

October 2024 Parish Council Report

Cllr Marisa Godfrey and Cllr Steve Hynd

News

- **Funding [Stroudfunding](#)** – Crowdfunding for Stroud District launched – deadline for applications is the end of October. This is the final opportunity to apply for Rural England Prosperity Fund as funds must be spent by March 2025. Eligibility criteria [here](#).
- **Final appeal** to families with relatives buried in St Cyr's churchyard in Stonehouse: please check whether your memorials have been identified as unsafe before they are laid flat.
- **Batteries** - It's extremely important that people do not dispose of batteries, vapes and electrical items in their household waste or recycling containers. [More info here](#).
- From Friday 1 November, SDC will be taking over the management and running of the leisure centre in Stratford Park, Stroud.
- Stroud District Council Tenants. We are **conducting a consultation** on the depooling of rents (separating the costs of specific services from the overall rent) and we want to hear your views!

September's Council meetings

Link to meeting agenda and documents in the committee title.

[Development Control Committee - 10th Sept](#)

- Bristol Street Ford, London Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire S.24/0826/FUL. Demolition of existing car dealership & ancillary servicing facility & redevelopment of the site for 35 dwellings. Numerous reasons for refusal and indeed it was refused
- Barn, Mill Lane, Cranham, Gloucestershire, S.24/0535/FUL. Demolition of existing agricultural portal barn and erection of agricultural barn. Permitted.
- [Video recording](#)

[Housing Committee - 17th Sept](#)

- Private Sector Housing Renewal 2018-2023 policy. The policy was extended whilst the Council fully reviews the private sector housing survey. This enables the Council to ensure that disabled facility grants are still available.
- An updated aids and adaptation policy was adopted.

- The Housing team is going to be [consulting tenants on the depooling](#) of rents and service charges. This is charging separately for rent and services. It will increase transparency, fairness and choice.
- A new electrical safety policy was adopted increasing the frequency of electrical inspections from 10 years to 5 years. A new gas safety policy was also adopted.
- The council agreed to accept a central government capital grant to purchase four properties for those on the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme who are fleeing violence and conflict in Afghanistan.
- The grant also covers the development of four housing pods for temporary accommodation which means that homeless households can remain in the District close to their families and support networks.
- The council agreed to support a report on The Future of Council Housing which seeks to enable Councils to play a full role in provide housing and includes recommendations for fair funding of housing, reforming Right to Buy, removing red tape from existing funding, ensuring existing council homes are good quality and ensure Councils can deliver new and replacement homes. The Chair of the Committee agreed to write to the three MPs representing Stroud District.
- The Committee agreed to extend its Pets Policy which recently received Gold Accreditation from the RSPCA.
- New Homes Programme: The exchange of contracts has been delayed with the 3 units in Symn Lane car park (Wotton) as a result of outstanding works due by the contractor. Following exchange of contracts completion will take place.
- Revised programme for Bradley Street houses (Wotton) following an extended tender process. Anticipated to start before April 2025
- [Video recording](#)

[Environment Committee - 19th Sept](#)

- **New Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Policy** which supports prevention and community involvement, early identification, supportive intervention, and enforcement. Approved by Environment Committee, and then subsequently by Community Services & Licensing Committee. SDC will focus on partnership work - with [SOLACE](#) , Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit & One Legal. Community Wardens work closely with Neighbourhood Police teams, other councils and service partners.
- The new ASB policy recognises that the alleged victim should be at the centre of the case, treated with respect and dignity, regardless of whether the ASB is considered low, medium or high level. More enforcement training for selected

officers will be provided. Noted the CCTV stock around the district is old and needs an upgrade. Next steps include a new Case Management System and better information sharing with partners.

- **Budget Monitoring:** Revenue underspend of £116k (against budget of £7.4m) and capital overspend of £9k (for a budget of £9.3m). Largest item of spend is the Multi Service contract with Ubico which includes waste and recycling collection
- Feedback from various member/officer reports:-
 - **Stroud Town Regeneration Committee.** Merrywalks transport hub improvements planned for next year, to include secure bike lockers.
 - **Climate Leadership Gloucestershire.** Draft of the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy will go out for consultation in November.
 - **Stroud Valleys Project Board.** Many projects right across the district delivering big social and environmental benefits.
 - **Cotswold National Landscape.** [Annual review](#) just published which covers two important projects: Glorious Cotswold Grasslands, and Farming in Protected Landscapes.
 - **Gloucestershire Resource & Waste Partnership.** Stroud District continues to have the best waste minimisation and recycling rates in the county. Committee agreed to write to GCC to request information about possible costs for the incinerator that may be passed onto Districts due to incinerators being brought within the Emissions Trading scheme.
 - **Electric Vehicle charging points in car parks rollout.** SDC to install 26 charging bays in seven car parks. Mobilisation meeting with the contractor (Connected Kerb) took place in Sept. Officers keen to schedule works and commence installation as soon as possible. Two 7kw charging bays destined for the SDC Potters Pond car park in Wotton.
 - **Simpler recycling** - lots of changes afoot in the coming years, including collection of recyclable plastic film, extended producer responsibility, deposit return scheme for drinks containers.
 - **Air Quality** – update on SDC responsibilities – an Air Quality Strategy is in progress.
- [Video recording](#)

[Strategic Planning Advisory Board](#)

- **Local Plan** - Update on the progress of the draft local plan are published on the SDC website – [local plan examination library](#), including progress with design

work to improve J14 and J12 of the M5. A [final consultation](#) on the technical evidence closed on 23rd September. An [update report](#) on the local plan was shared.

- **Planning policy** - Changes to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – SDC as Local Planning Authority would need to deliver an extra 3,200 homes by 2040 (increase of 36%) according to the Government’s new housing targets. SDC has responded to Government’s consultation and raised concern about scale of targets and importance of focusing on affordable homes. The revised NPPF is expected by the end of the year. Development Management decision-making will be subject to the new NPPF from the publication date. SDC will need to commence a brand new Local Plan to meet the higher housing targets, as soon as the Plan under inspection is adopted.

[Audit & Standards Committee - 24th Sept](#)

- **Counter Fraud and Enforcement** Unit Update:
 - Council is required to proactively tackle fraudulent activity.
 - The core group consists of attendees from Gloucestershire Constabulary Economic Crime Team, Trading Standards, Victim Support, NHS and colleagues from Gloucester City and County Councils.
 - Standalone web site in progress for signposting.
 - Workplan focus on polygamous working (multiple jobs). High risk.
- **External Audit.** Expected to sign imminently. Mostly positive. No issues.
 - Interesting discussion on whether replacement doors and windows are capital items. SDC in a good place with Audit compared to many of local authorities.
- **Reports**
 - Statement of Accounts audit for 2022/23 - approved.
 - Treasury Management Quarter 1 report - approved.
 - Customer service standards (Corporate Care) Performance - noted.
 - Corporate Risk Register report.
 - Internal Audit Plan – accepted.
- Cyber attack risk - SDC IT Team have been assisting Tewkesbury Borough Council following their recent cyber incident and learning lessons.
- [Video recording](#)

Community Services & Licensing Committee - 26th Sept

- **Cultural Strategy** - Approved [draft strategy](#) and allocation of £250k to support the Action Plan. Arts and culture in Stroud district is thriving but needs targeted support. Final recommendations to be adopted and launched formally later in the year.
- **Gambling Act** - Review of SDC's Statement of Principles in relation to issuing and enforcing licences, permits and notifications for betting shops, adult gaming centres, family entertainment centres, pubs and social clubs with gaming machines and small lottery registrations. No significant changes made to the SDC approach. Committee agreed to write to local MP to voice concerns about impact of online gambling.
- **Taxi & Private Hire licencing** - New policy approved for age criteria on first licensing of a vehicle. This will change to 7 years or less (currently 5 years or less) in response to feedback from the trade. The current exemptions for electric vehicles, low emission vehicles and wheelchair accessible vehicles to continue.
- **Gloucestershire Health Overview Scrutiny Committee** - [Briefing note](#) on cancer treatment improvements, urology improvement plan, dental treatment, and concerns about South West Ambulance Service response times.
- **Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel** - [Briefing note](#) on key issues. PCSOs not being replaced is a concern. Cllr Kitchen attended as one of the Stroud District Council representatives. The main topic was Constabulary's £7m. budget black hole. The precept will be going up and cuts to service are inevitable. [Detailed report here.](#)
- **Leisure Centres** - Work underway for Stratford Park Leisure Centre to be brought back in house in November. New Air Source Heat Pumps for leisure centres (and also museum) with final commissioning expected in October.
- **Abandoned vehicles** - SDC has a duty to investigate and remove ([stats](#)).
- [Video recording](#)

Gloucestershire City Region Board

A devolution deal may be available for Gloucestershire – new Government is yet to confirm the options. Cllr Braun highlighted the importance of a sensible geography for devolution with funding that for allows cross border bus services, such as the 84-85 service. Also agreed to note the GCC Economic Strategy, and work underway on a new Local Growth Plan, in line with Government requirements.