



**Minutes of the meeting of the
REGENERATION WORKING GROUP
15th February 2024, at 10.00am
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)**

Present

Town Cllrs Kevin Cranston (Chair), Liz Child, Tony Davey, Mick Fealty, Adrian Oldman, Stella Parkes (Deputy Chair); Cllr Robin Layfield (Stroud District Council, (SDC)), Mike Towson (SDC), Andrew Cummings (SDC); Cllr David Drew (Gloucestershire County Council)

In attendance

Kate Montgomery (Deputy Town Clerk), Alison Rood (Project Officer)

Absent

Tim Mars (Stroud Civic Society)

1. Apologies

Town Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, Camilla Hale; Leonie Lockwood (SDC) and Andrew Watton (Stroud District Chamber of Trade)

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 30th November 2023 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next opportunity.

6. Update from previous meeting actions

Actions were noted as per the table. To be updated further at the next meeting of the Regeneration Working Group.

7. Budget report to end January 2024

The report was noted.

8. Bus Shelter Request

Members noted that there were potentially other areas in the town which would also benefit from bus shelters. It was **agreed** to recommend to the Clerk to investigate the potential of an additional bus shelter in Russell Street with Gloucestershire County

Council as well as the potential to relocate the bus stop to the loading bay further up London Road and relocate the loading bay to outside the old Peacocks building.

9. Project Officer's report

Councillors noted the update. General discussion around the provision of air quality monitoring around the town and particularly around schools.

10. Neighbourhood Development Plan review

The Project Officer presented work done so far to review vision, scope and policies in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. It was **agreed** to recommend to the Clerk that the suggestions were taken forward.

It was noted that the review was paused due to the Project Officer leaving the council.

It was noted that the District Council's Local Plan was unlikely to be adopted before 2025.

11. Stroud District Chamber of Trade update

Tony Davey, Chair of the Chamber gave a verbal update regarding the period from November 2023. Local businesses had reported a good Christmas, supported by well attended Goodwill Evenings across the district, however January and February have been challenging months for the local economy.

The Chamber noted frustration around obtaining accurate footfall data. This hampers reporting and monitoring.

The Stroud Town Commercial Property Audit was published and is regularly updated. The latest vacancy rate is 13.6% (19th February), the report can be found at StroudChamber.org.uk.

A grant application has been submitted to fund 30,000 Enjoy Stroud District leaflets to be created and professionally distributed.

A Share My Table initiative was proposed by Stephen Moore – VisitStroud.uk/share which is about to go into a pilot.

The Windows of Opportunity project (StroudChamber.org.uk/windows) will commence soon as is hoped it will open the doors for a wider roll-out. The Chamber reported that they are stalling on the window vinyls project.

Finally, the VisitStroud.uk and Discover Stroud District App are now aligned with events. Thanks to SDC's Amy Helliwell for enabling the Chamber access to the platform. The Chamber invests time to keep this updated. January has been a quiet month to the VisitStroud platform: 339,000 Impressions, 3,940 clicks from Google. Typical per day visits topping 200 unique, active visitors per day. The Chamber expects to see a rise in March.

The Chair thanked Tony Davey for his report.

Action: SDC officer to follow up accurate footfall data

12. Progress on Regeneration Projects

Andrew Cummings gave an update regarding the Old Town Hall. Stroud District Council (SDC) received a number of expressions of interest and will now market the site for a six month period. The potential sale is following the asset of community value process, even though it was not registered as this.

Members noted that there would be an update at the next meeting regarding the Station Regeneration project.

It was noted that the “Spaces Remaining” sign and information at Brunel Mall car park was in progress with quotes being obtained. It was reported that any remaining funds from this project would be used to install cycle parking at the site.

13. Installation of tourism signs

Members voted for the version 1A mock up tourism sign.

Cllr Layfield requested that the font used for the sign is dyslexia friendly.

Actions: Project Assistant to order new signs and Green Spaces Team to install.

14. Funding for Stroud to Thrupp Feasibility Study

The recommendation was approved. Cllr Layfield noted that the entire amount required should be applied for through the District Council’s Cycling and Walking Fund.

Action: Clerk to apply for the feasibility study grant

15. Projects for District Council’s Vitality Fund

The Deputy Clerk introduced the item and invited members to contribute ideas to be considered for the fund. Cllr Child enquired about rural localism and suggested that a project connecting rural businesses to town marketing may be beneficial.

Cllr Davey noted that the dates for the grant are late 2024, and the funds are required now. Andrew Cummings confirmed that the funding could be allocated as soon as projects were ready to begin and would not need to wait until the autumn.

Action: Clerk to feed back selected projects to the working group

The meeting closed at 11.30am

Chair

Date