

COUNCIL MEETING**15 October 2015****7.00 pm – 9.40 pm****Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud****3****Minutes****Membership**

Liz Ashton	P	Colin Fryer	P	Mark Rees**	P
Martin Baxendale	P	Chas Fellows	P	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	
Miranda Clifton	P	John Jones	P	Studdert-Kennedy	P
Nigel Cooper	P	Stephen Lydon	P	Haydn Sutton	A
June Cordwell	P	John Marjoram	P	Brian Tipper	P
Doina Cornell	P	Russell Miles	A	Chas Townley	P
Gordon Craig	P	Stephen Moore	P	Ken Tucker	P
Kevin Cranston	P	David Mossman	P	Geoff Wheeler	P
Karon Cross	P	Keith Pearson	P	Martin Whiteside	P
Stephen Davies	P	Elizabeth Peters	P	Rhiannon Wigzell	P
Paul Denney	P	Simon Pickering	A	Tim Williams	A
Julie Douglass	P	Gary Powell*	P	Tom Williams	P
Jonathan Edmunds	P	Nigel Prenter	P	Penny Wride	P
				Debbie Young	P

**= Chair of Council

*=Vice Chair of Council

P = Present A = Absent

Officers Present

Chief Executive

Principal Policy Officer

Legal Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Democratic Services Assistant

CL.018**APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dorcas Binns, Tim Boxall, Russell Miles, Simon Pickering, Haydn Sutton and Tim Williams.

CL.019**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

CL.020

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Meeting held on 16 July 2015 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

CL.021

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader

Stroud's canal project has won a major award in a national competition run by the Canal & River Trust. The restored waterway between Stonehouse and Bowbridge came top of the Restoration and Historic Environment Category of the 2015 Living Waterways Awards.

Members were shown the award which was presented at a ceremony in London and will now be displayed at Ebley Mill. The Leader Geoff Wheeler paid tribute to the work of all the staff, volunteers and councillors involved in the project.

The Chief Executive

- (a) Resident Involvement Officer Stuart Strathearn has won a Public Servant Hero Award and Emma Quest from Environmental Services is the South West Regional winner of the Carbon Action Networks Awards.
- (b) The Council submitted a response to the Courts and Tribunal Service consultation, this had been circulated to Group Leaders and will be sent to all Members.
- (c) 19 November 2015 – An extra council meeting will be held.
- (d) 19 October 2015 – A seminar will be held on highways issues.
- (e) 8 public toilets have won Gold and Platinum "Flushed away" toilet awards.

CL.022

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Two nominations were received for the position of Vice-Chair of Council:

- (a) Councillor Gary Powell was nominated by the Leader and seconded by Councillor Mattie Ross.
- (b) Councillor John Jones was nominated by Councillor Keith Pearson and seconded by Councillor Rhiannon Wigzell.

On being put to the vote Councillor Gary Powell was duly elected by majority vote (25 votes for Councillor Gary Powell and 18 votes for Councillor John Jones).

On behalf of Members, the Chair of Council thanked Councillor June Cordwell who had stood down as Vice-Chair of Council to recuperate after an operation.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Gary Powell be elected Vice-Chair of Council for the remainder of the current Civic Year 2015/16.

CL.023 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

None received.

CL.024 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

Community Services and Licensing Committee - 3 September 2015

(a) Stroud District Council's Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005

Councillor Chris Brine, Chair of the Community Services and Licensing Committee outlined the above report which had been subject to extensive consultation.

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

RESOLVED To adopt Stroud District Council's revised Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005.

(b) Stroud District Council's Statement of Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003.

The Chair of the Community Services and Licensing Committee outlined the above report.

During debate, Members noted that that there was currently no provision under Licensing Act legislation to regulate or exclude fireworks, lanterns and helium balloons. Councillors Julie Douglas and John Jones undertook to collaborate together cross party to investigate whether this issue could be covered in a byelaw.

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

RESOLVED To adopt Stroud District Council's revised Statement of Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003.

Strategy and Resources Committee - 1 October 2015

(c) Council Tax Discount from April 2016 - Long Term Empty Properties.

The Leader outlined the above report.

In answer to Members' questions the Leader confirmed that:

- Officers identify that a home is empty on an ongoing basis using their expertise.
- A detailed definition of "substantially unfurnished" could be provided to Members after the meeting.
- An addition to the motion that this procedure would be reviewed after 12 months.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried

RESOLVED **To increase the charge to 150% on properties which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over 2 years and to review this again, after 12 months.**

(d) Local Council Tax Support Scheme

The Leader outlined the above report.

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

RESOLVED **To adopt the current Local Scheme as the scheme for Stroud District Council for the period 01 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.**

(e) Business Rates Pool

The Leader referred Members to the relevant sections of the Budget Strategy Report 2016/17 2019/20 (page 49 & 50 - paragraphs 22 to 28) on the Business Rates retention scheme and reported that:

- Under this scheme SDC has agreed to enter into a “pooling” arrangement with all Gloucestershire district councils and the county council.
- 2014/15 was the second year of operations for the scheme and it suffered a significant setback due to backdated business rate appeals including a successful appeal by Virgin Media in Tewkesbury. Despite this setback, all the modelling shows that the scheme is still beneficial although the pool may have to be dissolved in its current form and a new pool established.

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

RESOLVED **That Stroud Remains in the Business Rates Pool from April 2016 if to do so maximises the retention of business rates in Gloucestershire.**

CL.025 **DEVOLUTION - ‘WE ARE GLOUCESTERSHIRE BID’**

The Leader highlighted the key issues arising from the submission made in response to the Government’s invitation for groups of local authorities to submit devolution proposals:

- Members were requested to approve key preparatory steps necessary for a ‘devolution deal’ with each of the resolutions to be considered and debated in turn.
- He explained to Members that any ‘devolution deal’ would need to be considered and agreed by the Council at a future date.
- The submission provides for a combined authority to be created with democratically accountable leadership. This structure could give SDC a greater strategic overview and input in such areas as training, business support and local transport functions devolved by Government but it does not aim to create another layer of local government.

Councillor Martin Whiteside proposed the following amendment to Resolution 2 which was seconded by Councillor John Marjoram:

“To agree the Council’s participation in work to undertake a governance review with the aim of ensuring that the devolved decision making and delivery bodies incorporate best practices of transparency, accountability and citizen participation. Governance proposals will be subject to a statutory public consultation process”.

In response to Members’ questions the Leader replied that:

- It is envisaged that the new combined authority will include an audit and scrutiny committee.
- The focus/remit of the combined authority will be on strategic decision making; district councils will be self-sufficient within their own districts.
- Leadership Gloucestershire has agreed that the submission should not be based on an elected mayor; it is likely that the new combined authority would have a chairperson.

The Motion was debated with each of the resolutions considered and voted on in turn with each carried as follows:

Resolution 1: Carried by majority vote. Councillor John Marjoram wished to record that he voted against this resolution.

Resolution 2 (as amended): Carried unanimously.

Resolution 3: Carried unanimously.

Resolution 4: Carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

1. To endorse the ‘We are Gloucestershire’ bid for devolution.
2. To agree the Council’s participation in work to undertake a governance review with the aim of ensuring that the devolved decision making and delivery bodies incorporate best practices of transparency, accountability and citizen participation; and governance proposals be subject to a statutory public consultation process.
3. To agree ‘in principle’ to the concept of a combined authority for Gloucestershire on the understanding this does not diminish or weaken democratic accountability to the public or taxpayers in Stroud District or that functions, resources or responsibilities can be transferred from this authority without the express agreement of this Council.
4. To agree that a further report is made to full Council if and when a ‘devolution deal’ for Gloucestershire is offered.

CL.026**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

In Councillor Simon Pickering's absence, Councillor Paul Denney answered a question from Councillor Keith Pearson relating to bulky waste, which had been submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

CL.027**NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

Proposed by Councillor Martin Whiteside and seconded by the Leader.

"Stroud District will welcome and prepare for its share of Refugees. The Middle-East, North Africa and southern Europe are seeing the movement of desperate people unprecedented since the end of the 2nd World War. The vast majority are being driven away from their homes by war and insecurity. It is important that efforts are made to address the root causes of the conflicts and also to support the many millions who have fled to their neighbouring countries, particularly to Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. Some of the most vulnerable also need to be transferred from these camps to places of safety, including the UK. In addition our common humanity compels us to assist those who have risked all to arrive within the EU.

Stroud District Council hereby affirms that we are willing to take on the effort of welcoming and providing support to our fair share of refugees and to work with others to do this. In particular SDC will:

1. Inform central Government and our MP of our willingness to welcome and help support a fair share of refugees, including making an application to the Home Office's SVPR Scheme for the District to host our share of Syrian refugee families and ask them to support the Local Government Association's call for government to provide full funding for five years.
2. Work with others, including the County Council, statutory and voluntary sectors to make plans as necessary to welcome and support refugees.
3. Plan in such a way that the effort of welcome is distributed across our population and does not fall disproportionately on our existing residents in greatest need (e.g. those on the housing waiting list).
4. Work with our local communities to enable them to share in providing a welcome through fundraising and other practical support, including offers of accommodation, enabling this to become a truly community undertaking.
5. Work with Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS) in seeking the resettlement of refugees in Stroud District and to make a grant to GARAS of £5000 from contingencies to help cover its additional workload".

The Chief Executive informed Members that he had received two petitions from members of the public (one from the Reverend Michael Paige – 568 signatures and the other from Jasmin Wrigglesworth – 650 signatures) relevant to the Motion.

In response to Members' questions Councillor Martin Whiteside confirmed:

- The Home Office SVPR scheme relates to Syrian Refugees; there are currently no plans to resettle any other refugees in the Stroud district. It is

likely that around five to ten vulnerable families will be brought directly from the refugee camps.

- Unaccompanied minors will not be included in this initiative. However, GARAS does support lone children and helps with fostering arrangements.

During debate Members supported the Motion and when put to the vote it was carried.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

Chair