

Stroud District Councillors' Report – April 2021

Report of meetings during March

All Stroud District Council and Committee papers can be found here:

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings>

Full Council meeting – 18 March

All the papers can be found [here](#).

- **Proposed Prototype Fusion Power Plant** and associated innovation and business opportunities at Berkeley and Oldbury

The council endorsed a bid nominating the former nuclear energy production and new build sites at Berkeley and Oldbury to host a world first fusion power plant and associated innovation centre and business park, as part of the UK Atomic Energy Authority's 'STEP' (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) programme. Different regions across the UK are expected to submit bids. An initial review will identify the top three bids which will be required to submit further information. The final decision will be taken by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the recommendations of the UK Atomic Energy Authority.

- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Equality Objectives 2021-25**

The Council approved the draft policy and objectives.

- **Climate action** - Stroud District 2030 Strategy – Limiting, Adapting, Recovering And Responding In A Changing Climate.

Following public consultation, changes were made to the draft strategy and master plan which was unanimously supported. The final copy can be found [here](#).

- The **Civic Timetable** for 2021/22 was agreed.

Community Services & Licensing Committee – 25 March

The Committee discussed the following items. All the relevant papers can be found [here](#).

- **Taxi Policy Review**

The draft document, 'Common Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards for Gloucestershire', was discussed. It has been developed by the Gloucestershire Licensing Officers Group with the aim of aligning local policies on matters included in the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued by Department for Transport in 2020. The Statutory Standards focus on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

- **Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2022**

This Plan outlines the authority's key work to improve community health and wellbeing over the next year with a key focus on recovering both physically and mentally from the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan's priorities are:

- o COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- o Learning from the Leisure & Wellbeing Review
- o Developing Community Hubs
- o Improving Mental Health

- o Reducing Barriers to Physical Activity

- **Leisure and Wellbeing Review**

The Strategic Director of Communities provided a verbal update on progress with the Review.

- **Arts and Culture Strategy**

A number of Member and Officer reports were also presented on the following issues:

- **Community Resilience Wellbeing Grant** (see full list [here](#))

A number of local organisations in the Wotton Ward were successful in securing a grant from this new, recently revised fund, including Under The Edge Arts and The Keepers – Wotton Area Community Hub, as well as organisations which provide support to residents right across the District, such as The Nelson Trust, The Door, Stroud Beresford Group (known as Stroud Women’s Refuge), Longfield Hospice Care, Gloucestershire Counselling Service and Home-Start Stroud and Gloucester.

- **GFirst LEP - Visitor Economy/Tourism Business Group**

The Local Enterprise Partnership has obtained £100k from the business rate pool to promote “Visit Gloucestershire.” Currently workshops are taking place to try to understand the current situation and build a strategy upon that. It is hoped that the strategy will be in place by the Autumn and start to have an impact from the end of 2022. Interestingly they have picked up on the Stroud District Council study of a few years ago which highlighted the way in which a healthy tourism operation can, through the additional footfall, support local facilities for the benefit of communities, that might otherwise have to close and is therefore hugely important for residents.

- **Gloucestershire Health Overview Scrutiny Committee & Gloucestershire Covid19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board.** (GCC meeting attended by SDC Councillors). Three topics were covered:

- o **COVID 19** and the knock on effect on other hospital services. In terms of acute services Gloucester Royal and Cheltenham General hospitals are working hard to treat current demand and also catch up with the backlog. Reflecting the national picture, there is a record amount of people waiting for appointments and treatment. It will take sometime to catch up with pre COVID 19 levels. Also demand is increasing and expected to increase further owing to indirect effects of COVID 19 on mental health services.
- o **Fit for the Future** - this is the plan for the major reconfiguration of service delivery at Gloucester Royal Hospitals Trust. Although some councillors argued that this was not the time to undertake the work the NHS bodies have carried on with this plan.
- o **Cheltenham Festival** – Following requests from councillors an investigation was promised into how the Festival was permitted to go ahead last year at the time of the outbreak. The Committee agreed to formally write to Public Health England and the Minister asking for such an enquiry to take place.

Other reports covered the Museum in the Park, Police and Crime Panel, Citizens Advice, Performance Monitoring, the Neighbourhood Warden Service ([link](#)) and Careline.

Strategy & Resources Committee – 4 March

All the papers can be found [here](#).

- **Redevelopment of Brimscombe Port**

Procurement of a developer partner for the redevelopment of Brimscombe Port was approved.

- **Establishment of a Regeneration and Investment Board**

Establishment of the Board as an advisory body was approved.

- Member/Officer Reports:
 - o Support of the Leisure Contract Provider in Stroud (Sport and Leisure Management)
 - o Strategic Recovery Board
 - o Leadership Gloucestershire

Development Control Committee – 30 March

The Committee considered three applications:

- Manor House, Lower Littleworth, Amberley, Stroud (S.20/2729/HHOLD) Resubmission of S.19/2716/HHOLD - Revised application for creation of studio with associated landscaping & hard standings.
- Land South of Railway Line, Box Road, Cam, Gloucestershire (S.18/2697/OUT) Outline Planning Permission, with all matters reserved except means of access, for; up to 42 residential dwellings; open space and landscaping; roads, parking and new access off Box Road; suds; and associated ancillary and infrastructure works.
- Land at Quadrant Distribution Centre, Quadrant Way, Hardwicke, Gloucester (S.18/1947/OUT) Erection of 160 dwellings comprised of 53 two-bed, 83 three-bed, 6 four-bed, 6 five-bed houses & 12 Flats, with all matters reserved except for access.

Licensing Review Hearing - India Palace – 31 March

SDC received an application from Home Office Immigration Enforcement for a review of the Premises Licence of the India Palace restaurant in Wotton, based on an incident where persons were discovered to be employed at the Premises whilst not entitled to work in the UK. The Licensing Panel met to consider the evidence and decided to suspend the licence for a period of three months and to add three conditions as proposed by Immigration Enforcement and the Police, which were agreed and accepted by the licence holder. The panel decision can be found [here](#).

Housing - Renaming Sheltered Housing to Independent Living

All 28 of the SDC Sheltered Housing schemes will be renamed “Independent Living” from 1 April 2021. The renaming was initiated as part of the Older Peoples Strategy Action Plan agreed by Housing Committee in 2019. New external signage is being erected to sites.

Renaming Sheltered Housing schemes to Independent Living schemes is intended to alleviate historic assumptions of a ‘Warden’ on site and available 24 hours per day, to reflect the current service offer and support future aspirations.

As soon as guidelines allow, the communal areas in Independent Living Schemes will reopen on a phased and managed schedule. This will allow work to commence on using community lounges, where available, as “Community Hubs”, to support a neighbourhood focussed, community-led approach to addressing things that matter most as well as providing activities and surgeries, social inclusion and a sense of belonging. A dedicated Community Hub Facilitator will work alongside residents from the scheme and the wider community to co-ordinate services and activities. Initial discussions have already been held about links between the Independent Living Hubs and the wider Community Hubs such as The Keepers for the Wotton Area and GL11 in Cam.

Further information is available on the Council's website [here](#).