

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of the  
REGENERATION COMMITTEE  
11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 10.00AM  
Online meeting via Zoom**

**Present**

Cllrs Chas Townley (Chair), Kevin Cranston (Vice-Chair), Geoffrey Andrews (from item 8), John Bloxsom, Camilla Hale, Stella Parkes, Lucas Schoemaker (from item 8)

**In attendance**

Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Alison Rood (Project Officer); Stroud District Council: Brendan Cleere (Strategic Director of Place); Cllr Simon Pickering; Stroud Chamber: Tony Davey and Andrew Watton; Stroud Tourism Forum: Hannah McDonnell; Kardien Gerbrands (Fresh-n-Local Markets)

**1. Apologies**

None received.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

**3. Requests for dispensations**

There were no requests for dispensations.

**4. Questions from members of the public**

None received.

**5. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the Committee meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were **approved** by the members present subject to a correction to Item 8 (change policy reference number from ZP2a to ZP3). Minutes will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next possible opportunity.

**6. Budget report to end December 2020**

The budget report was **noted**.

**7. Project Officer's report (information only)**

The report was **noted**.

**8. Temporary closure of London Road**

The Clerk introduced the report and noted the current temporary road closure order expired on 3rd April 2021. It was therefore necessary to decide if, in the short-term, the scheme should be extended. Any longer-term solution would involve a TRO which is a much more in-depth and lengthy process.

Kardien Gerbrands, operator of Stroud Farmers' Market was invited to address the committee. He explained that the additional space provided by the current, temporary closure of London Road on Saturdays was successful and had been welcomed by traders and shoppers. Given the popularity of the market, he was seeking a commitment to permanently closing London Road on Saturdays to facilitate the market.

Members discussed the current closure, including the costs of traffic management. These costs had so far been met by Stroud District Council through Re-opening High Streets Safely funding.

Brendan Cleere reported there was potential this fund may be extended to June 2021, but he would need to confirm. Members **agreed** to progress an application to extend the temporary closure until September 2021. In the meantime, the Clerk and Project officer to investigate potential for a longer-term solution for permanent Saturday closure and report back.

**Action:** Clerk and Project Officer to progress temporary road closure order and investigate permanent long-term closure and report to next committee.

### **9. Stroud District Council One Public Estate bid**

Brendan Cleere gave details on the SDC bid for funding from the government One Public Estate and Land Release Fund, which focuses on buildings and potential development sites in public ownership within Stroud town. The bid consisted of two elements:

- 1) £200,000 for masterplanning and what is possible regarding housing and retrofitting of historic properties
- 2) £1million for Brimscombe Port development

Both funding sources have been oversubscribed, but it was hoped that the uniqueness of the retrofitting element would prove beneficial. The Council were likely to hear the result of their bid during the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. Brendan Cleere also noted the bid process had resulted in close working with partners, including STC and GCC, and had strengthened relations with these bid partners.

### **10. Stroud District Council Covid-19 Recovery Strategy**

Brendan Cleere reported that this consisted of multiple elements, including the Regeneration and Canal Strategy and the One Public Estate bid. In addition, an Economic Development Strategy for the district had been commissioned to investigate how to secure a strong future of the towns within the District.

Stroud District Council had applied to government to be a gateway for the Kickstart Scheme, aimed at 16–25 year-olds. Developing this bid had strengthened the Council's relationships with businesses, especially smaller ones. Elsewhere, the Council had concentrated its Covid-19 recovery work around the themes of: environment and climate, community, and housing. The Council will be recruiting officer on a temporary basis to help deliver this work.

### **11. Verbal report from Stroud Tourism Forum**

Hannah McDonnell gave an update on the work of the Stroud Tourism Forum. She highlighted members' confusion over business grants and the high levels of stress/anxiety, especially in the hospitality sector. To make businesses more visible forum members have discussed the use of brown tourism signage. Businesses must apply to and pay Gloucestershire County Council for these signs. Many have reported the process to be lengthy and cumbersome. Making the process easier and less expensive would provide welcome support to these businesses, particularly in the current climate. The Clerk offered to investigate the potential for gateway signs and Brendan Cleere offered to discuss with the Clerk.

Other work highlighted by Hannah included a request to GFirst LEP to make their staff more available to support businesses. Also a series of trails e.g., agri-tourism, funded by GWR would be launched on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The Clerk reported that the Town Council had signed up to the Cotswold AONB Kingfisher Trail taking place over the summer.

The current pandemic continued to impact on destination marketing which was causing further anxiety for businesses. The Visit Stroud website was proving successful with more Stroud businesses encouraged to sign up. Stroud Town Council were thanked for their financial

contribution to employ an officer to take the website forward. Councillors were urged to promote the site and highlight benefits to businesses.

**Action:** The Clerk to investigate potential for gateway signs and consult with Brendan Cleere.

**12. Review of Action Plan for 2021-22**

Members discussed the Action Plan contents. They requested an update on the commercial waste recycling project at the next meeting if the project had not transferred to the CAN.

The meeting ended at 11.55am

Chair..... Date.....