

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of the
REGENERATION COMMITTEE
29th April 2021 at 10.00AM
Online meeting via Zoom**

Present

Cllrs John Bloxsom, Kevin Cranston (Deputy Chair), Camilla Hale, Stella Parkes, and Chas Townley (Chair)

In attendance

Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Alison Rood (Project Officer); Stroud District Council: Brendan Cleere (Strategic Director of Place), Amy Beckett (Senior Economic Development Specialist); Cllr Simon Pickering; Stroud Chamber: Tony Davey and Andrew Watton; Stroud Tourism Forum: Hannah McDonnell; Stroud Civic Society and Stroud Preservation Trust: Hugh Barton; Streets Reimagined: Finlay McNab

1. Apologies

Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, Lucas Schoemaker (both work)

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 11th February 2021 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed by the Chair at the earliest opportunity.

6. Budget report to end December 2020

The budget report was **noted**.

7. Project Officer's report (information only)

The report was **noted**. A request was made for the air quality monitoring data be circulated. The Project officer was asked if the new welcome signage could be in place by 17th May to coincide with further easing of lockdown restrictions, but it was felt that this would be unlikely due to the manufacturing lead time.

Action: The Project Officer to circulate air quality monitoring data.

8. Update on the Street Spaces project

Finlay McNab of Streets Re-imagined outlined progress to date. This included desktop research and stakeholder meetings. Members suggested additional stakeholders e.g. delivery drivers and festival organisers. Members emphasised the need for non-digital methods of engagement to ensure inclusivity. Finlay McNab explained this could partially be achieved through 2-3 test site options for trialling at a later date.

It was confirmed that transport modelling was not included in the project scope, but secondary data from existing studies would be used to inform both potential designs and test sites. Members suggested the study should explore the cycle routes into the town centre such as Cainscross and the Golden Valley Route.

The initial timescale had been scheduled for a June completion, although due to on-going restrictions this was kept flexible. The Clerk explained the brief did not call for technical designs – it was focussed on community engagement and exploring what changes would be acceptable. Ultimately this work would assist the district and county councils to deliver schemes when capital funding becomes available.

Amy Beckett confirmed footfall counters would be installed in the next few weeks and access to footfall data from previous years would be available.

It was agreed to swap the order of Items 9 and 10 due to time restrictions.

10. Discussion on the Levelling Up Fund

The Clerk introduced a report to inform discussion on the form, content, timing and resources necessary for any bid to the government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF). As only local authorities (including Gloucestershire County Council Highways if a transport bid) are permitted to bid Brendan Cleere from Stroud District Council gave an update on the Council's current position.

He highlighted two key elements needed for a bid: support from the local MP, and 'shovel ready' projects. If a package of projects is submitted, each element will be individually assessed, so any package bid is only as strong as its weakest project. It was noted that Stroud District Council is in Category 2, which means any bid would need to be of a very high calibre to attract funding. Brendan Cleere explained the LUF was a £4billion fund with £600million allocated in the first round with the remainder allocated for round two. With only one opportunity for a successful bid the District Council was minded to submit a package bid with a comprehensive and developed set of projects in round two.

Members discussed potential projects, their current status and the advantages/disadvantages of preparing a bid for the first or second round. It was **agreed** to commit Town Council staff time and funding to support Stroud District Council with development of the bid.

9. Presentation on Stroud District Council's Economic Development Strategy

Amy Beckett gave an update on the draft Economic Development Strategy (presentation slides accompany the minutes). Members welcomed the development of the strategy and emphasised the need to include the views of small/medium sized businesses, consider post-pandemic growth in home-working and the need to gain buy-in for the strategy from Development Control colleagues.

11. Discussion on the Welcome Back Fund

An update was provided on this newly released £56million fund. It was noted that each local authority has been awarded funding to create and promote safe, post-pandemic high streets and tourism environments. Amy Beckett will be Stroud District Council's lead for the fund.

Action: Members to contact the Project Officer to suggest proposals for funding requests.

Members thanked outgoing Cllrs Townley and Pickering for their support of Stroud town over many years.

The meeting ended at 12.22pm

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