

To all Members of Stroud District Council

31 July 2018

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL** in the Council Chamber, Ebley Mill on **THURSDAY 9 AUGUST 2018 at 7.00pm.**



David Hagg
Chief Executive

Please Note: This meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site (www.stroud.gov.uk). By entering the Council Chamber you are consenting to being filmed. The whole of the meeting will be filmed except where there are confidential or exempt items, which may need to be considered in the absence of the press and public.

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interest

3 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the Council's meeting held on 19 July 2018

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive announcements from the Chair of Council

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairs of Committees will answer questions from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS

Noon on Monday, 6 August 2018

Questions must be submitted to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud and sent by post or email (democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk)

6 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

To approve the appointment of the Head of Paid Service on the recommendation of the panel of Strategy and Resources Committee.

7 COMMITTEE SEAT ALLOCATION (from August 2018)

To update the allocation of Committee seats.

8 APPOINTMENT OF ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER AND RETURNING OFFICER

To make the above appointments with effect from 5 October 2018.

9 GLOUCESTERSHIRE VISION 2050

To consider a response to the consultation on Gloucestershire Vision 2050.

10 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

See Agenda Item 5 for the submission deadlines

11 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

11a A motion regarding the Revenue Support Grant Settlement has been proposed by Cllr Baxendale and seconded by Cllr Cornell.

Background:

When the Council entered the four year revenue support grant (RSG) settlement with Government, it did so on the understanding that rules relating to New Homes Bonus and Business Rates would remain the same. The letter sent by the Council explicitly referred to these points and also urged the Government to review the use of "negative RSG" which affected the Council in the fourth year of the settlement.

Since the four year settlement was agreed, the Government has changed key parts of the overall funding to Stroud District. It has introduced changes to New Homes Bonus that reduce future funding available to the Council. The Government's plans originally provided for councils to retain 100% of business rates but this has subsequently been reduced to 75%*. As such the Government has moved, and continues to move, the 'goalposts' even within the four year RSG settlement period.

Negative RSG is not paying money back to Government. The Council does not receive RSG anymore. The sum of £549,000 is the largest negative RSG in Gloucestershire and is almost as much as Cheltenham and Cotswold put together.

147 of 200 district councils across England are affected by Negative RSG. The Local Government Association and the District Council Network have already lobbied for the Government to conduct a review. The previous Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government undertook to review Negative RSG in the 'spring' of 2018. The latest information being made available is that the review will take place before the announcement of the RSG settlement in December. A consultation exercise may take place this autumn. Ministers addressing the LGA Conference in July this year were vague about timescales.

Footnote:

* While Council currently receives 100% business rate retention as part of a pilot scheme, that is a temporary arrangement for this year only.

Motion:

"Stroud District Council strongly objects to Central Government introducing a new stealth tax on local households by demanding the payment of £549,000 from Stroud District to the Treasury in 2019/20.

This new tax comes on top of the already crippling removal of the Revenue Support Grant, repeated capping of council tax increases by Central Government, and the Government's failure to deliver the universal 100% business tax retention being promised at the time Council reluctantly accepted the current four year financial settlement.

It is a complete reversal of financial support and is a worrying precedent which seriously threatens the Council's ability to continue providing essential local services and facilities; especially if this payment turns out to be the thin end of a stealth tax wedge which will see ever larger annual payments of money siphoned off from local households to Central Government in future years.

Council therefore determines to lobby Central Government, through the District's two Members of Parliament, the Local Government Association and the District Council Network as a matter of urgency, for removal of the so-called Negative Revenue Support Grant of £549,000 in 2019/20 and an assurance that NRSG will not be re-imposed in future years.

Council also encourages the 52 parish and town councils in Stroud District to make representations in the same manner as those already made by Wotton under Edge Town Council."

11b A motion regarding the People's Vote has been proposed by Cllr Cornell and seconded by Cllr Marjoram.

Background:

This Council notes:

- That 55% of Stroud District voted to remain in the EUⁱ.
- The Business West 'Gloucestershire Brexit Summit of 9 March 2018 in which many business and community leaders from our area highlighted the dangers of a No Deal or Hard Brexit on our economy, including William Frazer, NFU adviser for Gloucestershire who said No Deal would be 'cataclysmic for the farming industry'ⁱⁱ
- Polling in July 2018 found that 71% of British people disapprove of how the Brexit negotiations are being handled.ⁱ and the latest quarterly Local Business Survey showed that confidence among SMEs in the West of England in government to deliver a Brexit that works for business is on the waneⁱⁱⁱ
- That the call for a People's Vote on the final terms of any Brexit deal is supported by a broad and growing coalition of individuals and groups^{iv}
- Polling in April 2018 found that the British public supported a 'final say' referendum - with a margin of 44% supporting to 36% opposing.ⁱⁱ

This Council believes:

- That Brexit and the type of Brexit will have a profound affect on the health and wellbeing of Stroud District residents and workers and therefore has significant implications for the work of Stroud District Council.

- That the British Government should be listening to the views of local people, local councils, local businesses and voluntary organisation in deciding how to respond to the original Brexit vote.
- That the referendum on 23rd June 2016 should be considered the beginning of a democratic process, not the end of one.
- That new information on the economic, environmental and social impacts of Brexit, which have come to light since the referendum, may have altered some voters' preferences regarding desired outcomes of the Brexit negotiations.
- That giving the British people a final say on the Brexit negotiations will help to rebuild trust and engagement in the political process.

Motion:

This Council resolves:

1. To call on the government to abandon any plans for a hard Brexit and to give the British people a vote on whatever deal they end up getting along with the opportunity to vote on staying in the European Union.
2. To write to its MPs and the Brexit Secretary expressing its views and asking them to support a People's Vote.
3. To instruct our leader and Chief Executive to work with our MPs, the District Council Network and LGA to ensure there is a strong voice from the people of Stroud District in decision making over Brexit.

Footnote

ⁱ BBC News 24 June 2016

ⁱⁱ Gloucestershire Brexit Summit 9 March 2018 presentation and video record.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kye Parkin Communications Executive | Business West 4th July 2018

^{iv} BBC Radio 4 Justine Greening Today Programme 16 July 2018