



**Minutes of the meeting of the
REGENERATION WORKING GROUP
30th November 2023, at 10.00am
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)**

Present

Town Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, Kevin Cranston (Chair), Liz Child, Tony Davey, Adrian Oldman, Stella Parkes (Deputy Chair); Cllr Robin Layfield (Stroud District Council), Mike Towson (Stroud District Council), Brendan Cleere (Stroud District Council); Cllr David Drew (Gloucestershire County Council); Tim Mars (Stroud Civic Society)

In attendance

Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Alison Rood (Project Officer)

Absent

Town Cllrs Mick Fealty and Camilla Hale

1. Apologies

None received.

2. Declarations of interest

None declared.

3. To consider requests for dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. Questions from members of the public

There were no questions.

5. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 12th October 2023 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next opportunity.

6. Budget report to end October 2023

The report was noted.

7. Project Officer's report

Members expressed disappointment that Stroud had received no funding allocation in Round 3 of the Levelling Up Fund and asked how projects within the original bid were to be taken forward. The Clerk advised that a smaller scheme for Lansdown Hall improvements had been funded by the Town Council using the match funding included in the bid. Independent fundraising would be necessary for the Subscription Rooms interior improvements, and there was no funding available to progress the Subscription Room forecourt project. It was understood that Stroud District Council were progressing plans around the station area, Cheapside and Bath Place.

Dransfield Properties Ltd were also progressing their project independently at Five Valleys. At a meeting in Westminster Cllr Davey had received feedback from civil servants indicating that the bid had failed due to a lack of employment and investment opportunities. Members acknowledged there were no suitable 'shovel ready' projects available at the time of bid submission and this should inform future suitable bids.

8. Stroud District Council update on items outstanding

Mike Towson, Community Services Manager at Stroud District Council (SDC) updated on the following items:

- Bench refurbishment. Some painting to mountings had been undertaken, but repairs to slats were still to be completed.

Action: Mike Towson to follow up.

The Clerk highlighted future painting should be done in green, as required by the Public Realm Strategy, not the black currently being used.

- Doors at Brunel Mall car park. All the door guards had been serviced and set to open. However, any loud noise e.g. fire alarm would cause them to close automatically. Parking attendants who were based in the building would take ownership and check regularly. Members requested attendants be informed the default should be 'open'.

Action: Mike Towson to brief parking attendants.

- Cleanliness of Bedford Street toilets. SDC regular inspections rate cleanliness as good, so Mike Towson wanted to understand the Town Council's concerns. If members could identify failings, this may unlock access to a SDC maintenance budget. Discussions concluded these concerns were mostly centred around the general disrepair of the toilets. It was suggested that the 'Out of Order' signage be improved and that a British Toilet Association assessment be undertaken to inform any repairs.

Action: Mike Towson to improve signage and contact British Toilet Association to arrange an assessment.

There was further discussion about the lack of 24-hour public toilet provision and the negative impact this has on the town. A Community Toilet Scheme, like the one in Gloucester was proposed. Cllr Davey said the idea had been raised at Chamber of Trade meetings, but more discussion was needed.

- Secure cycle parking. The Clerk informed the meeting she had recently met with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) to identify suitable locations. GCC had applied to SDC's CIL fund and were awaiting a response. The Clerk also highlighted potential funding from SDC's Walking and Cycling fund.

The lack of cycle stands located at the Museum in the Park was also raised. Cllr Layfield informed members that a programme of free stands for businesses and schools was included in SDC's Walking and Cycling fund. The Museum in the Park could apply.

Action: Brendan Cleere will investigate lack of cycle parking at the museum.

Members also discussed a scheme currently running in Newport to provide cycle parking in vacant shops. The Chamber had investigated this option and had previously forwarded details onto the Community Services Team at SDC.

9. Neighbourhood Development Plan review

The Project Officer presented work done to review policies in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. In addition, new proposed policies were included. The Project Officer had proposed two in-person meetings in December to finalise policies prior to further public consultation in January 2024. Members requested that all Councillors be invited to the meetings, not just those in the Regeneration Working Group.

Action: Project Officer to invite all Councillors to December meetings.

10. Stroud District Chamber of Trade update

Tony Davey, Chair of the Chamber gave a verbal update. Although the overall climate remained difficult some new businesses had opened. The Chamber was working with estate agents and landlords to develop an agreement enabling empty shops to be used to display signage for cultural events or for businesses as pop-up shops.

Traffic to the Visit Stroud website was very good and the recent 'Catch a bus' promotion had proved successful, with people still engaging with it. For some people it had highlighted unknown/unused bus routes. The hospitality sector was struggling with Christmas bookings down.

11. Progress on Action Plan

The Clerk introduced the report and highlighted some of the projects. The signage project had been superseded by Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) wayfinding project as part of the CIL walking and cycling bid. The protocol for town centre demonstrations had started in the Regeneration Working Group before going to Full Council where it had been 'parked'. The Clerk asked members to inform her if this was a priority to revisit.

Cllr Oldman asked for clarification around the lift or bridge project at the railway station. The Deputy Clerk had recently had an on-site meeting with Great Western Railway and the Clerk would check outcomes with her. Cllr Drew asked about electric vehicle charging points at the station and the need to identify suitable sites for the town. The Clerk confirmed Gloucestershire County Council's on-street rollout team had invited the Town Council to submit suitable sites for consideration.

Actions: All members to contact the Clerk regarding their views on whether the protocol on town centre demonstrations should be considered a priority. The Clerk to follow up with the Deputy Clerk with regard to the on-site meeting regarding lifts at the railway station.

12. Installation of tourism signs

At the previous meeting, members had requested mock-ups of the brown tourism signs to be placed on the four main entrance routes into Stroud. Members

considered the mock ups and discussed various wording and symbols for use. There was some disagreement about the signs, wording and symbols.

Members requested further mock ups and recommended that the recent tourism work undertaken by the Town Council with neighbouring towns be used to influence symbol choice. They also recommended that the Tourism Officer at Stroud District Council be consulted.

Actions: Project Assistant to create new mock ups. Project Assistant to refer to tourism work and consult Tourism Officer at Stroud District Council to inform choice of wording and symbols.

The meeting closed at 11.30am

Chair

Date