

Stroud District Councillors' Report – August 2022

Report of meetings during July

All Stroud District Council and Committee papers can be found here: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings> Recordings of meetings are available via the Committee meeting webpage on the Council's You Tube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeH_AmF0s-TShcYIM8Stweg/videos

Council – 21 July

Council Leadership change - following Cllr Doina Cornell's resignation in June from the Labour Party, and then subsequent resignation from the role of Leader of the Council, Cllr Catherine Braun (Green) was elected at the Council meeting as the new Leader of Stroud District Council, with Cllr Natalie Bennett (Labour) voted in as Deputy Leader. Cllr Cornell has formed a new Community Independents Group (which includes three other former Labour councillors) and will continue to serve as a member of the Council.

The administration remains committed to working collaboratively with all parties, to deliver on the Council's 2030 strategy for a sustainable future, and the Council Plan up to the next local elections in 2024 which addresses community resilience and wellbeing; economy, recovery and regeneration; and environment and climate change.

Other items at the meeting included:

- Appointment of a new Monitoring Officer – Claire Hughes ([profile](#)) who currently works for Publica in Gloucestershire. She will take over from the Interim Monitoring Officer, Stephen Taylor, in the autumn and work for both Stroud District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council.
- Changes to committee membership – to reflect the allocation of Committee places for the new Community Independents political group.
- Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for councillor allowances
- Approval of the draft UKSPF Investment Plan as considered by Strategy & Resources Committee (below).
- Acquisition of a brownfield development site at Bath Place, Cheapside Stroud ([see news release](#)) which will be part of the Council's Levelling Up Fund bid to Government.
- Adoption of new Council Service Standards.
- Motion regarding the former Ship Inn site, a canal-side piece of land adjacent to the A419 in Stonehouse. An amended version of the motion was agreed, and councillors agreed to request the Head of Property Services to report to Housing Committee by the end of Spring 2023 on options for a suitable use for the former Ship Inn site in Stonehouse that:
 1. Considers non-housing uses
 2. Builds upon the District Council's Canal Strategy and this Council's previous consultations for all its canal side sites in this area and, in light of the Stonehouse Town Council survey, continues to engage with the community and other stakeholders in exploring potential future uses for the site
 3. Invests any value from the site, if the site is not used for council housing, into affordable housing in the local area.

Housing Committee – 5 July

The committee considered the following reports:

- Final Report on Out of Hours Action Plan for Tenant Services – with details of the corrective action undertaken to strengthen operational procedures in the management of the out of hours service provision and to provide an update on subsequent service delivery.
- Prosecution of housing and tenancy fraud on behalf of social housing - summarising how SDC can assist with the prevention, detection and prosecution of housing and tenancy fraud on behalf of Social Housing providers.
- Action plan updates on Cleaner Estates and Service Standards.
- Information Sheet on Rough Sleeper Initiatives.
- Performance Monitoring.
- Updates from Tenant Representatives, and task and finish groups for Retrofit / Carbon Reduction, Tenant Engagement and Empowerment and Housing Repairs and Voids.

Strategy & Resources Committee – 12 July



The focus for the meeting was the **Brimscombe Port Redevelopment** and selection of the preferred bidder to take forward the £40m development site. Councillors set the project requirements back in 2019, but have had no role in the procurement process, which was undertaken independently. Following a commercial confidentiality period, St Modwen have now been announced as the successful developer partner for this site.

As well as new homes, the Brimscombe Port development will include opportunities for tourism and jobs, walking and cycling and improved biodiversity. Initial work will start behind the scenes next month on transforming the former industrial site into a new waterside community including more than 150 new sustainable homes, 30% of which will be affordable housing. The development will also include public spaces, commercial, retail, leisure, community, and business facilities and the restoration of the canal basin which was infilled after the Second World War.

There is an opportunity to meet the new developer at a drop-in event on Wednesday 10 August 2022 between 2.30pm and 8.00pm at Brimscombe Port Mill, Suite 5 West Suite, First Floor (lift available).

Other reports to the Committee covered:

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – outline of the proposed Investment Plan for funding of £1.37 m over the next 3 years, with the majority of funding to be received in the third year. Expressions of interest were received from the local communities for almost £4m – and all were scored against the shared priority interventions list. Consideration was also given to how the funds can support communities through the cost of living crisis. The successful bids will be informed once the SDC Investment Plan has been approved by Government – which is expected in the autumn.
- Fit for the Future Programme Update – the Council's modernisation programme.

Audit & Standards Committee – 19 July

Reports to committee covered the following items:

- Information Sheet on Planning Enforcement – with supplementary information to the report presented in November 2021.
- Updates to the Corporate Risk Register.
- Assurance over the counter fraud activities of the Council.
- New policy on use of the internet and social media in investigations and enforcement.
- Treasury Management Outturn report 2021/2022.

- Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22.
- Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2021/22.
- Annual Governance Statement 2021/22.
- Internal Audit activity progress report.

Development Control Committee – 26 July

- Parkfield, Highfield Way, France Lynch, Stroud S.22/0363/HHOLD
Proposed two storey extension with single storey link and a detached oak framed garage with associated new driveway and access – Refused.
- Parkfield, Highfield Way, France Lynch, Stroud S.22/0364/LBC – Listed Building Consent
Internal alterations, including the insertion of stairs and reconfiguration of plan form, the addition of a two-storey extension with single storey link and alterations to the boundary wall – Refused.

Other issues

UK's first ASB awareness week (19-25 July)

Stroud District Council joined the national campaign to take a stand against anti-social behaviour and make communities safer. The Council's focus is on:

- Prevention – keeping residents safe by working together with partner agencies.
- Promotion - of the Stroud Community Safety Partnership.
- Positive - information sharing to prevent and resolve ASB.

Organised by community safety specialists Resolve, ASB Awareness Week is being backed by the Home Office, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Local Government Association (LGA), National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC). For more information see: www.resolveuk.org.uk/asbawarenessweek

Cotswold Canals Connected summer events

Family-focused events are being organised this summer, starting with Stories from a Field on 5th August, with outdoor activities exploring wildlife and canal heritage. Willow weaving, pond dipping, a wildflower scavenger hunt, mammal skull identification will be on offer in Whitminster. The event is being hosted by Cotswold Canals Connected partners Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT), Stroudwater Navigation Archive Charity (SNAC) and Stroud Valleys Project (SVP) (see [press release](#)).

Annual electoral canvass

Residents are being asked to check their emails to ensure they can vote – as part of the annual electoral canvass to keep the electoral register up to date. It takes just a few minutes to check the details and return the form. The email should not be confused for a scam - all emails will be sent from elections@stroud.gov.uk with a subject line of `Household Electoral Register Communication - Stroud District Council.

May Lane / Prospect Place regeneration – Dursley

SDC has started the process of developing a derelict piece of land in Dursley in partnership with Dursley Town Council. The area that borders May Lane and Prospect Place in the centre of the town has lain derelict for years and could contain much needed homes. The site, which is owned by multiple landowners, has had several failed bids to regenerate it over the years. Recently the hoardings outside a pair of unoccupied Stroud District Council-owned houses in Prospect Place have been replaced. The

buildings have not been used due to structural issues. Council officers have now started the process of engaging with landowners affected in a bid to kick start the scheme. Once a range of viable options have been identified council officers will begin consultations with stakeholders.

Views requested on CCTV in taxis

Under Government guidance, councils are expected to consider whether they should have a local policy mandating CCTV in taxis, and SDC wants to know the public's views. The Council has launched a consultation on whether it would be proportionate for all taxis and private hire vehicles licensed by Stroud District Council to have a mandatory obligation to have CCTV in the vehicle - balancing public and driver safety against privacy and cost. The consultation runs until August 14 with a survey available here:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ZDL4L5/>

Repairs scam

Council and housing association tenants are warned to beware of phone calls and emails about repairs from organisations that claim to be working on behalf of their landlord. One Stroud District Council tenant contacted the council housing repairs service after receiving a phone call asking if she had any outstanding repairs on her property. After suspecting that the call was not genuine, the tenant refused to continue the conversation and reported it to the repairs team who confirmed her suspicions.

Stroud District Council tenants can report repairs via the website www.stroud.gov.uk/apps/report-a-repair by email to property.care@stroud.gov.uk; by text to 07984 442968 (start your text with the word REPAIRS) or by phone 01453 766321. The majority of Stroud District Council tenant repairs are carried out by an in-house team of skilled operatives who will never turn up unannounced and will always wear ID.