

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of the
REGENERATION COMMITTEE
5th November 2020 at 10.00AM
Online meeting via Zoom**

Present

Cllrs Chas Townley (Chair), Kevin Cranston, Camilla Hale, Stella Parkes, Lucas Schoemaker

In attendance

Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Alison Rood (Project Officer); Gloucestershire County Council: Harriet Osburn (Local Highways Manager); Stroud District Council: Brendan Cleere (Strategic Director of Place); Cllr Simon Pickering; Stroud Chamber: Tony Davey and Andrew Watton; Stroud Tourism Forum: Hannah McDonnell

Absent

Cllr Geoffrey Andrews

1. Apologies

Cllr John Bloxsom (Stroud Town Council); Stroud District Council: Mike Towson (Community Services Manager), Brian McGough (Building Programmes Manager); Hugh Barton (Stroud Civic Society and Stroud Preservation Trust)

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared

3. Requests for dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. Appointment of new Deputy Chair

Kevin Cranston **elected**.

5. Questions from members of the public

None received.

6. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the Committee meeting on 28th August 2020 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next possible opportunity.

7. Budget report to end September 2020

The budget report was **noted**.

8. Report on progress and next steps for the review of Shaping the Heart of Stroud

The Project Officer provided an update on the progress of the review and noted the pandemic had caused delays. Three technical reports by AECOM were welcomed as useful additions to the evidence base of the NDP. The technical reports were

- Stroud Parish Housing Needs Assessment (March 2020)
- Stroud Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidelines (June 2020)
- Evidence Base and Policy Development (EBPD) (May 2020)

Members considered the governance arrangements for the NDP review. The Clerk advised that as the Regeneration Committee had been established as a replacement for the NDP Working Group it

would be the most appropriate group to take forward the review. In developing a consultation plan for the review consideration would be given to including topic groups such as those used in the development of the original plan.

Members discussed recommendations a)-c) as detailed by the Project Officer and Clerk.

Recommendation a) sought to engage consultants to review and develop a street spaces document and/or policies for the NDP. This would consider how the pandemic influenced use of the public realm and increased active travel. Members **agreed** to the recommendation.

Recommendation b) was to engage an environmental consultant to analyse and report on the pollution monitoring data that has been collected since January 2020. Analysis can only be undertaken once Defra had released a bias-adjustment factor due in March/April 2021. Members **agreed** to the recommendation and expressed a preference for the use of local expertise wherever possible.

Recommendation c) sought to engage consultants to support SDC in the production of vision statements for development sites identified in the NDP. Members discussed which sites may be suitable for vision statement development in collaboration with both SDC and the landowners. It was **agreed** that Beeches Green (ZP5), the Police Station (ZP6) and Cheapside car park (ZP2a) should be taken forward as recommended by the Project Officer and Clerk. In addition, due to the successful bid for the restoration of the canal by the Cotswold Canals Trust, the Canal Basin site (ZP2b) was also included.

Members also discussed consultation. As a result of the pandemic restrictions digital consultation is likely to play an increased role. Members were keen to ensure that alternative, non-digital approaches would be made available to enable those unable to access or unfamiliar with on-line consultation to take part. This may require innovative alternatives and more visual approaches to be developed.

Action: Recommendation a) Project Officer and Clerk to develop brief and identify suitable consultants. Recommendation b) Project Officer to develop brief and identify suitable consultants in preparation for release of bias adjustment factor. Recommendation c) Project Officer and Clerk to speak to SDC about potential vision statements being developed for the four sites above and offer assistance and funding to take forward.

9. Verbal report on One Public Estate funding 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 deadline is 12th November 2020 with a decision likely in February 2021.

The bid is for Phase 1 feasibility/scoping work which, if successful, was expected to last 18 months. Consultants would be appointed to undertake this work. Retro-fitting is a unique element of the bid, which is designed to stimulate the market for retro-fitting. It was noted that three of the sites Beeches Green, the Police Station and Cheapside car park had earlier been selected by the Committee for potential vision statement development.

10. Verbal report on SDC 2030 Strategy consultation

Brendan Cleere outlined the 2030 Strategy, stressing that it aimed for not just a carbon neutral council, but a carbon neutral district. Documents could be found on the SDC website and consultation events were being held online. The deadline for responses is 16th December 2020.

11. Verbal report from Stroud Tourism Forum

Hannah McDonnell updated members on the work of the Stroud Tourism Forum. The forum now had 98 stakeholder representing different aspects of the local tourism sector. The sector had been hit hard by the pandemic and lockdown. The second lockdown starting on 5th November was

causing further anxiety. The forum had identified a need for more representation of the sector alongside greater recognition of its contribution to the local economy. It was noted that greater collaborative working would be beneficial.

The Visit Gloucestershire Partnership was being launched. This will provide a tourism plan for the whole of Gloucestershire, including Stroud. As part of this a website will be launched with a section dedicated to Stroud. Members discussed the potential creation of various Stroud-area trails similar to the Arts and Crafts Churches Trail currently in development. Other suggestions included a Wildlife Trust venues trail and an eco-innovation trail. The lack of social media and website skills was highlighted as an issue.

12. Verbal report on the temporary closure of London Road

The Clerk reported that the Saturday only closure was in place until 16th January 2021. Funding for traffic management had also been secured until 16th January 2021. An application to SDC for temporary road closure order up to 3rd April 2021 had been submitted.

Members considered whether the lockdown or the road closure had the greatest impact on businesses in the town and noted the second lockdown and Saturday only closure would provide a good comparison. Tony Davey commented that the barriers now used on Saturdays were far more effective than the ones used previously. Brendan Cleere confirmed that, unlike during the first lockdown, SDC had no plans to make car parking free during the second lockdown. Members expressed disappointment and suggested making long stay car parks free and shorter stays paid would be beneficial.

Due to time constraints it was agreed to swap items 13 and 14 on the agenda.

14. Draft Committee budget for 2021-22

The Clerk presented the draft budget. Following discussion members asked the Clerk to research the potential to include additional funding to assist Stroud Tourism Forum to employ someone to undertake social media/website work.

Action: Clerk and Hannah McDonnell to discuss funding needs in time for the Finance and Policy Committee meeting on 14th December.

Cllr Lucas Schoemaker left at 13.03pm

13. Phase 1 signage project update

The Project Officer updated members on work on the signage project following earlier discussion at Committee on 28th August. The designer had produced updated signage options for consideration. Members felt it was important to ensure the signage was functional and that the project should proceed at pace. Given the importance of the signage to the tourism sector, it was **agreed** that Hannah McDonnell set up a small focus group from Stroud Tourism Forum members to provide feedback on designs. In order to manage expectations Hannah McDonnell requested that the focus group be given clear direction on the extent of their remit.

Action: Project Officer and Hannah McDonnell to develop remit of focus group.

The meeting ended at 13.20pm

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