

# Stroud District Councillors' Report – June 2021

## Report of meetings during May and June

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

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

### Council Annual General Meeting – 20 May

Held at Stratford Park Leisure Centre, due to social distancing requirements.

Councillor Doina Cornell (Labour) was re-elected as Leader of the Council, Cllr Catherine Braun (Green) elected as Deputy Leader of the Council. The Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat groups (which have groups have 31 of the 51 SDC seats) have agreed to continue to lead Stroud District Council for the next three years, as they have since 2012.

At the Council meeting, the following committee appointments were made:

- Strategy and Resources Committee: Chair: Cllr Doina Cornell, Vice-chair: Cllr Catherine Braun
- Audit and Standards Committee: Chair: Cllr Nigel Studdert-Kennedy (Conservative, No Group), Vice-chair: Cllr Martin Pearcy (Green)
- Community Services & Licensing Committee: Chair: Cllr Chris Brine (Lab), Vice-chair: Cllr Jonathan Edmunds (Green)
- Development Control Committee: Chair: Cllr Martin Baxendale (Green), Vice-chair: Cllr Trevor Hall (Lab)
- Environment Committee: Chair: Cllr Chloe Turner (Green), Vice-chair: Cllr Robin Layfield (Lab)
- Housing Committee: Chair: Cllr Mattie Ross (Lab), Vice-chair: Cllr Chris Jockel (Green)

Cllr Steve Robinson (Labour) was elected Council Chair, and Cllr Trevor Hall elected Vice Chair.

Since the district council election was delayed by a year the last term was five years instead of four, and the new current term will last three years.

Appointments to outside bodies were also made at the AGM ([link](#)).

Cllr Tucker is a member of the Strategy & Resources Committee and Community Services & Licensing Committee, Cllr Braun is a member of the Strategy & Resources Committee and Cllr James is a member of the Environment Committee.

### Strategy & Resources Committee Meeting – 10 June

Brimscombe Port redevelopment was the main agenda item – and the Committee unanimously supported the proposals to take steps to give notice to the tenants on the former industrial site, to secure vacant possession. Much of the discussion focused on what additional support could be provided to the tenants (Rush Skatepark and Grace Network) to find new homes. Both of these organisations are social enterprises and deliver huge benefits to the community. The Grace Network runs Stroud Furniture Bank, The Long Table, Stroud District Kids' Stuff, Kick Off Stroud, The Bike Drop, Gloucestershire House Clearances and facilitates Stroud Foodbank. So far only Stroud Foodbank has definite plans to relocate. The Committee received a petition with over 3500 signatures in support of Rush Skatepark.

Redevelopment of the port is one of SDC's corporate priorities. It will be the destination at the eastern end of the canal – with the project delivering a reinstated canal and basin, a sustainable, new residential-led mixed use community. The redevelopment will also deliver better cycling and walking links, environmental improvements, a tourist destination, space for community and social enterprise. It will require new housing to be carbon neutral and include a minimum of 30% affordable homes. More information on the project can be found [here](#).

Brimscombe Port is a very complex and challenging site to develop and would be unviable without the significant amounts of public investment that have been secured. The tenants will need to vacate the site so that pre-demolition surveys can begin and the demolition of units can start outside of the main activity season for bats (between October to April). Works in the river required for the redevelopment are only permitted outside the fish spawning season (i.e. from June to September). Next steps on the [project milestones](#) include marketing of the development opportunity and stating the procurement for a developer.

The Committee also received updates on the following:

- the Property Review ([link](#)), which references the review of Public Conveniences, which has been deferred to autumn 2022 due to Covid.
- Report of the first meeting of the Regeneration and Investment Board, which covered the Levelling Up Fund bid (SDC need to apply – but as the Government have designed this fund for constituencies, funding would only cover Stroud Constituency), Canal Corridor strategy, a pipeline of capital investment and regeneration schemes and a further bid for One Public Estate funding. ([link](#))
- Corporate delivery Plan Progress, Corporate Peer Challenge progress and grant payments to the leisure provider SLM in Stroud. ([link](#)).

### **Housing Committee meeting – 8 June**

Meeting papers can be found [here](#). As a follow up to the previous meeting, the committee considered the Council Housing Income Collection and Recovery Policy, Tenant Services Compensation Policy, Visitor Room Policy for Independent Living (formerly known as sheltered housing), the Cleaner Estates Strategy Action Plan and Service Standards Action Plan.

### **Other issues**

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#### **Grants of £1million secured for brownfield housing & a carbon neutral district**

On 10 June it was announced that SDC, as a partner in the Gloucestershire One Public Estate Programme, has secured a total of £976,000 for two projects from The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government.

A £776,000 Land Release Funding grant will support infrastructure and flood alleviation measures to unlock the Brimscombe Port site for redevelopment.

A further £200,000 from the Zero Carbon Public Estate fund will be used to explore how to rationalise, repurpose and retrofit sites including SDC's Ebley Mill HQ, the Old Town Hall in Stroud, Thanet House (Stroud Town Council HQ), Lansdown Hall, Stroud Subscription Rooms, Stroud Job Centre, Stroud Ambulance Station, and Stroud Fire Station.

The Zero Carbon Public Estate funding will explore town centre regeneration through the redevelopment, co-location and rationalising of publicly owned land and buildings; the delivery of new homes to high energy efficiency standards; the delivery of financial savings and carbon savings; the provision of new training

opportunities and a pilot scheme for developing practical skills in the retro-fitting of public buildings, to stimulate a green recovery and a new skills supply that is replicable across a wider area. It is a project led by SDC with partners including Gloucestershire County Council, the Department of Work and Pensions, NHS Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, Stroud Town Council and Network Rail.

As well as individual properties, sites including Beeches Green, currently used for health and education and the railway station and adjacent Cheapside public car park, in Stroud town centre will be part of the first phase.

### **Award nomination**

A SDC development of council homes for older people, built at Tanners Piece in Nailsworth has been shortlisted as a finalist for Best Older Peoples' Housing Development by the Inside Housing Development Awards. The scheme was constructed in 2019 on the site of eight ageing prefabricated bungalows. The new properties consist of 11 modern apartments for older people which are modern, light and spacious; with wet rooms, a scooter store and a lift to provide a comfortable environment for older people wanting to live independently for longer.

This scheme was a part of Stroud District Council's £8million investment in modernising and rebuilding sheltered housing to meet the needs of an ageing population. Nationally it is estimated that there will be a significant increase in the number of older people over the next 20 years, so it is important councils are prepared and develop the appropriate infrastructure. The Inside Housing Development Awards ceremony will be held on Thursday 4 November

### **Local Plan consultation – to 7 July**

Following approval by Council on 29 April, the SDC Local Plan Review (covering planning changes up to 2040) is out for consultation for six weeks from 26 May until 7 July 2021.

The documentation will only be published online – and can be viewed at [www.stroud.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/localplanreview)

Following the consultation period, the Plan will be submitted for examination by an independent Planning Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State.

### **Council offices open to the public – by appointment only**

The SDC offices at Ebley Mill are once again open to the public – but in order to remain Covid compliant, people must make an appointment before coming to reception. Anyone who does so will be asked to contact Customer Services via phone or email. The council offices have been made safe with additional screens, fewer people and pre-booked appointments only. Residents are encouraged to continue to do as much as they can online or over the phone for safety.