

## STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

27 June 2013

# 3

7.00 pm – 9.55 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

### Minutes

#### Membership:

Councillor Geoff Wheeler (Chair)	P	Councillor Paul Hemming	A
Councillor Doina Cornell (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Keith Pearson	P
Councillor Dorcas Binns	P	Councillor Simon Pickering	P
Councillor Paul Carter	P	Councillor Mattie Ross	P
Councillor Molly Cato	P	Councillor Tom Williams	P
Councillor Nigel Cooper	P	Councillor Rhiannon Wigzell	P
Councillor June Cordwell	P		

P = Present                      A = Absent

#### Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Paul Smith

#### Officers Present:

Chief Executive	Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
Strategic Head (Customer Services)	Head of Housing Contracts
Head of Finance	Principal Marketing Officer
Accountancy Manager	Business Accountant (HRA)
Canal Project Manager	Democratic Services and Elections Officer
Benefit Manager	

#### SRC.001                      APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paul Hemming.

#### SRC.002                      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

##### Agenda Item 8 – Community Investment Group Policy

The following Councillors declared personal interests in respect of the above agenda item and left the Council Chamber prior to discussion upon the advice given by the Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer:-

Councillor Paul Carter's wife was an employee of the Independence Trust and also a trustee of Woodchester Mansion Trust.

Councillor Rhiannon Wigzell was a Stroud District Council appointed trustee of the Stroud and District Citizens' Advice Bureau and also a trustee of Woodchester Mansion Trust.

Councillor Geoff Wheeler was a trustee of the Stroud and District Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Councillor June Cordwell was Vice-President of the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Councillor Mattie Ross was a member of the VCA.

No further declarations were made.

### **SRC.003      PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

### **SRC.004      INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

The Chief Executive outlined the key functions and service areas which were within the remit of the Committee.

**RESOLVED**    **To note the update.**

### **SRC.005      JOBS AND GROWTH STRATEGY**

Prior to the meeting a note had been circulated by the Chief Executive and also distributed at the meeting entitled 'Jobs and Growth'. This was a background document that captured some of the Council's work and budget on jobs and growth. Also circulated was a copy of the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan (CDP) 2013-2017 which concentrated on the five key aspects of the Council's business, namely, Economy, Affordable Housing, Environment, Resources, Health and Well-Being.

Work was currently being undertaken on preparing a strategy that would be presented to September's meeting. This would include reference to the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's recently published Growth Statement and the Council's own Local Plan due to be considered by full Council on 25 July 2013.

**RESOLVED**    **To note the update.**

### **SRC.006      SERVICE COMMITTEE BUDGETS 2013-14**

Prior to the meeting a supplementary paper had been despatched to Committee, published on the Council's website and circulated at the meeting.

The Accountancy Manager presented the above report which informed Committee of the services it was responsible for, together with associated revenue budgets for 2013/14. The first quarters budget would be presented at September's meeting when each of the Committee's budgets had been agreed. A detailed budget book would be provided to all Committee Members.

It was confirmed that Committee would set future budgets and distribute these between the four core Committees. Due to financial pressures the gap in the Medium Term Financial Plan would be increasing and the individual Committees would have to make difficult decisions as to where funds would be invested or disinvested. This would inevitably affect services but priority should be given to those services identified within the Council's CDP.

**RESOLVED To note the service budgets for which Strategy and Resources Committee are responsible.**

**SRC.007 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

The Benefit Manager updated Members on the proposed consultation for a revised Council Tax Support Scheme to be implemented from April 2014. He confirmed that pensioners would be protected and an equalities impact appraisal would be carried out prior to the next Committee meeting when another report would be presented.

**RESOLVED To approve the proposal to undertake consultation on a revised Local Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2014.**

Councillors Paul Carter, Rhiannon Wigzell, Geoff Wheeler, June Cordwell and Mattie Ross left the Council Chamber.

**SRC.008 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT GRANTS POLICY**

In the absence of the Chair the Vice-Chair took the Chair for this item. The Strategic Head (Customer Services) introduced the above report which requested Committee to review and approve the grants policy and update the wording within the Council's Constitution.

The following amendments to the decision box of the report were proposed by Councillor Molly Cato and seconded by Councillor Chris Brine:-

Paragraph (i) that the words "and help those with the greatest need", be deleted from the second paragraph of Appendix A and the words "of the Constitution" be added to paragraph (ii) after 9.1.1.

Members unanimously agreed these amendments.

Clarification was given that all Members and officers would be required to declare interests in organisations that they were involved with. The policy would be reviewed after a period of three years.

**RESOLVED (a) To approve the Community Investment Grants Policy, with the deletion of the following words from Appendix A, second paragraph "and help those with the greatest need".**  
**(b) To update the wording of the delegation 9.1.1 of the Constitution for the Strategic Head (Customer Services) from 'core grant' to 'Community Investment Grant'.**

Councillors Paul Carter, Rhiannon Wigzell, Geoff Wheeler, June Cordwell and Mattie Ross returned to the Council Chamber.

**SRC.009      HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) OUTTURN 2012/13**

The Business Accountant (HRA) presented the above report which outlined actual revenue income and expenditure on the HRA for the financial year 2012/13, compared to estimates, together with actual expenditure on the capital programme compared to estimates.

He confirmed that more Council houses had been sold under the Right to Buy (RTB) Scheme than had been originally forecast. There would be a loss of revenue from rental income of between £3,000-£4,000 per property, per year but monies that the Council received from the RTB's would be invested in building projects within the District.

Committee agreed that because the report had already been presented and agreed at Housing Committee the report would be noted.

**RESOLVED    To note the report.**

**SRC.010      GENERAL FUND REVENUE OUTTURN 2012/13**

The Accountancy Manager presented the above report which outlined the outturn position against the General Fund revenue budget for 2012/13. He confirmed that a review had taken place for all budget carry forwards, which had all been justified by officers. Members expressed the view that they would like budgets to be spent each year and core Committees would look at their individual budgets in more detail.

**RESOLVED    (a)    The General Fund revenue outturn for 2012/13 be noted;**  
**(b)    To approve the transfers to and from earmarked reserves for the year, as set out in Appendix B (Pages 22-23);**  
**(c)    To approve the final list of budgets to be carried forward to 2013/14, as set out in Appendix C (Pages 24-25).**

**SRC.011      CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2012/13**

The Accountancy Manager advised Members of the capital outturn for 2012/13 and sought authority to carry forward capital budgets and corresponding finance into the 2013/14 capital programme. He also reported on the latest capital programme and funding position.

**RESOLVED    (a)    That the capital expenditure outturn statement for 2012/2013 be noted;**  
**(b)    That carry forward budgets identified in Appendix A, together with the sources of finance, are approved and added to the 2013/2014 capital programme;**  
**(d)    The revised capital programme and funding for 2013/2014 is agreed.**

**SRC.012      REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

The Leader confirmed that a Working Group would be set up after a period of six months of the new committee system being in place to propose amendments to the Constitution. It was suggested that the same Members, plus an additional one or two Members be invited to join the Working Group for continuity. But from the next civic year the reviewing of the Council's Constitution would be within the remit of the Audit and Standards Committee.

- RESOLVED**
- (a) To set up a Working Group in six months time to propose suggested amendments to the Council's Constitution.**
  - (b) From the next civic year reviewing of the Council's Constitution would be within the remit of the Audit and Standards Committee.**

**SRC.013      RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Head of Finance presented the above report that had been approved at the Audit and Standards Committee on 25 June 2013. It was confirmed that the same report could be debated at different Committees and if there were differing recommendations from both Committees these could be decided at full Council. Clarification would be sought as to which Committee would take responsibility for Risk Management in future.

- RESOLVED**      **That the Risk Management Policy as set out in Appendix A be approved.**

**SRC.014      BUSINESS PLAN**

The Leader referred to the Committee's business plan, the next special meeting to solely discuss the Local Plan and September's large agenda. Members recalled that the core Committees within the new committee system where decision making bodies and that reports to note should not be included on an agenda, unless there was an exception. Agendas should be limited to matters that required decisions. Information Sheets could be despatched between meetings and if Members required a report then this item could be added to the agenda for discussion. The Leader confirmed that these comments would be taken on board.

Members discussed future business and reports that they would like added to the Business Plan:-

- Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Strategy (24 September 2013).
- The feedback from the consultation on Council tax with Town and Parish Councils (14 November 2013).
- At a future meeting the Asset Management Strategy should be reviewed, (what assets do the Council have, are they benefitting the district and if the asset is not working well a way forward).

- RESOLVED**      **To update the Business Plan.**

**SRC.015      APPOINTMENTS****Stroud Concordat**

Stroud Concordat was a Town Centre Partnership looking at improving Stroud Town.

**RESOLVED      Councillor Roger Sanders was re-elected to be the Council's representative for the Stroud Concordat.**

**Performance Monitoring Meetings**

The Chair confirmed that two Committee Members were required to meet with senior management teams on a quarterly basis to monitor the performance of services within the remit of Committee and report back on an exception basis. There were two expressions of interest.

**RESOLVED      That Councillors Keith Pearson and Rhiannon Wigzell would represent Committee.**

**SRC.016      TASK AND FINISH GROUP – BRIMSCOMBE PORT**

The Canal Project Manager outlined the short term strategy to redevelop Brimscombe Port as a commercial leisure facility whilst retaining the long term ambition of a mixed use development in a canal side setting. The Committee was informed that the Homes and Community Agency would be considering an application for £2m of grant funding towards the redevelopment of Brimscombe Port at its meeting on 6 July 2013. Furthermore, a report on the acquisition of Brimscombe Port would be presented to Committee in September.

During debate Members expressed their differing views regarding of keeping the momentum going and supporting the offer from Environment Committee to join a cross-Committee Task and Finish Group with immediate effect or wait until the outcome of the funding application was known. Upon the vote it was

**RESOLVED      To defer making a decision to join the cross-Committee Task and Finish Group until September's meeting.**

**SRC.017      MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

**Chair**