = Absent

**Officers Present**

Chief Executive	Accountancy Manager
Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer	Principal Accountant
Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)	Principal Policy Officer (Democratic Services)

**CL.038      APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dorcas Binns, Tim Boxall, Karon Cross, Chas Fellows, Russell Miles, David Mossman and Rhiannon Wigzell.

**CL.039**      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Chas Townley works for Gloucestershire County Council and is a member of a trade union and declared an interest in Agenda Item 11b.

**CL.040**      **MINUTES**

Subject to correction of the misspelling of Councillor Doina Cornell's name in the minutes of 15 October and 19 November 2015:

**RESOLVED That the minutes of the following meetings are confirmed and signed as a correct record:**

<b>Council</b>	<b>15 October 2015</b>
<b>Extraordinary Council</b>	<b>19 November 2015</b>
<b>Budget meeting</b>	<b>28 January 2016</b>

**CL.041**      **ANNOUNCEMENTS**The Leader

Group Leaders have agreed to make Stroud district a Dementia Friendly District, with the official announcement to be made in May. To help raise awareness the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner has awarded a grant of £720 and Care UK is to provide free training, which will be hosted by the Council. Bookings are currently being taken from interested residents, voluntary groups and our own staff. Two local supermarkets have already signed up to the scheme.

An announcement was made today that Cotswold DC is part of an Oxfordshire Districts' outline proposal to establish 4 unitary councils, replacing Oxfordshire County Council and the existing districts. In response Leadership Gloucestershire has put out a statement that Cotswold district is seen as a valued and integral part of how services are delivered in Gloucestershire. The group will continue to support the current 'We are Gloucestershire' devolution bid. Members were invited to put any questions to the next meeting of Strategy & Resources.

Chief Executive

The decision has been made by HMCTS to officially close Stroud magistrate's court by October 2016. They have agreed to pursue the Council's offer, made as part of our objection to the closure, of using our facilities to establish a virtual connection for our residents with the court which will now be centred in Cheltenham.

**CL.042**      **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

**CL.043**      **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES: REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

This report has been adjourned until the Council meeting in April 2016.

**CL.044      STANDARDS PANEL: APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL MEMBERS**

Councillor Nigel Studdert Kennedy outlined the report which was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED** That two district councillors (preferably members of the Audit and Standards Committee) who are also parish / town councillors be appointed to the Standards Panel as “local members”.

**CL.045      REVISED GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16-2019/20**

The Leader outlined the above report and appendices.

In accordance with The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (amended 29 January 2014), a recorded vote was taken, the results of which are as follows:

<b>FOR:</b>	<b><u>Councillors</u></b>		
<b>(44)</b>	Liz Ashton	Paul Hemming	Steve Robinson
	Martin Baxendale	Nick Hurst	Mattie Ross
	Rowland Blackwell	Julie Job	Emma Sims
	Chris Brine	Haydn Jones	Nigel Studdert-Kennedy
	Miranda Clifton	John Jones	Haydn Sutton
	Nigel Cooper	Stephen Lydon	Brian Tipper
	June Cordwell	John Marjoram	Chas Townley
	Doina Cornell	Stephen Moore	Ken Tucker
	Gordon Craig	Keith Pearson	Geoff Wheeler
	Kevin Cranston	Elizabeth Peters	Martin Whiteside
	Stephen Davies	Simon Pickering	Tim Williams
	Paul Denney	Gary Powell	Tom Williams
	Julie Douglass	Nigel Prenter	Penny Wride
	Jonathan Edmunds	Lesley Reeves	Debbie Young
	Colin Fryer	Mark Rees	

**RESOLVED** Council approves the changes made to the funding of the 2016/17 budget and the revised Medium Term Financial Plan set out at Appendix A of the report.

**CL.055      SETTING OF AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX FOR 2016/17**

The Leader outlined the above report and appendices.

In accordance with The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (amended 29 January 2014), a recorded vote was taken, the results of which are as follows:

<b>FOR:</b>	<b><u>Councillors</u></b>		
<b>(42)</b>	Liz Ashton	Paul Hemming	Mark Rees
	Martin Baxendale	Nick Hurst	Steve Robinson
	Rowland Blackwell	Julie Job	Mattie Ross

Chris Brine  
 Miranda Clifton  
 June Cordwell  
 Doina Cornell  
 Gordon Craig  
 Kevin Cranston  
 Stephen Davies  
 Paul Denney  
 Julie Douglass  
 Jonathan Edmunds  
 Colin Fryer

Haydn Jones  
 John Jones  
 Stephen Lydon  
 John Marjoram  
 Stephen Moore  
 Keith Pearson  
 Elizabeth Peters  
 Simon Pickering  
 Gary Powell  
 Nigel Prenter  
 Lesley Reeves

Nigel Studdert-Kennedy  
 Haydn Sutton  
 Brian Tipper  
 Chas Townley  
 Ken Tucker  
 Geoff Wheeler  
 Martin Whiteside  
 Tim Williams  
 Tom Williams  
 Penny Wride  
 Debbie Young

**AGAINST:** Councillor Emma Sims  
 (1)

**ABSTAIN:** Councillor Nigel Cooper  
 (1)

**RESOLVED** 1. It be noted that the Council has calculated:

- (a) the Council Tax Base 2016/17 for the whole Council area as 42,148.48 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")] and
- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as in the attached Appendix A column 2.

2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the for the Council's own purposes for 2016/17 (excluding Parish precepts) is £8,035,608.

3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Act:

- (a) £84,399,662.00 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils;
- (b) £73,221,043.00 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act;
- (c) £11,178,619.00 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year [Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act];
- (d) £265.22 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a)) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year [Basic Band 'D' including

- (e) £3,143,011.00 **Parish precepts];**  
being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix A);
- (f) £190.65 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates [Basic Band 'D' excluding Parish/Town Councils].

4. That it be noted that for the year 2016/17 Gloucestershire County Council and The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands*	Gloucestershire County Council	The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire
DisrA**	£630.01	£116.84
A	£756.01	£140.21
B	£882.01	£163.57
C	£1,008.01	£186.94
D	£1,134.01	£210.31
E	£1,386.01	£257.05
F	£1,638.01	£303.78
G	£1,890.02	£350.52
H	£2,268.02	£420.62

\* Banding proportions are shown in paragraph 13 of the report.

\*\* Band DisrA provides for a discount for disabled people living in a band A property.

5. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3(d) and 4 above, the Council in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2016/17 for each of the categories of dwellings shown in Appendix C to this report.

## **CL.056 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Councillor Penny Wride asked the following question of Councillor Geoff Wheeler, Leader of Council.

**Question:** Sometime ago, I think in 2014, a commitment was made in this chamber by the leader of the Council and the Chief Executive that ward members would be copied in on all communications between officers and Parish Councils. Please can he confirm this and explain why it is not happening?

**Answer:** Staff have been reminded each year at Proud of Stroud sessions, through The News, corporate messages and in other settings. Whilst accepting that there may be occasional lapses, there have not been any member complaints to me or the Chief Executive in the past year.

In researching material for a response to Cllr Cooper's question, I have been made aware of one manager sending out an email to parish councils that was not copied to members. However, as far as I am aware, this is the exception to the rule. If you have other specific examples then you should raise them as and when they occur.

Councillor Nigel Cooper asked the following questions of Councillor Geoff Wheeler, Leader of Council.

**Question 1:** I understand the Council is withdrawing the free Jigsaw webhosting facility by end of December. How much money is this expected to save?

**Answer:** Jigsaw, an IT product developed in-house over 10 years ago, is no longer 'fit for purpose'. It is now an outdated and insecure way of developing and publishing websites and makes our corporate SDC network vulnerable and less secure. The decision is based on internet security and is not a question of making savings.

ICT staff are currently spending around 14 hours a month on helping parish councils upload information to their sites. It is expected there would be a staff saving when Jigsaw is withdrawn but some staff time is still likely to be spent advising parish councils in relation to their new websites.

A request has been made by GAPTC that the Council consider funding towards new websites for individual parishes. This is being considered.

**Supplementary question:** What provision had been made to procure alternative services and investigate charging for the service?

**Answer:** Councillor Wheeler replied that alternatives were being explored.

**Question 2:** What consultations, formal or informal, were there with the users of this service and Councillors before decision to withdraw service was taken?

**Answer:** The decision to withdraw the Jigsaw product has been made by officers in the context of SDC website security for which they have delegated authority. No councillors were consulted, though Group Leaders were informed of the intention at a recent meeting.

Parish councils were notified in an email dated 9<sup>th</sup> February of the likely withdrawal in December. Regrettably, this was not copied to all members.

There is an ongoing dialogue with the Chief Executive of the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC) is considering a product that would provide websites and support to individual parish councils.

**Supplementary question:** Why was the situation not discussed before the decision to withdraw the service was made?

**Answer:** Councillor Wheeler replied that alternative ways of supporting parish and town councils were being investigated.

**Question 3:** Does the Leader realise that this is going to cause great difficulty and unwanted extra expense for many parish councils, who have already suffered from the LGCTS debacle, and already set their budgets?

**Answer:** There has not been a 'debacle' in respect of the Local Council Tax Support scheme. The Council gave notice of its intentions in December at a seminar to which all parish and town councils were invited.

Parish councils with a turnover of less than £25,000 can apply for funding a website under the national Transparency Fund. A new serviced website will cost less than £200 pa and is eligible under this fund. Parishes can apply to the National Association of Local Councils (full details on its website).

We are also giving consideration to a grant scheme of £100 per parish towards their new websites.

**Supplementary question:** Councillor Cooper stated that he was disappointed with the responses and asked that the decision be cancelled and the matter referred to Strategy and Resources Committee.

**Answer:** Councillor Wheeler said he would take advice on this matter.

Councillor Debbie Young asked the following questions of Councillor Simon Pickering.

**Question 1:** What are you going to do for the many residents who had previously used the paid for green bag system, but cannot accommodate a big brown wheellie bin?

**Answer:** Currently the green bag waste goes to landfill which is clearly neither desirable nor sustainable. The council's new garden waste service was designed on the basis of ensuring a cost effective, affordable and a useable scheme that provided onward compliance with waste legislation and a reduction in health and safety concerns. The district unfortunately suffers from many narrow access issues that prevents a standard approach being adopted across its area. Appreciating these difficulties, council officers have considered alternative solutions such as compostable bags but have been restricted by requirements of the various treatment options provided by Gloucestershire County Council. I myself have raised this issue at the Joint Waste Committee just this week

The Council will continue to look at and consider alternative options for residents living in these narrow areas with GCC but in the meantime, residents do have the options of home composting their garden waste and/or taking their waste to the tip. Residents living in narrow access areas are encouraged both through telephone and online enquiries to leave their details to enable the council to contact them as and when a suitable service alternative can be adopted; this will also provide an understanding of the likely take up of an alternative service.

**Supplementary question:** Councillor Young outlined the case of a Painswick resident who now has a 20 mile round trip to the recycling site at Horsley to dispose of his green waste and asked that Councillors be informed of the viable alternatives to having a brown bin as a matter of urgency.

**Answer:** Councillor Pickering said that the public would be kept up to date with new developments. Alternatives were being looked into, such as the possibility of shared bins.

**Question 2:** How much research and public consultation was undertaken regarding possible up take of this scheme?

**Answer:** A statistically valid telephone survey of over 500 residents was conducted by MEL Research during the early part of 2014. There was also an online consultation and consultation was sent to all members and parish councils. However the there were only 41 online responses only 9 parish council responded and just 3 members of this council responded to the questionnaire sent to them.

Garden waste featured in the survey. Questions related to the cost of the service and what would put residents off from using the scheme.

Feedback included up to 36% of residents said they 'would', 'most likely' or 'probably' would use the service with 64% they would not. Of those residents saying they would not, there reasons included the fact they home composted their waste, had no garden waste, took their waste to the tip, found the service too expensive, would experience storage issues or would have access difficulties.

**Supplementary question:** Does take up of the service match expectations?

**Answer:** Not at this early stage and that it may take two years for the service to fully develop.

**Question 3:** What is the estimated total overall cost of the new Garden Waste scheme?

**Answer:** The Council resolved that the service, when established, should be self financing, placing the full cost of the service on customers. To date, the Council has 2,600 customers; this is expected to increase to 4,000 customers by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and 8,000 customers by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and at that point the service cost of £286,000 matches the income received. The final figure can only be determined once the service has settled and appropriate cost effective arrangements have been put in place to accommodate the eventual geographical spread of customers. Adding further disproportionate costs to the service at this stage may significantly delay the point at which the service becomes self financing.

**Supplementary question:** By how much are taxpayers subsidising the service?

**Answer:** This is difficult to estimate until there is a full year of accounts, but provision has been built into the budget.

## **CL.057      NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

### **11a    Motion Concerning the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership**

The background to the motion as set out in the agenda was further explained and it was proposed by Councillor Martin Whiteside and seconded by Councillor Doina Cornell that:

**The Council resolves:**

To request the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, our two local MPs, all Southwest MEPs and the Local Government Association (LGA) raising our serious concerns about:

- The secrecy of the negotiating process, making it impossible to judge the potential impact of TTIP on Stroud District Council operations and on our public services, social and environmental protection; thereby preventing Stroud District citizens and elected members from contributing to the decision making process.
- Requesting an impact assessment of TTIP on local authorities, including our own, before negotiations can be concluded.  
Further to this, Council requests assurances from the Secretary of State that the Government will:
- Seek full openness to TTIP position texts and ensure access to TTIP documentation and debate by the UK public, including concerned residents of Stroud District.
- Assure Stroud District Council that our local levels of democratic accountability, labour and environmental standards will not be lowered by the adoption of TTIP.
- Assure Stroud District Council that our corporate key priorities of 'helping local people and businesses grow the local economy and increase employment' and to 'provide value for money to our taxpayers and high quality services to our customers' will not be restricted by accession to TTIP."

**The motion was carried.**

#### **11b Motion concerning the Trade Union Bill**

The background to the motion as set out in the agenda was further explained and it was proposed by Councillor Steve Lydon and seconded by Councillor Paul Denney.

#### **The Council resolves:**

- (a) To seek to continue its own locally agreed industrial relations strategy and will take every measure possible to maintain its autonomy with regard to facility time and the management of union subscription fees.
- (b) To support the campaign against the unnecessary, anti-democratic and bureaucratic Trade Union Bill and will write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Rt Hon Sajid Javid and both of the District's MPs to express this Council's motion."

**The motion was carried.**

The meeting closed at 9.07 pm.

Chair of Council