

13th January 2025



To Members of Council

You are hereby summoned to a MEETING OF THE COUNCIL to be held on **Monday, 20th January 2025 at 7.30pm** at Congregational Church Hall, Bedford Street, Stroud, GL5 1AY to conduct the following business.

Helen Bojaniwska
Chief Executive Officer (Town Clerk)

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive declarations of interest or requests for dispensations
3. To approve the minutes of the meetings of 9th December 2024 previously circulated
4. To receive the Mayor's remarks
5. To receive questions from members of the public
6. To receive reports from County and District Councillors (for information only)
7. To receive the CEO's Report (for information only)
8. To receive a report on relocation to Locking Hill
9. To approve a contract to extend work with Extended Studio to enable them to act as lead designer and contract administrator during the build phase for Locking Hill, and to issue a contract to that effect.
10. To allocate funds from reserves to fund the installation of an air-source heat pump at Locking Hill and include this as part of the main construction phase of the project (Phase 2)
11. To authorise the Office Working Group to form the tender evaluation panel in consultation with officers and make a recommendation to Council for appointment of a contractor for Phase 2 works at Locking Hill.
12. To approve a project budget for Locking Hill for 2025-26
13. To receive a Programme Overview
14. To approve the budget for 2025-26
15. To approve the precept for 2025-26
16. To receive a report on devolution and set up a new Devolution Working Group to assess the options and opportunities for the Town Council
17. To adopt updated Internal Control Checks as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee
18. To approve a new Fraud Policy as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee
19. To consider a response to a government consultation on the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England
20. To approve updates to the Council's Training and Development Policy

21. To receive Committee and Working Group reports, previously circulated, as follows:

Finance & Policy Committee	2 nd December 2024
Consultations & Highways Committee	16 th December 2024

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith, marital status and disability); Crime and Disorder (Section 17); Health and Safety; and Human Rights.

CEO's report for Council 20/1/2025

EV CHARGE POINTS

Stroud District Council have sent us the proposed plan of works regarding the installation of electric vehicle chargepoints in London Road Surface car park. We have been advised that the works are likely to cause minor disruption to the use of the car park however, they will be working closely with the contractors to eliminate this as much as possible. At the moment there is no confirmed installation date, but it is hoped works will commence at the end of February/beginning of March.

Devolution Discussions

Over the past month, I have spent a lot of time researching and discussing the opportunities and challenges presented by Devolution. It is likely that this will occupy a significant portion of our time in coming months.

Review of the Council's Strategy

Our Programme Manager is leading on the review, which will ensure that the Council's strategy remains relevant and effective. In recent weeks this work has included stakeholder mapping and discussions with key stakeholders.

Staff update

The recruitment process for new staff has been ongoing, with a particular focus on ensuring that we attract and retain high-quality candidates who will support the delivery of our strategic priorities. The new Communications and Engagement Officer will be joining us in February.

The new Project Manager and Communications Officer roles have been advertised and we have seen good interest in these posts.

We currently have a temp with us covering for the long term absence of one of the Rangers.

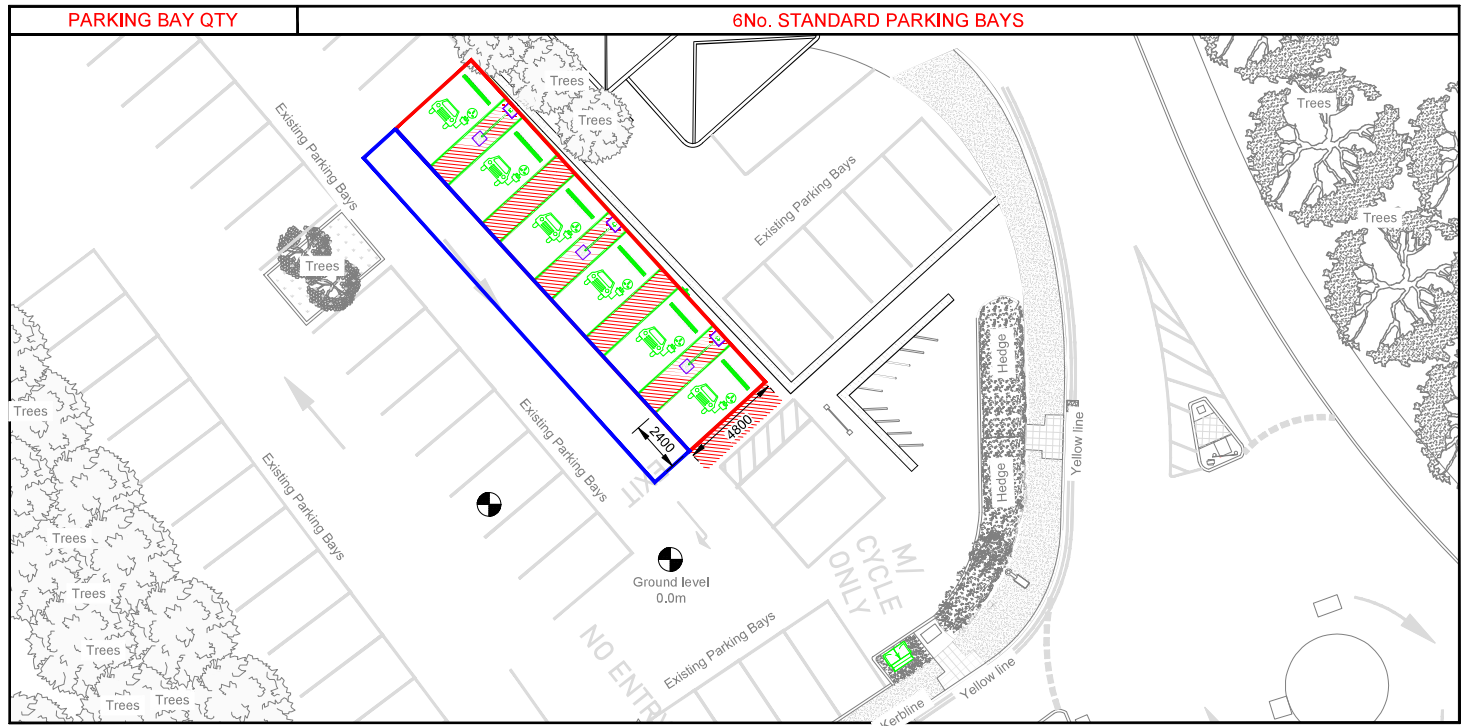
As our team grows, we are progressing with leadership development across the organisation. We have arranged a staff away day for March, which will provide an opportunity for reflection and strategic planning.

Reflecting on the Past Year and Looking Ahead

As we move into the new year, January offers an opportune moment to reflect on the past 12 months. This year has presented us with numerous challenges, including reconfiguration of staffing following an external review. However, these challenges have also provided opportunities for us to innovate, strengthen partnerships, and streamline our operations.

Looking ahead, we will need to respond quickly to the opportunities and challenges of devolution in an evolving political landscape and the need to meet growing demand for our community services.

Helen Bojaniwska FSLCC, CEO (Town Clerk)
13th January 2025



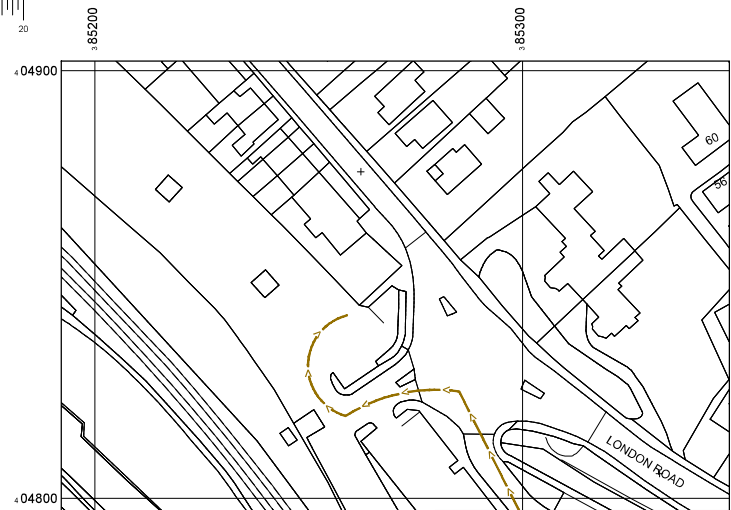
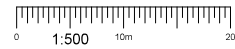
- NOTES:
- ALL DIMENSIONS IN MM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
- NEW CODE:
- Demise: Outlined in Red
 - Access Route: Brown Arrow
 - Set Down Area: Outlined in Blue
 - Charging Point: Light Green



GOOGLE MAPS QR CODE

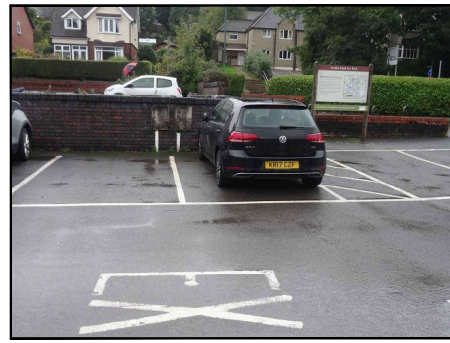
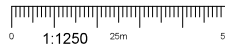
Master	Project	Purpose of Issue	Issue
M001	EV Charging Point	Detailed Design	A
Date: 24/12/2024	Revision / Upgrade Description:		
Drawn: SSB	First Issue: Detailed Design		
Checked: DEP			
Approved: CK			

DEMISE AREA



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 NGR E: 385266 N: 204884
 LAT: 51.742464 LONG: -2.214791

SITE LOCATION PLAN



SITE PHOTOGRAPH



Site Name: OFF STREET - LONDON ROAD CAR PARK

Site ID: P-002858

Address: LONDON ROAD CAR PARK, LONDON ROAD, STROUD RODBOROUGH, STROUD, GL5 2AP

Title: 002 SITE LOCATION PLAN

Project: CHARGEPOINT PROPOSAL

Purpose of Issue: DETAILED DESIGN

Master Drawing No.	Issue
OFF STREET - LONDON ROAD CAR PARK	A

100mm
150mm
10mm

UPDATE ON LOCKING HILL RELOCATION PROJECT

8 January 2025

From: Ben Challis, Programme Manager, and Helen Bojaniwska, CEO on finance.

To: Full Council

Recommendations for approval – see report below

1. Approve a contract to extend work with “Extended Studio” to enable them to act as lead designer and contract administrator during the build phase, and to issue a contract to that effect.
2. To agree that Council should allocate up to £60k from reserves to fund the installation of an air-source heat pump and include this as part of the main construction phase of the project.

To authorise the Office Working Group to form the tender evaluation panel in consultation with officers and make a recommendation to Council for appointment of a contractor for Phase 2 works.

3. To approve a project budget for 2025-26

Updates for information – see report below

4. Erection of a vehicle store for the Green Spaces team
5. Relocation of the Green Spaces team from Libby's Drive
6. Procurement of principal contractor for the construction phase at Locking Hill
7. Use and development of the lower ground floor spaces for community use
8. Sale of Thanet House

Report

1. Extended Studios Design Work

- 1.1. Council previously agreed to commission Extended Studios to provide designs and architectural drawings for the redevelopment of Locking Hill in July 2024 at a total cost of £23,375. Extended Studios have now provided final “Stage 4” tender drawings for the building and have therefore completed their work under this proposal.
- 1.2. Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations advise that construction projects retain a qualified architect/designer during the construction phase of a project to ensure variations or adaptations required as works proceed are informed by a qualified person.
- 1.3. A “contract administrator” who would be responsible for quality assurance and reviewing requested variations to the design; scope; timeframe and cost plan as is required during the construction phase.
- 1.4. Given that Extended Studios have worked extensively with the Council during the design phase and have a strong understanding of the building, technical design and vision for the building, officers recommend that the Council seek to retain Extended Studios services during the construction phase of the project.
- 1.5. Additionally, officers recommend that Extended Studio are nominated as the “contract administrator” to ensure that a qualified person with experience of building and construction design is available to review any requested variations during the construction phase. As the client, the Council would retain ultimate control of the contract and any deliverables although required not to frustrate reasonable requests for variation.
- 1.6. Extended Studio have quoted an estimated maximum of £31,500 to work as both contract administrator and principal designer during the construction phase. This has been accounted for in the total costs included in the budget for this project. As the work required may vary depending on the number of issues arising during the project, this would be charged as a day rate (of £750/day for Director; and £450/day for Assistant). The full proposal is provided as Appendix 2. Officers recommend that we accept this proposal and extend our contract with them accordingly.
- 1.7. Alternatively, the Council may:
 - *Act as contract administrators ourselves*: this is not recommended as it may absorb a significant amount of officer time, and officer’s do not hold the technical understanding of design and construction required to make an effective judgement regarding the reasonableness of any variations requested.

- *Appoint an alternative designer for the construction phase:* this is not recommended for reasons of continuity and given Extended Studio's understanding of the design, building and Council's vision for its future use.
- *Appoint a principal construction contractor on a "Design and Build" basis:* this is not recommended given Extended Studio's ownership and understanding of the existing design, and the limited checks and balance this would create with the construction contractor. If working on this basis, a contractor could deliver a design significantly different from that approved to date.

2. Issues with the boiler at Locking Hill

- 2.1. The existing boiler at Locking Hill broke down shortly before Christmas. Officers have drained the water system to meet insurance obligations and prevent issues with freezing pipes during the cold weather. An engineer attended on 9th January and was able to get the boiler running again.
- 2.2. During the visit the engineer advised that the boiler is obsolete and no replacement parts would be available if a future repair required them. He advised he had previously told the GPs surgery to prepare to replace the boiler and repeated this advice to STC.
- 2.3. Officers have contacted suppliers to provide indicative costs for options to replace the boiler (and estimated related works). Cotswold Energy have been asked to undertake a full heat-loss survey to provide a clearer technical proposal for a heat pump system and are expected to complete this w/c 13 January.
- 2.4. There are several potential approaches to this problem, which are set out below.

Option 1 / Status-Quo: Retain existing boiler

This is the lowest cost option but only an interim solution. Retaining the existing boiler would require us to retain the cold-water tanks in the loft. This will either require modifications to the design to retain a wall currently scheduled for demolition; or to replace and downsize the existing tanks and provide a new supporting structure in the loft space. We have estimated the related work to cost ~£2-3k.

This is a short-term solution and either Option 2 or 3 below would then be required in future with associated disruption to operations and the building.

Option 2: Replace existing boiler with a new gas boiler

This is the middle-cost option and for which have an estimate of £16,227.94. While we would remain reliant on fossil fuel heating, it would enable us to install a modern boiler with greater efficiency: bringing some carbon reduction and cost benefits. It also reduces the risk of a breakdown in the near-term causing disruption to the building. However, it would reduce our eligibility for future grant funding for decarbonisation – probably for the next ten years. This extends beyond the Council's target for becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Option 3: Replace existing boiler with a heat pump system

This is the highest-cost but most environmentally friendly option. We have an estimate of £50,836.32 (including associated plumbing work and replacement of radiators). Some of the costs for radiators and plumbing work may be duplicated in the main project specification, so there may be opportunities to make some small savings by lining up the estimates.

A full heat-loss survey has been commissioned which will enable us to provide a more accurate figure. It is likely that this installation **would** require planning permission.

There are significant advantages to undertaking this work as part of the main construction phase given the need for significant plumbing / mechanical changes to the building which would be highly disruptive in future. We would also explore whether this enables the plant room to be relocated in a way which increases the space available for any future redevelopment of the lower ground floor community space.

There are limited immediate options for obtaining external / grant funding for this work: although we *may* be able to part-fund through grant funds to improve the lower ground floor community rooms. It should be assumed that if delivered as part of the main building phase Council would need to meet these costs directly from earmarked reserves. See separate budget report. As Thanet House has not been sold yet we will have time to pursue applications.

2.5. **Recommendation:** although Option 3 will require additional expenditure from reserves this is the recommended approach because it enable works to be carried out alongside the main construction phase, with no future disruption caused by retrofitting. If approved, this will be included as a requirement for suppliers in the schedule of works.

3. To approve a project budget for 2025-26

Please see attached update on budget requirement for 2025-26. Assuming the recommendation to progress the air source heat pump installation is adopted the total project budget for 2025-26 will be £477,938 an increase from the draft considered by the Finance and Policy Committee of £101,140. The difference can be met from underspends in 2024-25, use of some earmarked reserves and a small contribution from the General Reserve as shown in the attached table.

Updates for Information

4. Erection of vehicle store for Green Spaces team

4.1. An application for a 'build over license' to enable the erection of the planned vehicle store to Severn Trent has been submitted and officers are awaiting their response.

4.2. The design of the vehicle store has been amended to respond to Severn Trent's feedback. Our identified contractor believes these can be accommodated within the original contract price, but will advise formally once Severn Trent's permission has been obtained. Should this change, officers will return to the Working Group for advice. Changes to the design include:

- Reorientation of the building to avoid enclosing the manhole cover so the open 'bin store' is now toward the rear of the car park.
- Reduction in number of timber support columns in favour of two steel beams to reduce the need to excavate in the vicinity of the sewer and reduce load pressure on the ground. This does not change the external appearance of the building.

4.3. If permission to build over is granted, officers will award the contract as previously agreed and work should commence quickly. If permission is not granted, officers will return to the Working Group for further advice as it may not be possible to build the vehicle store at the Locking Hill site as originally expected, likely requiring us to consider the Cemetery compound as a long-term solution.

5. Relocation of the Green Spaces team from Libby's Drive to Locking Hill

5.1. The Green Spaces team are in the process of moving remaining equipment and items to Locking Hill and/or the Cemetery compound.

5.2. Vehicles will be stored at the Cemetery until the vehicle store at Locking Hill is complete.

5.3. A new fuel store has been ordered to be located at the Cemetery. Once this has been delivered the Green Spaces team will dispose of the existing fuel store and welfare unit at Libby's Drive: both are being sold to enable cost-recovery.

5.4. The Green Spaces team expect to vacate Libby's Drive from the end of January, enabling us to end our contract and make savings on the rent and utilities of c£1,200 per month.

6. Procurement of principal contractor for the construction phase at Locking Hill

6.1. On 8 January we arranged a pre-tender supplier briefing at Locking Hill in an effort to ensure a strong supplier pipeline ahead of tenders being issued. Suppliers were provided with information about the vision, design and tendering process and given a tour of the building.

6.2. The briefing was well attended, with five suppliers attending. National suppliers were identified through the Crown Commercial Service's framework contracts. No significant concerns or questions regarding the project were raised. Suppliers have been asked to submit feedback if there are any

elements of the project or tender which would prevent them from bidding: so far 4 of 5 have indicated (anonymously) that they *will* submit a bid and provided positive feedback on the session.

- 6.3. A formal invitation to tender will be issued to all five suppliers once Cotswold Energy have provided a heat loss survey, or sooner if Council does not wish to include a heat pump in the design. Suppliers will have a 6-week period to submit bids.
- 6.4. It is recommended that the Office Working Group should form the tender evaluation panel in consultation with officers and make a recommendation to Council.

7. Use and development of the lower ground floor community spaces

7.1. The Fundraising Officer has begun to explore potential grant funding opportunities to enable the refurbishment and equipping of the lower ground floor community areas at Locking Hill. We hope these rooms will provide a flexible space which can be used:

- a) To deliver space for other services to run 'drop-in' clinics or services for residents in an accessible location close to the Town Centre.

and

- b) To provide a facility for new / emerging community groups to work from in an "incubator" setting, with the possibility of providing support from the Community Development team as needed.

7.2. The next meeting of the community Hubs network to be held at Locking Hill in these rooms in early-Feb. This will give us an opportunity to co-develop ideas with the Hubs about how these spaces could be most useful to them; their clients; or similar organisations. Officers will also be seeking views from the Door and Creative Sustainability alongside our collaboration with them on the Participatory Budgeting project.

7.3. Officers plan to consult town center residents to understand which services are most likely to benefit from accessing from this location; and the Community Development Support Officer is reaching out to services who currently run 'drop-in' services in the community hubs to understand if they would access the space.

7.4. As it will not be possible to administer or use these rooms until the construction work at Locking Hill is complete, officers will begin to consult a wider group of community groups and potential users closer to the point at which Locking Hill will be occupied and/or funding to redevelop these spaces has been identified.

8. Sale of Thanet House

8.1. Viewings of Thanet House have been sporadic, with no offers coming forward yet. A second agent with a wider reach is being appointed, but this will increase the fees.

Details

Client:
Stroud Town Council

Project Title:
Locking Hill

Project Details:
The refurbishment of the existing locking hill surgery into the new office space for Stroud Town Council, including a green spaces area, council chamber, and various office / workspaces.

Site Address:
Locking Hill, Stroud, GL5 1UY

Estimate Date: 10/01/2025
 BCIS Function: 320
 BCIS Construction: Traditional Construction
 BCIS All-in TPI: 4Q24 (396)
 Procurement type: TBC
 Stage: RIBA 2
 Type of Work: Refurbishment/Refit Out
 Location Factor: 105
 GIFA: 391 m²
 Primary Stories: 2 nr
 Functional Units: 1 nr
 Estimated Construction programme: 18 weeks

0. Executive Summary		Cost £	Cost per m ² of GFA	£ per Functional Unit
0	Facilitating Works	£ 44,249	£113	£44,249
1	Substructure	£ -	£0	£0
2	Superstructures	£ 68,730	£176	£68,730
3	Internal Finishes	£ 38,591	£99	£38,591
4	Fittings, Furnishings and Equipment	£ 5,400	£14	£5,400
5	Services	£ 103,856	£266	£103,856
6	Prefabricated Units	£ -	£0	£0
7	Works to Existing Buildings	£ 1,050	£3	£1,050
8	External Works	£ 23,243	£59	£23,243
SUB-TOTAL		£ 285,118	£729	£285,118
9	Main Contractor's Preliminaries	£ 59,666	£153	£59,666
10	Main Contractor's Overheads and Profit	£ 44,256	£113	£44,256
11	Project / Design Team Fees	£ -	£0	£0
12	Other Costs	£ -	£0	£0
13	Contingency	£ -	£0	£0
14	Inflation	£ 22,334	£57	£22,334
SUB-TOTAL		£ 126,255	£323	£126,255
TOTAL		£ 411,374	£1,052	£411,374

1. Introduction

Information used relates to as built provided. This estimate has been prepared in accordance with RICS NRM Vol1 and are intended to indicate the affordability of the proposed works. This forecast cannot accurately predict the impact of future national or international political events or local market forces particular to this project.

2. Description

2.1 Works Information and design features

This estimate provides for the work as follows: complete internal demolition as per design, install of a structural steels as required, creation of new structural openings, install of new internal and external doors, new partitions, new M&E systems, new finishes and external works.

2.2 Site Information and limitations

Access from the road is good from 'Slad Road', there is limited access to the read of the property from a small lane just off 'Locking Hill'.

3. Basis of estimate

3.1. Procurement

For the purposes of this estimate we have assumed that the project will utilise a single stage traditional form of procurement under a selected competition tender procedure based upon utilising an unamended JCT IFC.

3.2. Programme

We have made allowance for the works to complete within 18 weeks - estimated

3.3. Benchmarking

The following cost data has been used:

- In House data:- previous similar projects and subcontractor returns.
- BCIS indices and functions

3.4. Documents Used

The following documents have been used:

- Extended Studios drawings - following their issue on 16/12/24
- O'Brien and Price structural drawings

4. Assumptions, Exclusions and Key Risks

The following is not included in this estimate:

- Below ground obstructions, voids, etc.
- Contamination remediation
- We assume VAT will apply at the standard rate 20%
- Utilities or Highways s38, s104, s278 works
- Boundary / ownership and neighbourly issues including party wall awards
- Planning obligations contributions (e.g. s106)
- Client costs (e.g. staff costs and decanting/recanting)
- Capital allowances or other tax implications.
- Funding and finance
- Backlog maintenance and fees associated
- Fees for clerk of works responsibilities
- No specific allowance included to identify or address any latent defects
- No allowance for any loose FFE - chairs, desks, white goods, reception fit out.
- The following Items 9.02, 9.05, 9.06, 9.07 as per the Extended Studios Schedule of Works are excluded.

NRM1 Ref	Description - Locking Hill	Quantity	Unit	Rate £/m²	Cost £	Cost per m² of GFA	% of Value (excl VAT)	£ per Functional Unit
0	Facilitating Works							
0.01	Allowance to remove FFE not shown on drawings to date	1	PS	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 3	0%	£ 1,000
0.02	Removal of internal single doors; incl disposal	13	nr	£ 50	£ 650	£ 2	0%	£ 650
0.03	Removal of internal double doors; incl disposal		excl					
0.04	Demolition & removal of all internal partitions	153	m²	£ 45	£ 6,894	£ 18	2%	£ 6,894
0.05	New internal opening to reception space in existing wall - internal screen	1	nr	£ 500	£ 500	£ 1	0%	£ 500
0.06	New internal opening to reception space in existing wall - opening	1	nr	£ 750	£ 750	£ 2	0%	£ 750
0.07	Adapt existing opening for new new single door and window - main entrance way	1	nr	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 3	0%	£ 1,000
0.08	Adapt existing doorway in LGF to accommodate new doorway	1	nr	£ 750	£ 750	£ 2	0%	£ 750
0.09	Remove existing window and adapt to form opening for emergency escape door from meeting room	1	nr	£ 750	£ 750	£ 2	0%	£ 750
0.10	Adapt existing walls around stair to be lowered & m/g	1	item	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 5	0%	£ 2,000
0.11	Remove and disposal of existing ceiling finishes - all ceilings in this item to be treated as ACM's	136	m²	£ 75	£ 10,202	£ 26	2%	£ 10,202
0.12	Remove and disposal of existing floor finishes	192	m²	£ 9	£ 1,728	£ 4	0%	£ 1,728
0.13	Allowance for removal of existing water tanks in roof space	3	nr	£ 175	£ 525	£ 1	0%	£ 525
0.14	Provisional sum for asbestos survey and removal of any asbestos found.	1	PS	£ 10,000	£ 10,000	£ 26	2%	£ 10,000
0.15	Provisional sum for all temporary works, propping and shoring that may be required.	1	PS	£ 5,000	£ 5,000	£ 13	1%	£ 5,000
0.16	Allowance for the contractor to block up the existing extraction vents in the new council chamber	1	item	£ 2,500	£ 2,500	£ 6	1%	£ 2,500
				£	£ 44,249	£ 113	11%	£ 44,249
1	Substructure							
1.01	<u>Excluded</u>							
2	Superstructures							
					£	£ -	0%	£ -
2.01	New Columns supporting overhead beam, including boxing steel washer plate and all associated fixings	4	nr	£ 2,000	£ 8,000	£ 20	2%	£ 8,000
2.02	New concrete lintels to be supplied and installed across openings detailed in 0.06 & 0.07	2	nr	£ 500	£ 1,000	£ 3	0%	£ 1,000
2.03	Mineral wool insulation, 200 thick, to roof space	277	m²	£ 15	£ 4,150	£ 11	1%	£ 4,150
2.04	Supply and install new Aluminium external FD30S automated swing door to the main entrance including a fixed side panel.- External door type A	1	nr	£ 5,000	£ 5,000	£ 13	1%	£ 5,000
2.05	Supply and install new emergency external escape door from meeting room - External door type B	1	nr	£ 2,250	£ 2,250	£ 6	1%	£ 2,250
2.06	Supply and install new double glazed aluminium framed FD30S door - External door type C	1	nr	£ 2,500	£ 2,500	£ 6	1%	£ 2,500
2.07	New internal partitions - Wall Type 1	7	m²	£ 145	£ 1,002	£ 3	0%	£ 1,002
2.08	New internal partitions - Wall Type 2	74	m²	£ 185	£ 13,736	£ 35	3%	£ 13,736
2.09	IPS incl framing		excl					
2.10	Form openings in new partitions	5	nr	£ 200	£ 1,000	£ 3	0%	£ 1,000
2.11	Supply and install new casement windows W/UG04 & W/UG03	2	nr	£ 900	£ 1,800	£ 5	0%	£ 1,800
2.12	Supply and install new internal single doors, FD30S side hung solid core door with a safety glass vision panel; including frame and ironmongery - Door type A	3	nr	£ 1,150	£ 3,450	£ 9	1%	£ 3,450
2.13	Supply and install new internal single doors, FD30S side hung solid core door; including frame and ironmongery - Door type B	4	nr	£ 950	£ 3,800	£ 10	1%	£ 3,800
2.14	Supply and install new side hung FD30S solid core door with side glazed panel with safety glass, including frame and ironmongery - Door type C	1	nr	£ 5,000	£ 5,000	£ 13	1%	£ 5,000
2.15	Supply and install new sliding solid core door with side glazed panel with safety glass, including frame and ironmongery - Door type D	1	nr	£ 3,500	£ 3,500	£ 9	1%	£ 3,500
2.16	New suspended ceiling including plasterboard finish	157	m²	£ 80	£ 12,542	£ 32	3%	£ 12,542
				£	£ 68,730	£ 176	17%	£ 68,730
3	Internal Finishes							
3.01	Make good to existing walls following demolition of internal partitions	1	PS	£ 3,000	£ 3,000	£ 8	1%	£ 3,000
3.02	Allowance for decoration of new and existing walls	345	m²	£ 16	£ 5,376	£ 14	1%	£ 5,376
3.03	Allowance for splashback tiling to WC's & Tea Point	10	m²	£ 250	£ 2,566	£ 7	1%	£ 2,566
3.04	Supply and install new floor finish - vinyl, incl covod skirting	101	m²	£ 80	£ 8,113	£ 21	2%	£ 8,113
3.05	Supply and install new floor finish - carpet	83	m²	£ 70	£ 5,838	£ 15	1%	£ 5,838
3.06	New timber skirting including decoration	162	m	£ 20	£ 3,246	£ 8	1%	£ 3,246
3.07	Decoration to existing timber skirting	134	m	£ 8	£ 1,072	£ 3	0%	£ 1,072
3.08	Decoration to existing door frame, architraves	21	nr	£ 100	£ 2,100	£ 5	1%	£ 2,100
3.09	Allowance for entrance barrier matting	2	m²	£ 250	£ 435	£ 1	0%	£ 435
3.10	New ceiling finishes - sand back and re-paint the existing timber ceiling	34	m²	£ 40	£ 1,357	£ 3	0%	£ 1,357
3.11	Allowance for a skim and paint to new plasterboard ceiling	157	m²	£ 35	£ 5,487	£ 14	1%	£ 5,487
				£	£ 38,591	£ 99	9%	£ 38,591
4	Fittings, Furnishings and Equipment							
4.01	8.4m flexible curtain rail curtain/blind excluded	1	item	£ 300	£ 300	£ 1	0%	£ 300
4.02	Allowance for plywood kitchen carcassing and worktops to GF tea point - kitchen excluded	1	nr	£ 2,500	£ 2,500	£ 6	1%	£ 2,500
4.03	Allowance for supply and install of new brushed stainless steel signage.	1	PS	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 3	0%	£ 1,000
4.04	Allowance for all new statutory signage	1	PS	£ 500	£ 500	£ 1	0%	£ 500
4.05	Provision of new access hatch and ladder access to roof space	1	item	£ 800	£ 800	£ 2	0%	£ 800
4.06	Wire growing cables supply & install	1	PS	£ 300	£ 300	£ 1	0%	£ 300
4.07	Loose FFE excluded		excl					
				£	£ 5,400	£ 14	1%	£ 5,400
5	Services							
5.01	Allowance to carefully remove and storage of existing sanitary ware and associated accessories in 3nr locations, and to be reinstalled in new locations as detailed on the drawings.	3	nr	£ 1,750	£ 5,250	£ 13	1%	£ 5,250
5.02	Allowance for all additional items required for LG08 -	1	nr	£ 1,615	£ 1,615	£ 4	0%	£ 1,615
5.03	Allowance for all additional items required for UG 05 & UG 07	2	nr	£ 1,040	£ 2,080	£ 5	1%	£ 2,080
5.04	Allowance for all additional items required for UG 06	1	nr	£ 1,490	£ 1,490	£ 4	0%	£ 1,490
5.05	New WC Extract	3	nr	£ 700	£ 2,100	£ 5	1%	£ 2,100
5.06	Hot & cold water distribution	4	nr	£ 450	£ 1,800	£ 5	0%	£ 1,800
5.07	Provision for new water tank - 2nr	2	nr	£ 350	£ 700	£ 2	0%	£ 700
5.08	External cold water tap	1	nr	£ 250	£ 250	£ 1	0%	£ 250
5.09	Allowance for above ground drainage to WC's, cleaners store, tea point	1	item	£ 3,000	£ 3,000	£ 8	1%	£ 3,000
5.10	Allowance to box in all new above ground drainage installations.	1	PS	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 5	0%	£ 2,000
5.11	Adjustments to existing radiator systems and existing ventilation systems to accommodate layout changes - Provisional	1	PS	£ 15,000	£ 15,000	£ 38	4%	£ 15,000
5.12	Allowance for new 800x2000mm radiators white wall mounted column radiator - UG01 UG02	2	nr	£ 500	£ 1,000	£ 3	0%	£ 1,000
5.13	Allowance for new 400mmx500mm radiators white wall mounted column radiator - UG005 UG06 UG07 & UG16	4	nr	£ 350	£ 1,400	£ 4	0%	£ 1,400
5.14	Allowance for improvements/ alterations to heating controls - Provisional	1	PS	£ 7,500	£ 7,500	£ 19	2%	£ 7,500
5.15	Adjustments to existing small power installations to accommodate layout changes - Provisional	1	PS	£ 8,500	£ 8,500	£ 22	2%	£ 8,500
5.16	Adjustments to existing general lighting and emergency lighting installations - Provisional	1	PS	£ 15,000	£ 15,000	£ 38	4%	£ 15,000
5.17	Supply and install lighting bars above reception desk and working spaces	1	item	£ 1,500	£ 1,500	£ 4	0%	£ 1,500
5.18	Allowance for the supply and installation of Light Type A - in accordance with the luminaire schedule	7	nr	£ 26	£ 179	£ 0	0%	£ 179
5.19	Allowance for the supply and installation of Light Type B - in accordance with the luminaire schedule	41	nr	£ 26	£ 1,046	£ 3	0%	£ 1,046
5.20	Allowance for the supply and installation of Light Type C - in accordance with the luminaire schedule	23	nr	£ 128	£ 2,933	£ 8	1%	£ 2,933
5.21	Allowance for the supply and installation of Light Type D - in accordance with the luminaire schedule	1	nr	£ 85	£ 85	£ 0	0%	£ 85
5.22	Allowance for the supply and installation of Light Type E - in accordance with the luminaire schedule	3	nr	£ 102	£ 306	£ 1	0%	£ 306
5.23	Allowance for the supply and installation of Light Type F - in accordance with the luminaire schedule	2	nr	£ 255	£ 510	£ 1	0%	£ 510
5.24	Allowance for the supply and installation of Light Type G - in accordance with the luminaire schedule	2	nr	£ 544	£ 1,088	£ 3	0%	£ 1,088
5.25	Allowance for the supply and installation of Light Type I - in accordance with the luminaire schedule	2	nr	£ 68	£ 136	£ 0	0%	£ 136
5.26	Adjustments to existing fire alarm and smoke detection systems - Provisional	1	PS	£ 4,500	£ 4,500	£ 12	1%	£ 4,500
5.27	Access control, intruder alarm - Provisional (CCTV excluded)	1	PS	£ 3,500	£ 3,500	£ 9	1%	£ 3,500
5.28	Allowance for refuge alarm to new AWC UG05	1	item	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 3	0%	£ 1,000
5.29	Allowance for induction loop to reception	1	item	£ 850	£ 850	£ 2	0%	£ 850
5.30	Allowance for data connection to new office area	1	item	£ 6,000	£ 6,000	£ 15	1%	£ 6,000
5.31	Testing, servicing & commissioning @ 7.5%	1	item	£ 6,924	£ 6,924	£ 18	2%	£ 6,924
5.32	Builder's work in connection with services @ 5%	1	item	£ 4,616	£ 4,616	£ 12	1%	£ 4,616
				£	£ 103,856	£ 266	25%	£ 103,856
6	Prefabricated Units							
6.1	<u>Not used</u>							

		£		-		0%		£	
7	Works to Existing Buildings								
7.1	Provisional sum - for pile support to exposed existing pile cap as per SE requirements	1 PS	£ 700	£ 700	£ 2	0%	£ 700		
7.2	Provisional sum - new structural deck for water tank	1 PS	£ 350	£ 350	£ 1	0%	£ 350		
8	External Works								
8.01	Supply and install a new ramped path from D/UG12 to the existing lane at the south of the building, including works detailed in 15.01 of the SoW.	16 m ²	£ 850	£ 13,354	£ 34	3%	£ 13,354		
8.02	Enlarge the existing pathway between the carpark and Locking Hill to be 1200mm wide.	1 item	£ 4,000	£ 4,000	£ 10	1%	£ 4,000		
8.03	Install a new paved slope creating a ramped threshold to ED/LG14	1 item	£ 1,500	£ 1,500	£ 4	0%	£ 1,500		
8.04	Adapt the levels at D/UG01, creating a level threshold - re-use existing paving where possible	1 PS	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 3	0%	£ 1,000		
8.05	Allowance to sand down and re-paint the soffit of external canopy to entrance way	20 m ²	£ 45	£ 890	£ 2	0%	£ 890		
8.06	Supply and install flooding protection to LGF external doors	2 nr	£ 1,000	£ 2,000	£ 5	0%	£ 2,000		
8.07	Make good all external landscaping upon completion of works	1 PS	£ 500	£ 500	£ 1	0%	£ 500		
			£	£ 23,243	£ 59	6%	£ 23,243		
9	Main Contractor's Preliminaries								
9.01	Main contractors cost items	19% @	£ 284,068	£ 53,973	£ 138	13%	£ 53,973		
9.02	Allowance for internal access scaffolding / working platforms	1 item	£ 500	£ 500	£ 1	0%	£ 500		
9.03	Contractor to complete the CDP across all mechanical and electrical elements of the works	1 item	£ 5,193	£ 5,193	£ 13	1%	£ 5,193		
			£	£ 59,666	£ 153	15%	£ 59,666		
10	Main Contractor's Overheads and Profit								
10.01	Overheads	7.5% @	£ 343,734	£ 25,780	£ 66	6%	£ 25,780		
10.02	Profits	5% @	£ 369,514	£ 18,476	£ 47	4%	£ 18,476		
			£	£ 44,256	£ 113	11%	£ 44,256		
	Sub total			£ 389,040					
11	Project / Design Team Fees								
	<i>Not used</i>			£ -	£ -	0%	£ -		
12	Other Costs								
	<i>Not used</i>			£ -	£ -	0%	£ -		
13	Contingency								
	<i>Not used</i>			£ -	£ -	0%	£ -		
14	Inflation								
14.01	Construction inflation - Start to Mid-point - 2Q25- 3Q25	405 Excl	£ 408	£ 2,882	£ 7	1%	£ 2,882		
14.02	Location factor uplift - 105	100 Excl	£ 105	£ 19,452	£ 50	5%	£ 19,452		
			£	£ 22,334	£ 57	5%	£ 22,334		
	Total Excluding VAT			£ 411,374					
15	VAT								
15.1-3	<i>vat on construction taken above</i>	<i>Incl</i>	20% £	£ 77,808					
15.4	<i>vat on fees</i>	<i>Incl</i>	20% £	-					
15.5	<i>vat on other</i>	<i>Incl</i>	20% £	-					
15.6	<i>vat on risk</i>	<i>Incl</i>	20% £	-					
15.7	<i>vat on inflation</i>	<i>Incl</i>	20% £	£ 4,467					
			£	£ 82,275					
	Total Including VAT			£ 493,649					

ADJUSTMENTS TO LOCKING HILL DRAFT BUDGET

Locking Hill - relocation and refurbishment	Centre	Code	Draft budget 2025-26	Updated budget
Relocation works	111	4301	£346,798	£411,374
Relocation fees	111	4302	£30,000	£22,500
TOTAL			£376,798	£433,874

Savings - GS team to do so of the landscaping (Note 1)			0	-£6,773
		revised total		£427,102

Heating options

Carry on with existing boiler until 2026

Install new gas boiler - estimate GP973

Replace gas boiler with Air Source Heat Pump - estimate GP973A (Note 2)

Additional cost	Updated budget	Difference compared to draft
£0	£427,102	£50,304
£16,228	£443,329	£66,531
£50,836	£477,938	£101,140

Potential source of funding to cover difference

Projected underspend 2024-25 £32,611

Additional use of earmarked reserves:

- Opportunity Fund £30,000

- Carbon reduction projects £13,361

Use of General Reserve - (Note 3) £25,168

TOTAL £101,140

Notes

1 - remove items 8.02, 8.03 and 8.07

2 - there may be some duplication of costs relating to radiators, which may lead to a small saving

3 -The general reserve stands at £475,844, which at approximately 75% or 9 months of annual revenue expenditure is comfortably within recommended levels.

A £10,730 reduction would still leave a healthy balance.

Attn. Ben Challis
Stroud Town Council
Thanet House
58 London Road
Stroud
GL5 2AD

Extended Studio
Lower Street Atelier
19a Lower Street
Stroud
GL5 2HT

Our ref: 1127 – RIBA Stage 5 and 6 Contract Administration

09.01.2025

Re: Contract Administration services for yard structure and Phase 2 refurbishment works

Dear Ben,

As previously discussed please find below our scope and fee for providing Contract Administration services to Stroud Town Council for their works to Locking Hill.

Background:

- Extended Studio have been engaged by the Council to prepare designs for the refurbishment of Locking Hill into the new council offices. Most recently they completed the RIBA Stage 4 which potential Contractors will be tendering for, and which will for the contract information for the project.
- Extended Studio are architects with extensive experience of acting as Contract Administrator for traditional building contracts, and are familiar with the processes, clauses and stages of the JCT suite of contracts, which are being used for this building contract.
- Director Tom Sykes will remain the point of contact for this contract throughout, providing continuity from the previous stages.
- The current cost plan is based a construction programme of 5 months, and is currently programmed to begin in late Spring / early Summer.
- STC have requested Extended Studio provide a fee for continuing on this project as Contract Administrator and providing these services over RIBA Stages 5 (Manufacturing and Construction) and 6 (Handover)
- There are two separate contracts to be administered – the first for the yard structure, the second for the 'Phase 2' refurbishment works of Locking Hill.

Scope of services:

The services are to be provided on a time basis, and may include the following:

- **Preparation of contract documents** – following approval of preferred supplier by the Council, prepare JCT Minor Works contract for signing by both parties
- **Site visits** (fortnightly, or as required) – to review progress and quality of works, including site photo record and site visit reports
- **Monthly Progress Meeting chairing** (monthly) – to monitor variations, progress of the works, assess valuations, report on any design updates and answer design queries, including preparation of minutes
- **Issue of Architect's Instructions** – summarising any variations and their contractual implications (in terms of cost and time)
- **Assessing valuations and certificates** – assessing Contractor's applications for interim payments against completed works (based on the Schedule of Works) and issuing Certificates
- **Assessing claims from the Contractor** – for example, Extensions of Time
- **Issuing contract certificates and schedules** – for example, Certificates of Practical Completion, start of Rectification Period or Schedules of Defective Works

- **Reviewing and responding to site queries** – to assess site queries & Requests for Information and respond with clarifications (e.g. additional sketches / drawing updates / SoW updates) within 5 working days
- **Additional design information and clarifications** – providing Construction stage drawings clarifying elements of the tender information, this can include design sessions and workshops with stakeholders (for example, development of washer plate designs for structural columns with community groups, or graphic design of council table map of Stroud)
- **Assessing Contractor Design Portions** – review of proposals against performance requirements in SoW and drawings, and to assess in terms of their coordination with other elements of construction
- **Assessment of manufacturing / shop drawings** (including comment and ‘A, B, C’ status) – review of proposals as above, marked up with comments
- **Assessing contractor’s proposals for changes to design** – review of proposals against performance requirements in SoW and drawings, and to assess in terms of their coordination with other elements of construction implications on programme
- **Co-ordination with other consultants** – where additional coordination is required (e.g. with M&E systems or with Building Control) to supply clarifying drawings / notes and ensure that other consultant input is coordinated with the overall design and construction works
- **Visits to off-site fabrication to review quality of off-site components** – visiting manufacturing facilities to ensure that the quality standards required are being met, and to respond to detailed construction queries
- **Visits during commissioning** – visits by the relevant engineering discipline for commissioning
- **Stage 6 input** – Quarterly visits / inspections, final certificates and contract visits at end of Rectification Period.

Programme, time allowances and fees:

The fee will be charged at day rates (or portions thereof) on a time charge basis, with timesheets for each month issued alongside invoices.

Director	£750/day
Assistant	£450/day

Based on similar contracts and experience we anticipate spending between 4 and 6 days per month, this is reflected in the fee tables below. If additional services or time is required we will obtain approval in writing before proceeding.

The successful contractor will propose their own build programme, however for the purpose of preparing an indicative fee for Contract Administration services, the programme lengths have been assumed as below (from start on site).

1. Yard structure

A 2-month construction programme has been assumed, with a fee estimate as follows:

Activity	Upper allowance (/month)	Lower allowance (/month)
Site visits & site meetings	2	1
Desk based work	4	3
Total days / month	6	4
Cost / month	£4,500	£3,000
Estimated total cost (2-month programme)	£9,000	£6,000

2. Phase 2 refurbishment

A 5-month construction programme has been assumed, with a fee estimate as follows:

Activity	Upper allowance (/month)	Lower allowance (/month)
Site visits & site meetings	2	1
Desk based work	4	3
Total days / month	6	4
Cost / month	£4,500	£3,000
Estimated total cost (5-month programme)	£22,500	£15,000

The total estimated maximum fee is therefore **£31,500 (ex VAT)**

Exclusions:

Our input would exclude the following:

- Engaging sub-consultants;
- Preparing and submitting information for planning;
- Party wall negotiations;
- Negotiating a price with a Contractor (in lieu of tendering);
- As built drawings;
- Co-ordinating Building Control visits (Contractor / Employer responsibility);
- Planning input.

Additional details / assumptions:

- Terms of appointment will be RIBA Standard Professional Services Agreement: Architectural Services 2020.
- Payment will be monthly
- All fees are exclusive of VAT.
- If survey works are required (e.g. CCTV / GPR / trial pits) we will prepare a scope for the works, which will then be procured directly by STC.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please let me know.

Kind regards,



Tom Sykes

Co-Founder of Extended Studio
Design Council Expert

E: tom@extendedstudio.com

T: +44 7708941989

W: www.extendedstudio.com



GLOUCESTER

PLUMBING & HEATING LTD

Locking Hill Surgery, Stroud

Notes and Exclusions

GP973 – New Boiler

- We have allowed to remove the existing, and replace with a floor standing Worcester Bosch boiler.
- We would install a new plate heat exchanger, and in the plantroom would for the pipework and fittings from the boiler to the heat exchanger. This would then connect to existing pipework, which from my visit to site, appears to be relatively new and in good condition.
- Due to the inactivity of the building over the last few years, we have allowed to test and re-commission the existing system.
- We have not allowed for any power supplies to the new boiler or any connections to the BMS, we assume this will be picked up by your chosen electrical contractors.
- We will modify and extend the existing heating distribution pipework but on the location of new and existing radiators on the drawings.
- This price is subject to a full design based on the production of an EPC report for the building being produced.
- This is a provisional price is for the heating system only at this stage, we have not allowed for any modifications to the domestic water service to serve the re-configured WCs

GP983A – Replace boiler with Air Source Heat Pump

- We have allowed to install a Mitsubishi Ecodan heat pump at the rear of the building. We have priced to run the incoming pipework above the void, reducing the costs of ducting and potential excavation work.
- We would install a new 300L hot water cylinder in the plantroom. As above, all other pipework would be retained.
- As above, we have allowed to re-commission and test the existing heating system, and we haven't allowed for any electrical supplies or BMW modification.
- Due to the difference in the flow temperature compared to a gas fired system, we have allowed to put a completely new pipework system in the building.



GLOUCESTER

PLUMBING & HEATING LTD

- With the lower flow temperature in mind, we have also priced to replace all radiators in the building, as the existing single panel items are unsuitable for use with heat pumps.

If the council were to commit to a heat pump system, which, whilst having a much higher install cost, would future proof the property going forward, we would recommend investing in the insulation of the building. Buildings from this era are notorious for having poor heat retention, and in its current state, any cost savings from not using gas would be cancelled out by the increased electrical costs. We would be happy to support you going forward and work with you to find the best solution for the council.



Unknown Unknown
Stroud Town Council
Stroud Town Council
Thanet House,58 London Road
Stroud
Gloucestershire GL5 2AD

**ESTIMATE GP973 -
LOCKING HILL - BOILER**
10 January 2025

Quantity	Details	Unit Price (£)	VAT	Net Subtotal (£)
1	Design	1,800.00	20%	1,800.00
1	Boiler and associated Plantroom Works	8,896.93	20%	8,896.93
1	Radiators	1,149.83	20%	1,149.83
1	Testing and Commissioning	1,760.00	20%	1,760.00
1	Pipework Alterations	2,621.18	20%	2,621.18
			Net Total	16,227.94
			VAT	3,245.60
			GBP Total	£19,473.54

Other Information

Company Registration Number: 08826971

Unknown Unknown
Stroud Town Council
Stroud Town Council
Thanet House,58 London Road
Stroud
Gloucestershire GL5 2AD

**ESTIMATE GP973A -
LOCKING HILL - ASHP**
10 January 2025

Quantity	Details	Unit Price (£)	VAT	Net Subtotal (£)
1	Design	3,000.00	20%	3,000.00
1	Air Source Heat Pump	28,233.46	20%	28,233.46
1	Radiators	4,639.30	20%	4,639.30
1	Testing and Commissioning	1,760.00	20%	1,760.00
1	Pipework Alterations	13,203.56	20%	13,203.56
			Net Total	50,836.32
			VAT	10,167.26
			GBP Total	£61,003.58

Other Information

Company Registration Number: 08826971

Programme Overview | January 2025

From: Ben Challis, Programme Manager

To: Full Council (20th January); All Staff

Overview

- We have now worked through more detailed project planning for the projects prioritised for delivery in 2025 – giving us a clear idea of timelines, next steps and resourcing requirements across the portfolio.
- During the first half of 2025, a substantial amount of staff time will be engaged in consultation and engagement with partners: on the shape of community spaces at Locking Hill; understanding needs and opportunities for our emerging strategy; and on the impact of local government reorganisation. Navigating the impact of local government reorganisation on local assets, services and community groups is likely to absorb a significant amount of staff resource and shape the strategic context in which we operate.
- More detailed updates on specific projects follow, and a forward look of key timelines and milestones for the 2025 calendar year is at the end of this update.

Active Projects

Strategy Refresh

- The emerging work around **devolution and local government reorganisation** will significantly change the strategic context in which we operate: presenting opportunities to bring more local control over key assets and services in town but presenting risks that others may become neglected or more difficult for us to influence as other Councils merge. This may impact the timeline for the overall strategy refresh and we will be consulting and working with Councillors on this as an early priority in the New Year.
- Following our workshop in November we are working toward a Strategy for 2026-30 built around three strategic programme objectives:
 - **Enhancing the Public Realm:** supporting Stroud as a destination for commerce and culture; protecting and improving our public and green spaces.
 - **Community Development:** enabling Stroud's network of community groups to provide critical services and influencing the way in which key services and assets are run in our town.
 - **Participation and Inclusion:** working to address socio-economic exclusion across Stroud; responding to gaps in provision; and improving accessibility and connectivity between our communities.
- In January, officers have a Stakeholder Analysis workshop to carry out a more detailed assessment of our relationship with key partners / stakeholders in these areas. This will inform outreach to develop a deeper, localised understanding of needs and opportunities; leading to wider public consultation in the Summer.

Ultimately, this should enable us to begin developing a pipeline of projects to deliver the strategy from 2026 onwards.

- I am also working on proposals for clearer guidance around programme governance and project management to ensure STC is in a good place to manage and steer the way in which we deliver this strategy. I plan to share proposals for this to Full Council in February; which will ensure these are in place to allow Councillors to shape project pipelines and oversee the portfolio for 2026 onwards later this year.

Locking Hill

- In January, the Green Spaces team will be wrapping up at Libby's Drive and relocating to Locking Hill. We also hope to begin construction of the new vehicle store which should be completed by the end of February – subject to permissions from Severn Trent.
- We are preparing to release final tenders for the renovation of the office space and Council Chamber on the Upper Ground Floor. On 8 January, six suppliers will be joining a pre-tender briefing at Locking Hill to give feedback on the plans and ensure a good competition. We expect to complete procurement by end March - with work commencing as soon as possible pending the sale of Thanet House and likely to last around six months.
- We will also be starting to work with community groups and other service providers across Stroud to co-design how the lower ground floor community spaces can best be used: ensuring we have concrete community-led plans to support fundraising for their renovation later in the year.
- We continue to wrestle with Locking Hill's plumbing and heating: the old existing boiler requires repair and there are complications with maintaining the existing gravity-fed system alongside changes expected during renovation. Options for our approach to this issue will be covered in a separate paper.

Participatory Budgeting / Youth Services

- Laura and Gina are currently finalising plans with the Door and Creative Sustainability to deliver a Participatory Budgeting project which will give local young people a chance to design and deliver their own priorities for projects in town. We will deliver a series of eight workshops over a 12-week period and expect to start in February.
- We expect young people to select their preferred projects in time for the Town Meeting in May and to see them turned into reality during the second half of the year. During this time we also expect to work with those whose projects were not selected to look for alternative funding or routes to delivery.
- We are focusing on this as a pilot and lessons learning project considering how STC can build better relationships with young people in Stroud and to look at how other areas have dealt with the erosion of youth service provision by statutory authorities. We expect to return to Council with findings during the Autumn, which

will also ensure these inform the development of our pipeline and strategy for 2026 onwards.

Bus Shelters

- Helen is in the process of finalising the adoption of SDC-owned bus shelters. Once this has been completed we will carry out cleaning / repairs.
- Later in the year (once the new Project Manager has joined the team) we will begin to look more widely at other bus shelters / stops across town (as well as in neighbouring parishes where appropriate) to consider where new shelters or improvements may improve usage and connectivity to the Town Centre.

Play Equipment

- I am currently arranging for Allsorts to work with our preferred supplier to review inclusivity of the play area design for Park Gardens. Installation of the new equipment should be completed by end-March meaning all STC-owned sites have relatively recent play equipment installed.
- This gives us an opportunity to consider how best to make additional improvements to play area provision across Stroud. I will be bringing proposals to the Environment Committee in February for a review of existing play provision which can provide specific recommendations / proposals for how best to build on the existing provision. This would consider inclusion; geographic coverage; climate resilience; and our demographic offer and provide an evidence-base for fundraising in future.

Signage

- A detailed plan for the replacement / improvement of signage has been put together: including waymarking signs in town; event / billboard notices; community noticeboards and heritage signs. Having reviewed staff capacity we plan to start this project in the Spring – this will also allow the new Communications officer to ensure any future designs reflect the Town Council's brand identity.
- We will prioritise delivery of key site and Health & Safety information at STC-owned sites: beyond this, we plan to work with partners from the Chamber; History Societies; Community Hub Network and Festival Forum to ensure content and placement is appropriate – as well as coordinating with SDC for coherence.

Project / Workstream	Activity / Milestone	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Q3	Q4
Strategy Refresh	Project / Programme Governance		Proposal to Full Council			Strategic Outcomes / Risk Workshop		Budget Setting	
	2026 onwards Project Pipeline Development					Project identification; conceptualisation + prioritisation			2026 Priority Projects to detailed Planning Stage
	Partner Engagement		Stakeholder Analysis workshop	Targeted outreach / engagement with strategic partners on priority themes			Project co-design where appropriate		
	Public Consultation					Public consultation launch (Town Meeting)			
Devolution	Planning Workshop								
	Partner Engagement + Delivery	Detailed workplan TBD following Jan workshop							
Locking Hill	Phase 1: Green Spaces Team	GS Move-In	Yard Structure Completion						
	Phase 2A: Main Office + Chamber	Procurement		Award recommendation to Council	Works (pending TH sale)			Relocation	
	Phase 2B: Lower Ground Floor Community Spaces	Partner outreach / co-design + public consultation					Fundraising		
Participatory Budgeting / Youth Services	Phase 1: Workshops / Concept Development					Project Selection + Launch (Town Meeting)			
	Phase 2A: Project Delivery	Delivery of prioritised projects and ongoing support							
	Phase 2B: Youth Services Lessons + Options Appraisal								Options for youth provision and potential pipeline projects to Council
Bus Shelters	Phase 1: Shelter Adoption		SDC shelters adopted; cleaned/repaired			GCC / other shelters adopted; cleaned/repaired			
	Phase 2: New Shelter Installation				Research into siting / usage		Procurement	Delivery	
	Phase 3: Amenity / Appearance Improvements				User / best-practice research	Findings incorporated into new shelter design	Iterative programme of improvements for existing shelters developed		
Play Equipment	Park Gardens	AllSorts accessibility consultation	Works	Completion					
	Play Area Review		Proposals to Environment Committee	Delivery (subject to EC approval)			Options + assessment received	Fundraising phase	
Signage	Branding Review / Design Code				Led by new Comms officer				
	Partner Engagement					Consultation with partners on siting; content; maintenance etc			
	Supply / Installation						H&S critical signage installed	Procurement + installation	

Draft 2025-26 budget report

AUTHOR

CEO (Town Clerk & RFO)

CONSULTEES

The Personnel, Environment, Community Consultations and Highways committees, and Regeneration Working Group reviewed their draft budgets at their most recent meetings.

Finance and Policy Committee reviewed the whole budget at their meeting on 2nd December 2024.

The Programme Manager has been working with the architect and cost consultation on costings for Locking Hill.

FOR MEETING

Council 20th January 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Approve budget and precept requirement, as detailed in separate reports and tables.

Increase cemetery fees by 10% from 1st April 2025.

REPORT

To be read in conjunction with Budget tables attached.

2024–2025 Budget overrun

Budget pages (**Appendix 1**) show the budget for this year, expenditure and income to the end of September and projections for the year end.

The predicted overrun for the end of the financial year 31/3/2025, is an underspend of £32,611, which it is recommended should be added to the Locking Hill Budget – see separate report.

The 2024-25 pay award has now been confirmed. For all grades up to SCP 43 the agreed amount is £1,290 per annum. Grades from SCP 44 to 62 are increased by 2.5%. The Foundation Living Wage has increased from £12.00 per hour to £12.60.

The 2024-25 budget assumed an estimated pay award for 2024-25 of 4% across the board, which is marginally lower than the confirmed increases.

Changes to National Insurance announced in the budget increase the overall salaries bill by approx. £16,000.

2025–2026 Budget

See Appendices:

1. Budget tables
2. Summary of projects
3. Detailed projects
4. Summary of reserves movements

Expenditure

Salaries (office and green spaces team)

The Personnel Committee reviewed the whole staff budget at their meetings on 21st October 2024 and again on 19th November 2024 following the government changes to National Insurance.

The draft budget is based on the staff that are already in place or due to start before the end of March 2025, plus the addition of the new Project Manager and Communications Officer posts from 1st April 2025 previously approved following the Staff Review. Recruitment for these new posts has commenced.

The Personnel Committee have also approved in principle the creation of a new post working 10 hours per week focusing on street cleaning – total cost estimated at £8,665. This has been added to the Environment Committee staff budget as it is assumed that the new post would join the Green Space team.

The staff budget is based on an estimated pay award for 2025-26 the same as 2024-25. It is unlikely that the new pay deal will be confirmed before the budget needs to be finalised.

The Personnel Committee have also approved a scale point increase for one member of staff, reflecting progression in their skills and capabilities.

Training

Staff training budgets are recommended of: Green Spaces £3,000, Office £10,000 and Conferences £1,500.

A separate budget of £1,000 is included for Councillors' training.

Pensions

An actuarial valuation of the Gloucestershire LGPS (Local Government Pension Scheme) pension scheme was carried out in 2022. The Council's Employers' contribution rate has been confirmed at 21.1% until 31/3/2026.

At the last valuation the scheme was 107% funded (meaning that projected assets were more than projected liabilities) and it appears unlikely that contributions will increase in 2026¹.

Central Services

No changes of note.

Civic

Election costs for elections in May 2024 have not yet been invoiced. An estimate of £4,000 has been assumed, which will be part funded from the Elections EMR.

Projects – see Appendices 2, 3 and 4

Thanet House

The budget assumes that the office will be sold and vacated by the end of March 2025. This is looking increasingly unlikely, but the main impact of this will be a longer time frame for phase 2 works at Locking Hill.

Lansdown Hall

Most of the planned works have now been completed, with the final new windows due to be installed soon. It is anticipated that £17,101 will remain in the EMR at the end of the year. A 2025-26 budget for this amount is recommended to enable recommendations from a SWEA Energy Efficiency Report produced in September 2023 to be progressed.

Subscription Rooms

The SLA for the Subscription Rooms was renewed until 31/3/2025 and is due to be reviewed by the Community Committee.

The Finance and Policy committee has a budget of £5,000 to cover project management costs of any building works.

The Community Committee has a budget of £10,000 to cover fundraising and volunteer co-ordination, falls to the Community Committee.

The budget assumes renewal at the same amount, but this has yet to be discussed.

Locking Hill

Council signed off a contract for Phase One works at the meeting on 9th December 2025. The 2025-26 budget covers cost estimates for Phase Two. Please note that there are two cost centres for Locking Hill:

¹ See *Stroud District Council's Medium-Term Budget Strategy, paras 3.8 to 3.10*
<https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s13411/Budget%20Strategy%20and%20Draft%20M TFP.pdf> .

111 – Refurbishment

The draft 2025-26 budget assumes that Phase 1 of the refurbishment works, will be completed by the end of March 2025.

Phase 1 includes: the cost of creating outside storage for the Green Spaces team, some minor internal works in the new workshop area, setting up fire safety, security and CCTV systems, and the fees related to purchasing the property. The budget figures for 2024-25 include virements previously agreed and highlighted in pink.

Phase 2, from April 2025, will cover the main refurbishment project. The latest cost estimate for Phase 2 forms the basis for the 2025-26 budget shown in the separate report. These costings came in too late for inclusion in the main budget tables, but do not impact on the precept, because it is proposed to fund the additional costs from underspends and reserves.

112 – Ongoing Maintenance Costs and Loan Repayments.

After the Green Spaces team leave Libbys Drive they will no longer need a budget for rent and depot running costs, like utilities and security, which will be combined in this new cost centre.

Service level agreements

Budgets have been included for all of the current SLAs, but some are due for renewal on 1/4/2025, and subject to review by the Community Committee in early 2025.

Regeneration Projects

The Regeneration Committee have plans for a number of infrastructure projects in 2025-26 mostly funded by CIL and earmarked reserves. These include: Bus shelters, Real Time Passenger Information, Walking & Cycling projects, Street furniture, Signage and wayfinding and a contribution to Stroud District Council landscaping project at Wallbridge project.

The budget recommended by the Regeneration Working Group also included £20,000 for continuing the review of the NDP, but as there is currently no government funding available for this work, it is recommended that this item is deferred, so it has been removed from draft budget. Whilst the review does not have to synchronise with the Local Plan review, it seems prudent to wait for the outcome of the Examination and find out what changes the new government propose for the wider planning system before progressing further.

Environment Projects and Play equipment updates

New play equipment is due to be installed at Park Gardens early in 2025. All of the other sites have been reviewed and there are no major projects planned for 2025-26. The draft budget has therefore been adjusted accordingly.

Some other Environment Committee projects have been delayed – the draft budget makes provision for unspent project funds being added to earmarked reserves at the end of the year for use in 2025-26.

Planned works for 2025-26 include:

- More wall repairs
- More interpretation
- More accessibility improvements
- Construction of a polytunnel at the cemetery

Project funding including use of Earmarked Reserves

A detailed breakdown of expenditure and income for projects, including reserves movements is provided in **Appendices 2 and 3**.

A summary of proposed reserves movements is provided in **Appendix 4**.

General Reserve

The general reserve stands at £475,844, which at approximately 75% or 9 months of annual revenue expenditure is comfortably within recommended levels. It is proposed to use £25,168 to support the installation of Air Source Heat pumps at Locking Hill, which will still keep the General Reserve at a healthy level.

Income

Fees and charges

Cemetery fees – it is recommended that current fees are increased by 10%. Cemetery income is likely to reduce following the change of rules only permitting Stroud residents to be interred in new plots.

Grants

Our new fundraising officer has started researching future funding opportunities. There are no grant applications currently in progress, but the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund is being researched for further phases of work at Locking Hill. Youth projects could also potentially attract external funding.

Precept

The tax base has been confirmed at 4,398.18 – a modest 0.85% increase from 4,360.88 last year and slightly less than the 1.5% increase anticipated in the first draft of the budget.

The draft budget results in a precept of £1,092,546 or £ 248.41 per Band D property, an increase of 12.1% or 52p per week.

Potential budget reductions

The Finance and Policy Committee made some requests for further work as follows:

Item to be reviewed	Outcome
Explore grant funding from Stroud District Council	Discussed informally with Andrew Cummings – grant funding unlikely
Check an increase in the Environment Committee's budget for Contracted Infrastructure repairs. (<i>From £5,000 to £15,000</i>)	RFO recommendation – more path resurfacing needed next year.
Review expenditure under Subscriptions	Report circulated to F&P – no comments received.
Review expenditure under Communications with the Chair	Report forward to Chair – no comments received.
Draft news release about the draft budget in consultation with the Chair	A draft was produced but held back for further discussion.
Review total budget to bring the increase down below 10%	See Appendix 5 – Potential Savings.

Appendix 5 contains a prioritised list of potential savings that can be made to bring the budget increase down to be below 10%.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

A local council, as a 'local precepting authority', has power to issue a precept for each financial year on the principal council in which the local council is situated in accordance with the provisions of s.41, LGFA 1992.

The precept must state the local council's council tax requirement (as calculated under s. 49A) for the forthcoming financial year, and such amount is payable by the billing authority in respect of the precept for that financial year.

The council tax or budget requirement is the difference between the council's expenditure and income. Stroud District Council ask local councils to submit their precept request by the end of January.

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications covered in report.

Staffing implications – none.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The Council is legally bound by the public sector equality duty to prevent and eliminate discrimination, establish and promote equality and equal opportunities, and foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics.

CO2 IMPLICATIONS

Further research is needed on potential projects to reduce the carbon footprint of Locking Hill and will be the focus of spending in further phases of the refurbishment. Replacing the boiler and external insulation are obvious priorities for grant funding.

Many other areas of the budget have the potential to contribute to carbon reduction in the town, including:

- Carbon reduction grants
- Environment Committee community projects

HB

14/1/2025

The latest costings for Locking Hill came in too late for inclusion in the main budget tables. Please read the Locking Hill reports for the proposed budget.

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL - BUDGET 2025/26

DRAFT V2

Includes virements agreed for LKH works

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Central Services	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Staff Costs	101	4001	268,099	276,671	312,217	131,909	156,109	513,265
Conference fees	101	4006	557	1,110	1,500	1,285	1,500	1,500
Staff training	101	4008	2,426	8,649	4,120	6,200	7,500	10,000
Staff travel expenses	101	4009	715	615	1,000	376	750	500
Misc staff costs	101	4010	0	596	0	2,090	2,090	0
Payroll fees	101	4014	0	714	750	362	750	800
Waste and recycling	101	4015	309	334	400	253	500	
Health Safety Security	101	4017	3,928	8,584	5,500	2,370	3,000	6,000
Consumables	101	4019	1,297	1,167	750	487	750	750
Tel/post/communications	101	4021	4,026	6,128	2,000	3,594	5,000	5,000
Stationery/office Supplies/	101	4023	1,214	1,045	1,250	458	1,100	1,100
Subscriptions/publications	101	4024	5,670	4,729	5,500	4,130	7,000	7,000
Insurance	101	4026	4,931	592	7,500	6,254	6,254	7,500
Printing/Copying	101	4027	1,630	1,002	900	565	950	1,000
Office equipment	101	4029	3,366	1,869	1,000	855	1,000	5,000
Recruitment advertising	101	4030	211	666	0	1,509	2,500	0
Computer/phone HW/maint	101	4033	8,795	1,794	1,500	1,157	1,500	6,500
HR support	101	4034	1,350	3,144	1,350	1,501	1,501	1,500
Computer sw/licences	101	4044	0	7,392	7,000	5,432	7,000	7,500
Accountancy services	101	4055	1,219	1,254	2,300	235	2,400	2,500
Legal Expenses	101	4056	1,438	1,500	0	750	750	0
Audit fees	101	4057	2,409	2,430	1,600	420	2,950	2,950
Room hire	101	4106	820	570	600	254	600	0
Communications strategy	101	4166	250	943	1,000	216	1,000	1,000
Use of reserves	101	4998	0	0	0	0	0	0
transfer to reserves	101	4999	0	76,330		0		0
TOTALS			314,660	409,828	359,737	172,662	214,454	581,365

Civic	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Councillors' training/expenses	102	4099	753	141	1,000	325	750	1,000
Mayor's allowance	102	4111	1,961	1,768	1,500	25	1,500	1,500
Elections	102	4112	0	221	6,000	0	4,000	0
Publications, website etc.	102	4116	6,646	4,576	5,000	1,459	5,000	5,000
Civic Awards and Town Meeting	102	4117	490	249	750	870	870	900
Entertainment/hospitality	102	4126	198	619	1,000	46	1,000	1,000
Communications contract	102	4166	9,418	4,950	4,950	0	0	0
Use of reserves	102	4998	0	0	-4,000	0	0	0
transfer to reserves	102	4999		0	0	0	0	2,000
TOTALS			19,466	12,524	16,200	2,725	13,120	11,400

Thanet House	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Rates	104	4011	13,291	13,099	13,291	7,209	13,291	0
Utilities	104	4018	5,058	10,005	5,000	3,157	5,000	0
Maintenance	104	4036	11,713	2,367	1,000	3,924	4,015	0
Equipment hire	104	4041	85	0	0	0	0	0
Legal Expenses	104	4056	2,056	4,295	0	3,120	3,120	0
Consultancy	104	4059	0	3,305	2,500	275	275	0
Carbon reduction projects	104	4064	0	0	34,509	0	0	0
Use of reserves	104	4998	0	-3,772	-28,765	0	0	0
Transfer to reserves underspend	104	4999	11,625		0	0	13,396	0
Transfer EMR to LKH	104	4999					15,632	0
TOTALS			43,828	29,299	27,535	17,685	54,729	-

	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Lansdown Hall								
Health, safety and security	109	4017	200	200	250	250	250	250
Insurance	109	4026	592	1,457	2,186	2,917	2,917	3,000
Lansdown Hall - loan repayments	109	4142	19,763	19,763	19,763	9,881	19,763	19,763
Lansdown Hall fees	109	4143	15,946	4,927	6,251	193	763	5,101
Lansdown Hall works	109	4144	0	23,255	10,000	1,615	10,545	12,000
Bank Gardens lighting	109	4178	0	27,922	0	0	0	0
Use of reserves	109	4998	-15,946	-46,103	-16,251	0	-11,308	-17,101
TOTALS			20,555	31,421	22,199	14,856	22,930	23,013

	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Subscription Rooms								
Health, safety and security	110	4017	200	200	250	250	250	250
Insurance	110	4026	1,457	4,869	7,304	8,519	8,519	9,000
Legal Expenses	110	4056	3,000	1,100	0	0	0	0
SLA for project management	110	4059	1,018	2,043	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Building works	110	4165	56,422	0	0	495	495	0
Transfer from reserves	110	4998	- 50,000	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS			12,097	8,212	12,554	14,264	14,264	14,250

	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Locking Hill - relocation and refurbishment								
Health, safety and security <i>works</i>	111	4017	0	0	0	5,484	10,000	0
Office equipment - not computer	111	4029		0	4,000	0	4,000	0
Computer/phone hardware	111	4029		0	5,000	0	5,000	0
Relocation consultancy	111	4300	0	0	0	18,864	30,000	0
Relocation works	111	4301	0	0	108,326	4,892	40,000	346,798
Relocation fees	111	4302	0	0	0	2,270	5,000	30,000
Relocation legal fees	111	4303	0	0	0	6,395	10,000	0
Property purchase	111	4304	0	0	0	530,310	530,310	0
Removal costs	111	4306	0	0	0	1,235	0	
Locking Hill Bridging finance	111	4308	0	0	0	380,000	380,000	0
Locking Hill Bridging finance	105	1901				-380,000	-380,000	0
Loan proceeds	105	1900	-	-	0	-553,556	-553,556	0
Sale of Thanet House	105	1074				0	-350,000	0
Transfers from reserves	111	4998	0	0	0	0	-134,410	-376,798
Transfer to reserve underspend	111	4999	0	0		0	403,656	0
TOTALS			0	0	117,326	15,894	0	0

	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Locking Hill - operating costs								
Maintenance	112	4036	0	0	0	0	0	5,000
Loan repayments	112	4313	0	0	0	0	20,083	40,165
Rates	112	4411	0	0	0	725	5,087	7,631
Health, safety and security <i>maintenance</i>	112	4417	0	0	0	691	2,000	3,000
Utilities	112	4418	0	0	0	326	5,000	12,000
Insurance	112	4426	0	0	0	933	933	1,200
TOTALS			-	-	-	2,675	33,103	68,996

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE: TOTALS BY COST CENTRE	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Central Services	101		268,099	409,828	359,737	172,662	214,454	581,365
Civic	102		19,466	12,524	16,200	2,725	13,120	11,400
Thanet House	104		43,828	29,299	27,535	17,685	54,729	0
Lansdown Hall	109		20,555	31,421	22,199	14,856	22,930	23,013
Subscription Rooms	110		12,097	8,212	12,554	14,264	14,264	14,250
Locking Hill	111		0	0	117,326	15,894	0	0
Locking Hill - operating costs	112		0	0	0	2,675	33,103	68,996
TOTALS			364,045	491,284	555,551	240,761	352,600	699,024

Community Committee								
	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Arts and Culture								
Street art project	103	4028	0	4,052	5,000	846	846	4,154
Arts and culture grants	103	4118	5,950	6,750	11,000	1,500	11,000	8,000
Lansdown Hall and Gallery SLA	103	4125	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Arts and culture strategy	103	4127	0	0	3,000	0	3,000	0
Sub Rooms SLA	103	4221	17,680	17,680	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Use of reserves	103	4998	0	-4,240	-3,600	0	-3,600	-1,314
Transfer to reserves	103	4999	5,000	0	0	0	554	0
TOTALS			33,630	29,242	30,400	17,346	26,800	25,840

	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Community								
Staff Costs (CDO, CDSO)	107	4001	0	51,195	87,437	29,672	65,000	70,933
Small Grants Fund	107	4060	2,500	1,500	4,000	2,585	4,000	4,000
Ward specific projects	107	4063	918	1,218	3,000	576	3,000	3,000
Footpath Survey/work	107	4067	0	0	200	0	0	0
Citizens' Advice Bureau SLA	107	4080	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Youth projects	107	4081	0	0	5,000	0	5,000	10,000
Marah Trust SLA	107	4084	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Community safety/CCTV	107	4101	687	18	3,000	3,380	8,000	5,000
Allsorts SLA	107	4121	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Gardening support scheme	107	4122	1,632	2,208	1,750	1,200	1,750	1,750

Play Rangers SLA	107	4124	14,857	15,120	16,179	8,090	16,179	18,000
Homestart SLA	107	4139	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Community Support Fund	107	4146	16,546	8,482	10,000	8,700	10,000	10,000
Lilian Faithfull Care	107	4160	3,000	3,000	0	0	0	0
Emergency Community Fund	107	4171	4,102	5,428	0	0	0	0
CD fund (for use by Comm Dev Officer)	107	4172	964	616	2,000	371	2,000	2,000
Paganhill Community Group SLA	107	4229	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	3,000
Cost of living support	107	4230	0	1,520	5,000	2,258	5,000	5,000
SDC CDSO grant	105	1087	-	-20,000	0	0	-20,000	0
Transfer from reserves CDSO - SDC funding	107	4998			-3,330	0	-3,330	0
Transfer from reserves youth	107	4998	-18,729	0	-2,500		-2,500	0
Transfer to reserves	324	4999	7,500	8,518	5,000	0	5,000	5,000
TOTALS			49,977	97,823	155,736	72,832	118,099	153,683

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE: TOTALS BY COST CENTRE	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024-25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025-26
Arts and culture	103		33,630	29,242	30,400	17,346	26,800	25,840
Community	107		49,935	97,823	155,736	72,832	118,099	153,683
TOTALS COMMUNITY COMMITTEE			83,565	127,065	186,136	90,178	144,899	179,523

REGENERATION COMMITTEE

			Actual	Actual	Approved	Year to end	Projected	Draft
Town Centre/Regeneration	Centre	Code	2022-23	2023-24	budget 2024-25	Sept 2024-25	year end	budget 2025-26
Million Hours project	108	4028	0	188	0	0	0	0
Defibrillator maintenance	108	4042	796	0	1,000	0	1,000	1,000
Christmas lights	108	4115	7,640	5,611	6,000	200	6,000	7,000
Town Centre Projects/cleanliness	108	4128	4,000	282	5,000	1,545	5,000	6,000
Wallbridge project	108	4129		0	0	0	0	4,994
NDP WG projects	108	4216	1,815	215	20,000	0	0	0
NDP Review	108	4217	6,184	512	0	0	0	0
Golden Valley project	108	4223	17	17	18	13,844	13,844	0
Pollution monitoring	108	4225	809	898	1,000	320	1,000	1,000
Bus shelters	108	4228	0	0	15,000	0	15,000	22,425
Real Time Passenger Information	108	4231	0	0	10,000	0	10,000	15,000
Walking & Cycling projects	108	4232	0	4,000	10,000	0	13,844	20,000
Street furniture	108	4311	0	0	0	0	0	25,000
Signage and wayfinding	108	4312		0	0	0	13,000	12,000
Transfer from reserves	108	4998	0	-726	-64,000	0	-30,165	-91,958
Transfer to reserves	108	4999	1,740	0	0	0	14,835	0
TOTALS			23,001	10,997	4,018	15,909	63,358	22,461

CONSULTATIONS AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

			Actual	Actual	Approved	Year to end	Projected	Draft
Consultations and highways	Centre	Code	2022-23	2023-24	budget 2024-25	Sept 2024-25	year end	budget 2025-26
Legal expenses	503	4056	-	1,500	0	0	0	0
Consultancy	503	4059	-	6	0	12	25	0
Road safety	503	4136	1,643	678	3,000	0	3,000	5,000
Transfer from reserves	503	4998	-1,643	-678	0	0	0	0
TOTAL CONSULTATIONS AND HIGHWAYS			0	1,506	3,000	12	3,025	5,000

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Environment	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024- 25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025- 26
Staff costs	316	4001	128,072	127,740	139,042	65,569	130,713	167,160
Staff costs - additional	316	4001	0	0	0	0	0	8,987
Training	316	4008	2,238	4,887	2,910	258	2,910	3,000
Travel/expenses	316	4009	348	0	350	0	350	350
Misc staff costs	316	4010	350	0	0	96	0	0
Rates	316	4011	10,679	10,838	10,679	6,706	11,173	7,485
Rent	316	4013	10,000	11,500	8,625	8,625	8,625	0
Health safety security	316	4017	2,206	6,302	4,000	1,889	4,000	4,000
Utilities	316	4018	2,018	2,674	3,000	1,155	3,000	2,000
Consumables	316	4019	215	143	500	75	500	500
Tel/post/communications	316	4021	1,714	-257	1,500	0	0	0
Insurance	316	4026	1,989	2,239	4,000	2,732	2,732	3,000
Recruitment advertising	316	4030	0	0	0	249	249	0
Site materials	316	4037	4,009	3,506	2,000	744	2,000	4,000
Small tools and equipment	316	4039	1,171	1,649	1,200	819	1,200	1,200
Equipment hire	316	4041	606	363	500	0	500	500
Equipment maintenance	316	4042	1,045	392	1,750	155	1,750	2,000
Fuel and oil	316	4043	2,165	1,843	2,000	759	2,000	2,000
Vehicle lease	316	4045	0	0	330	0	0	0
Vehicle maint/MOT/tax	316	4046	3,875	4,408	4,000	455	8,000	4,500
Planting	316	4047	12,990	10,658	12,000	9,975	9,895	12,500
Legal expenses	316	4056	-	683	0	0	0	0
Contracted grass maintenance	316	4069	11,209	7,985	4,000	3,315	4,000	10,000
Contracted infrastructure repairs	316	4071	4,199	8,026	5,000	1,591	5,000	15,000
Contracted grave digging	316	4072	16,640	21,560	15,000	11,550	15,000	15,000
Contracted waste management	316	4073	7,965	7,281	11,000	7,485	11,000	11,550
Contracted play equip works	316	4074	33,358	44,275	40,000	541	22,000	18,000
Contracted tree reports and works	316	4076	1,958	7,638	5,000	2,500	5,000	5,000

Environment projects: Wall repairs	316	4078		28,442	0	0	0	5,000
Environment projects: Accessibility improvements	316	4078			20,000	0	20,000	10,000
Environment projects: Interpretation	316	4078			14,000	0	14,000	10,000
Environment projects: Plant nursery	316	4018					0	4,500
Large tools and equipment	316	4085	2,868	0	0	0	3,000	3,000
Stroud Valleys Project	316	4089	273	0	500	0	500	500
Stroud Nature Festival SLA	316	4091	0	2,000	0	0	0	0
Community engagement (Green Spaces)	316	4094	1,250	278	1,000	17	500	1,000
Carbon Reduction & Biodiversity Fund	316	4164	2,602	3,000	5,000	0	0	7,500
Loan repayments	316	4167	15,485	15,485	15,485	7,743	15,485	15,485
EMR Buyback	316	4168						0
Graffiti removal / vandalism	316	4201	7	727	500	13	500	500
Contingencies / liabilities	316	4202	750	0	4,000	0	0	4,000
Transfer from reserves	316	4998	-24,324	0	-35,000	0	-5,000	-47,500
Transfer to LKH	316	4998					30,186	0
Transfer to reserves	316	4999	30,610	10,690	5,000	0	23,000	5,000
Wayleaves	316	1002	0	-41	0	0	0	-50
Miscellaneous income	316	1095	0	-1	0	0	0	0
Cemetery income	316	1101	-36,803	-40,719	-25,000	-20,095	-30,000	-33,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE			253,737	306,194	283,871	114,921	323,768	283,667

COMMITTEE TOTALS

Committee	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024-25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025-26
Finance and Policy			364,045	491,284	555,551	240,761	352,600	699,024
Community			83,565	127,065	186,136	90,178	144,899	179,523
Regeneration			23,001	10,997	4,018	15,909	63,358	22,461
Consultations and Highways			-	1,506	3,000	12	3,025	5,000
Environment			253,737	306,194	283,871	114,921	323,768	283,667
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			724,348	937,046	1,032,576	461,781	887,649	1,189,674

INCOME

Income source	Centre	Code	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Approved budget 2024-25	Year to end Sept 2024-25	Projected year end	Draft budget 2025-26
s.106	105	1006	8,889	12,015	0	0	0	0
Community Infrastructure Levy	105	1009	33,415	2,635	1,000	3,174	5,942	6,000
Million Hours grant	105	1028	-	3,600	0	0	0	0
Sale of assets	105	1074	-	0	0	0	0	1,000
Sponsorship/donations	105	1076	1,000	5,000	0	0	0	0
Grants received	105	1077	2,918	25,418	35,509	1,400	0	11,750
SDC	105	1078	2,927	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	105	1095	22,494	4,079	4,000	1,884	0	4,000
SDC Chapel Street funding	105	1100	-	3,000	0	0	0	0
Interest	105	1190	9,235	30,579	12,000	11,424	17,000	15,000
Use of reserves	various	4998		0	13,662	0	13,662	59,378
Transfer to reserves	various	4999		- 16,479	0	0	0	0
<i>Subtotal</i>			<i>80,878</i>	<i>69,847</i>	<i>66,171</i>	<i>17,882</i>	<i>36,604</i>	<i>97,128</i>
Precept		1176	793,629	868,188	966,355	966,355	966,355	1,092,546
TOTAL INCOME			874,507	938,035	1,032,526	984,237	1,002,959	1,189,674

Precept calculation

	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
Precept requirement	793,629	868,188	966,355	1,092,546
Tax Base	4,361	4,348.85	4,360.88	4,426.29
Band D annual charge	181.97	199.64	221.60	246.83
% inc. of Band D on previous year	4.88%	9.71%	11.00%	11.4%
Cash increase on previous year - annual	8.47	17.67	21.96	25.23
Cash increase on previous year - per week	0.16	0.34	0.42	0.49

Appendix 2 PROJECTS summary 2025-26

EXPENDITURE							INCOME			
Committee	Cost centre	Cost code(s)	Project	Description	Source of income	EXPENDITURE	GRANTS	USE OF RESERVES	Sub Total Other income	balance to be met by PRECEPT
Finance and Policy	102	4999	Elections	Top up reserve for election costs	Precept	2,000	0	0	-	2,000
Finance and Policy	109	4143 4144	Lansdown Hall	Projects arising from SWEA report	Reserves	17,101	0	17,101	17,101	-
Finance and Policy	111	Various	Locking Hill	Phase 2 of refurbishment	Reserves	376,398	0	376,398	376,398	-
Community	103	4028	Street art project	Further project development	Precept	4,154	0	1,314	1,314	2,840
Community	107	4081	Youth projects	PB project and youth services	Grants	10,000	10,000	-	10,000	-
Community	107	4999	Opportunity fund	Top up EMR	Precept	5,000			-	5,000
Regeneration	408	4217	NDP-Review	Project review and consultation	Precept		0			
Regeneration	108	4228	Bus shelters (CIL)	New bus shelters	CIL Reserves and precept	22,425	0	16,714	16,714	5,711
Regeneration	108	4231	More RTPI	Contribution to roll out of RTPI	NDP Reserve	15,000	0	15,000	15,000	0
Regeneration	108	4232	Walking and cycling projects	Evidence gathering to support promotion of highways projects	NDP reserve	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0
Regeneration	108	4311	Street furniture	Adoption of and renovation of existing and installation of new street furniture	NDP reserve	25,000		25,000	25,000	0
Regeneration	108	4312	Signage and wayfinding	Improvements to signage and wayfinding in the town centre	NDP reserve and Rotary Club Grant	12,000	1,750	10,250	12,000	0
Regeneration	108	4129	Wallbridge project	Contribution to SDC landscaping project	Wallbridge reserve	4,994	0	4,994	4,994	0
Environment	316	4074	Play equipment	Play equipment projects	Play equipment EMR, Precept	20,000	0	18,000	18,000	2,000
Environment	316	4078	Environment projects	More wall repairs	Env Projects EMR	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0
Environment	316	4078	Environment projects	Accessibilty improvements	Env Projects EMR	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	0
Environment	316	4078	Environment projects	Interpretation	Env Projects EMR	10,000	0	0	-	10,000
Environment	316	4078	Environment projects	Plant nursery	Env Projects EMR	4,500	0	4,500	4,500	0
Environment	316	4999	Vehicle replacement fund	Add to EMR for vehicle replacements	Precept	5,000	0	0	-	5,000
GRAND TOTAL						568,572	11,750	524,271	536,021	32,551

APPENDIX 3 BREAKDOWN OF FUNDING FOR PROJECTS

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Election 2024

2024/25

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Election costs	102	4112	6,000	0	6,000
TOTAL			6,000	0	6,000

Income	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2023	Projected year end
Use of reserves	102	4998	4,000	0	4,000
Precept	102	1176	2,000	0	2,000
TOTAL			6,000	-	6,000

Reserve movement year end

Opening balance	5,557
Use of reserve	- 4,000
Balance carried forward	1,557

2025/26

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget
Top up election EMR	102	4999	2,000
TOTAL			2,000

Income	Centre	Code	Budget
Precept	102	1176	2,000
TOTAL			2,000

Reserve carried forward

Opening balance	1,557
Addition to reserve	2,000
Balance carried forward	3,557

Thanet House works projects

2024/25 OPTION 2 - PSDF BID NOT SUCCESSFUL

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Maintenance	104	4036	1,000	3,924	4,015
Carbon reduction projects:	104	4064	33,509	-	-
Consultancy	104	4059	Included	275	275
Transfer to reserves					13,396
TOTAL			34,509	4,199	17,686

Income	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Precept	105	1176	17,686	8,843	17,686
TOTAL	105		17,686	8,843	17,686

<u>Reserve carried forward</u>	Thanet	LKH
Opening balance	House	15,632 0
Reallocate TH EMR to LKH	- 15,632	15,632
Underspend to LKH EMR		13,396
<u>Reserve carried forward</u>	-	29,028

LANSDOWN HALL

2024/25

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Lansdown Hall fees	109	4143	6,251	193	763
Projects arising from SWEA report	109	4144	10,000	1,615	10,545
TOTAL			16,251	1,808	11,308

2025-26

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget	Funded by
Lansdown Hall fees	109	4143	5,101	EMR
Projects arising from SWEA report	109	4144	12,000	EMR
TOTAL			17,101	

LOCKING HILL

Locking Hill

2024/25

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Legal fees	111	4303	0	6,395	10,000
Property purchase	111	4304	0	530,310	530,310
Refurbishment project phase 1	111	various	117,326	32,745	94,000
Transfer to LKH EMR					269,246
TOTALS			117,326	569,450	903,556

2025-26

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Draft budget 2025-26
Refurbishment project phase 2	111	various	376,798
TOTALS			376,798

Income	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Use of reserves	105	4998	16,251	1,808	11,308
TOTAL			16,251	1,808	11,308

Reserve carried forward

Opening balance	28,409
Use of reserve	- 11,308
Balance carried forward	17,101

Income	Centre	Code	Budget
Use of reserves	105	4998	17,101
TOTAL	105		17,101

Reserve carried forward

0

Income	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Public works loan	105	1900	0	553,556	553,556
Property sale	105	1074	0	0	350,000
TOTAL			0	553,556	903,556

New EMR set up at year end

Underspend at year end	269,246
Transfers in	154,841
Opening balance	424,087

Income	Centre	Code	Budget
Use of reserves	105	4998	376,798
Precept	105	1176	-
TOTAL	105		376,798

Opening balance	424,087
Use of reserve	- 376,798
Balance carried forward	47,289

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Play equipment updates
2024/25

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Play equipment updates at Park Gardens	316	4074	20,000	0	20,000
Play equipment updates at other sites	316	4074	20,000	0	2,000
Transfer to EMR	316	4999	0	0	18,000
TOTAL		TOTAL	40,000	0	40,000

Income	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Precept	105	1176	40,000	20,000	40,000
TOTAL			40,000	20,000	40,000

	<u>Play equipment</u>
Reserves carried forward	-
Opening balance	-
Use of/addition to reserve	18,000
Balance carried forward	18,000

2025/26

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget	Funded by
Play equipment updates	316	4074	18,000	EMR
TOTAL		TOTAL	18,000	

Income	Centre	Code	Budget
Use of reserve	105	4998	18,000
TOTAL			18,000

Environment projects
2024/25

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
More wall repairs	316	4078	-	0	-
Accessibility improvements	316	4078	20,000	0	20,000
Interpretation - (phase one carried forward)	316	4078	14,000	0	14,000
Add to EMR for vehicle replacements	316	4999	5,000	0	5,000
Transfer to LKH	316	4999	-		30,186
TOTAL			39,000	0	69,186

Income	Centre	Code	Budget	Year to end Sept 2024	Projected year end
Use of reserve	105	4998	35,000	-	35,186
Precept	105	1077	34,000	17,000	34,000
TOTAL			69,000	17,000	69,186

	<u>Vehicle replacement</u>
<u>Reserve carried forward</u>	<u>Env Projects fund</u>
Opening balance	64,686 5,000
use of/transfer to reserve	- 35,186 5,000
Reserves carried forward	29,500 10,000

2025/26

Expenditure	Centre	Code	Budget	Funded by
More wall repairs	316	4078	5,000	Env Projects EMR
Accessibility improvements	316	4078	10,000	Env Projects EMR
Interpretation - phase two	316	4078	10,000	Env Projects EMR
Plant nursery	316	4078	4,500	Env Projects EMR
Add to EMR for vehicle replacements	316	4999	5,000	precept
TOTAL			34,500	

Income	Centre	Code	Budget
Use of reserve: Env Projects	105	4998	29,500
Precept	105	1077	5,000
TOTAL			34,500

	<u>Vehicle replacement</u>
<u>Reserve carried forward</u>	<u>Env Projects fund</u>
Opening balance	29,500 10,000
use of reserve	- 29,500 5,000
Reserves carried forward	- 15,000

Appendix 4 Proposed Earmarked Reserve Movements 2024-2026

Stroud Town Council

Committee	Code	Account	Opening Balance	Anticipated change 2024-25	Transfers to LKH	Carried forward 1/4/2025	Anticipated change 2025-26	Carried forward 1/4/2025
C&H	350	EMR Planning Contingency Fund	9,000			9,000		9,000
C&H	355	EMR Road Safety	2,179			2,179		2,179
COMMUNITY	324	OPPORTUNITY FUND	20,000	5,000		25,000	5,000	30,000
COMMUNITY	386	EMR PCG Youth Project	2,500	-2,500		0		0
COMMUNITY	387	EMR Street Art Project	760	554		1,314	-1,314	0
COMMUNITY	391	EMR GRANTS FUNDED	3,518		-3,518	0		0
ENVIRONMENT	321	EQUIPMENT RENEWAL FUND	3,005		-3,005	0		0
ENVIRONMENT	325	CEMETERY FUND	14,000		-14,000	0		0
ENVIRONMENT	343	EMR CHAPEL WORKS	8,691		-8,691	0		0
ENVIRONMENT	382	EMR Carbon reduction projects	13,361			13,361		13,361
ENVIRONMENT	383	EMR Play equipment replacement	0	18,000		18,000	-18,000	0
ENVIRONMENT	384	EMR Environment projects fund	64,686	-5,000	-30,186	29,500	-29,500	0
ENVIRONMENT	388	EMR Vehicle replacement fund	5,000	5,000		10,000	5,000	15,000
F&P	334	EMR ELECTIONS	5,557	-4,000		1,557	2,000	3,557
F&P	339	EMR LANSDOWN HALL	28,409	-11,308		17,101	-17,101	0
F&P	342	EMR THANET HOUSE MNTNCE	15,632	0	-15,632	0		0
F&P	389	EMR REVENUE SUPPORT	73,000	-13,622	-59,378	0		0
PERSONNEL	390	EMR SDC FUNDED CDSO POST	3,330	-3,330		0		0
REGENERATION	315	EMR CIL 2022-23	33,415	-25,000		8,415	-8,415	0
REGENERATION	316	EMR CIL 2023-24	2,635	0		2,635	-2,635	0
REGENERATION	328	EMR WALLBRIDGE PROJECT	4,994	0		4,994	-4,994	0
REGENERATION	332	EMR XMAS LIGHTS	2,903	0		2,903	0	2,903
REGENERATION	338	EMR CANAL FUND	11,466	0		11,466	0	11,466
REGENERATION	349	EMR Town Centre	9,000	0		9,000	0	9,000
REGENERATION	351	EMR NDP Projects	82,079	-10,000		72,079	-71,079	1,000
REGENERATION	352	EMR Defibrillator	2,295	0		2,295	0	2,295
REGENERATION	392	EMR GOLDEN VALLEY	13,844	-13,844		0	0	0
REGENERATION	NEW	EMR CIL 2024-25	0	4,835		4,835	-4,835	0
F&P	NEW	EMR LOCKING HILL	0	269,246	134,410	403,656	-376,398	27,258
		TOTAL	435,259	214,031	0	649,290	-522,271	127,019

POTENTIAL BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Cost centre	Nominal	Budget area	Proposed change
101	4001	Staff costs	Assume lower (flat 2.5%) pay increase
107	4001	Staff costs	Assume lower (flat 2.5%) pay increase
316	4001	Staff costs	Assume lower (flat 2.5%) pay increase
316	4085	Large tools&equipment	Fund from EMR or contingency
101	4055	Accountancy services	Budget reviewed
101	4057	Audit	Budget reviewed
108	4115	Christmas lights	Maintain current budget level
105	1077	Grants	Increase estimate
107	various	SLAs	Review comunity SLAs (10% reduction)
103	various	SLAs	Review arts SLAs (10% reduction)

Tax base 4398.18
 Band D 2024 221.60

Current draft budget	Revised budget	Change £	Impact on Band D £	Impact on Band D %	Cumulative impact £	Cumulative impact %
513,265	510,052	3,213	£0.73	0.33%	£0.73	0.33%
70,933	69,992	940	£0.21	0.10%	£0.94	0.43%
167,160	164,049	3,110	£0.71	0.32%	£1.65	0.75%
3,000	-	3,000	£0.68	0.31%	£2.33	1.05%
2,500	200	2,300	£0.52	0.24%	£2.86	1.29%
2,950	2,700	250	£0.06	0.03%	£2.91	1.31%
7,000	6,000	1,000	£0.23	0.10%	£3.14	1.42%
11,750	21,750	10,000	£2.27	1.03%	£5.41	2.44%
33,750	30,000	3,750	£0.85	0.38%	£6.27	2.83%
15,000	1,350	13,650	£3.10	1.40%	£9.37	4.23%
TOTAL REDUCTION		41,213	£9.37	4.23%		

Draft

Draft precept increase

1,092,546 12.10%

Revised precept	Revised increase
1,089,334	11.77%
1,088,393	11.67%
1,085,283	11.35%
1,082,283	11.05%
1,079,983	10.81%
1,079,733	10.79%
1,078,733	10.68%
1,068,733	9.66%
1,064,983	9.27%
1,051,333	7.87%

DEVOLUTION 2025

Introduction

The government [White Paper on Devolution in England](#) sets out an ambition to devolve greater powers out of Westminster, but comes with requirements for local government reorganisation away from two-tiers to universal unitary authorities, plus the establishment of new Strategic/Mayoral Authorities/Combined County Authorities.

The third tier of local government, Parish and Town Councils, which represent over 10,000 communities, get very few mentions in the White Paper, but will clearly be impacted by these changes. A key point is the statement that:

“We will also rewire the relationship between town and parish councils and principal Local Authorities, strengthening expectations on engagement and community voice”.

In a [letter to Local Authority](#) leaders Jim McMahon OBE MP, Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, set out a requirement for unitary authorities to represent areas of 500,000 residents or more, which Gloucestershire meets with a population of 646,627¹.

Strategic/Mayoral/Combined County Authorities

The key question locally is: which area would a new authority serve? The Minister's letter states a timetable leading to the election of any new Mayors in 2025, which means there will be little time for discussion.

The Gloucestershire County Council Leader wishes to be in first tranche of Local Government Reorganisation. At their meeting on 9/1/2025 their Cabinet approved a proposal which included three potential configurations for an eventual strategic authority:

“While we believe that our economy and the county's economic connections are strongest to the south and may be best served by joining an expanded West of England Strategic Authority, Gloucestershire remains open to strategic alignment to the north with Worcestershire and Herefordshire and to the east with Oxfordshire and Swindon. We propose exploring three pathways to meaningful negotiations with WECA, and neighbouring authorities north and east, to identify the potential for the strongest regional cooperation and maximisation of mutual economic potential.” (GCC Leader's [draft letter to Minister.](#))

In previous discussions, District Councils have expressed different preferences between these options reflecting different local orientations and identities: raising the prospect of a heated debate about the eventual direction, or even the break-up of the county.

The map below includes the areas under consideration. The areas shaded orange are already unitary authorities.

¹ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/szofuc4l/current-population-of-gloucestershire-2021.pdf>



For the full map see: <https://geoportal.statistics.gov.uk/documents/ons:local-authority-districts-counties-and-unitary-authorities-april-2023-map-in-the-uk/explore>

Gloucestershire

In Gloucestershire the 6 second tier authorities will inevitably disappear, so based on previous devolution deals, many of their services will be transferred to a new Unitary Authority.

Gloucestershire County Council's Cabinet met on 9th January 2025 to approve a bid for Gloucestershire to become a Unitary Authority and for the 2025 elections to be postponed. The [report](#) for the meeting included a recommendation:

“To endorse the Leader’s response to the Minister of State’s letter of 16 December 2024 to give a clear commitment to delivering both reorganisation of local government and devolution for Gloucestershire.”

The Leader’s letter is attached in **Appendix 1**.

The report proposes a timetable which would see plans for a new Unitary to be in place by either April 2027 or April 2028 to be submitted to the Minister by May 2025. This is a very short timeline, but is driven by the Minister’s timetable.

Interestingly, 5 of the 7 MPs for Gloucestershire have also written to the Minister of State stating that a single unitary would be too large, so they are proposing 2 unitaries covering the west (Stroud, Forest of Dean and Gloucester) and east (Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Cotswold) see **Appendix 2**.

Stroud District

The Leader of Stroud District Council, Cllr Catherine Braun has welcomed the principle of devolution, but also expressed concern about:

“the concentration of power in the hands of a few individual mayors who could place national politics over the needs of Gloucestershire communities” ([Stroud News and Journal, 20th December 2024](#)).

The next Full meeting of Stroud District Council is not due until 13th February 2025.

Stroud Town

Many areas of the country have already been through a process of becoming unitary councils, so there is lots of experience that we can draw on. One of the immediate concerns is that instead of decision making coming closer to the community, it does in fact become further away. This is likely to make the representative role of parish and town councillors more important than ever.

Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils will be pulling together a working group with representatives from across the county to support their member councils.

Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity is the political principle that decisions should always be taken at the lowest possible level or closest to where they will have their effect, for example in a local area rather than for a whole country. Every nation operates at a different level of subsidiarity, but England is much more centralised than other comparative states, for example Switzerland or France.

The government's decision to decentralise from Westminster should in theory bring more local control over services and funding at the strategic level, for example transport networks, bus franchising, rail networks and stations, strategic planning for housing growth, and clean energy. However, there is the potential for control over middle level to shift upwards from district/city/borough to Unitary level.

Assets and Services

As the council nearest to the community Stroud Town Council will need to explore and consult on which local assets would best be retained locally and which could be better managed at County Level. Council officers have started work on mapping assets and services to inform discussions.

Fortunately, many of the town's key assets have already been transferred to the Town Council, including parks, allotments, the cemetery and the Subscription Rooms.

Demand for the Town Council's public facing and community development services are likely to grow if there is no replacement for the local contact provided both at Ebley Mill and in person, for example through the Community Wardens.

As the main town for the District, Stroud is home to many facilities that benefit a wider community, beyond the parish boundary, for example Stratford Park, the Leisure Centre and the Museum in the park. There is a question about how these will be financed and operated in future. Could they be managed locally, but funded centrally?

Stroud is currently the only town in the district with car parking charges, which could be retained in the town to fund local services. In Cornwall car parks were given to local councils because it was more cost effective for them to collect parking payments.

In some areas which have previously become Unitary, town councils have found themselves faced with a take it or lose it situation, when unitary finances have been stretched. Some examples include:

- Chippenham Town Council: www.chippenham.gov.uk
- Bridgwater Town Council: www.bbc.co.uk/news/
- Wells City Council: www.wells.gov.uk/

Office and depot space

The move to Locking Hill will provide ample space for the current staff team, but may be stretched if the staff team grows significantly. It is too early to say what if any Stroud District Council buildings will be retained.

Community Engagement

Engagement with the community will be an essential aspect of the Council's planning process for devolution. There will inevitably be concerns about the impact on local representation and the potential for increases in Council Tax bills. An important lesson from other areas that have already been through this process is that the best way to protect local services and assets is for them to be managed locally.

Contracts

Many of the services that could potentially be transferred to town and parish councils are currently contracted out. In Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire one of the biggest is the Ubico contract, which in Stroud covers the collection of waste and recycling, street cleaning, grounds maintenance and building cleaning.

Ubico is a teckal company wholly owned by 8 local authorities including Stroud District Council. A teckal company is a company that receives contracts from its controlling contracting authorities without needing to go through a competitive tender process, and which is subject to certain requirements and accountability to its public sector owners. It is reasonable to assume that household waste and recycling would become a Unitary service, but in other areas of the country services like street cleaning and grass cutting have transferred to local councils.

There will also be a wide range of contracts for building repairs and maintenance and the general costs of running a council, e.g. insurance, waste disposal and recycling, IT services etc. These will all need to be unpicked during the devolution

process. We have some experience of this from the transfer of the Subscription Rooms.

Housing

Stroud District is unique amongst the Gloucestershire councils in that it owns its own social housing stock. Housing in the other districts is managed by a range of housing associations. It will be interesting to see whether this changes as part of the devolution process.

Governance

In some urban areas of England which did not previously have local councils, part of the reorganisation process has included setting up new parish or town councils, for example [Weymouth](#) in Dorset in 2018, [Northampton Town Council](#) in 2021 (the largest so far in England) and [Harrogate and Scarborough in Yorkshire](#) from 2025.

In response to the latest announcement some traditional Borough and City Councils, for example [Maidstone](#), many of which have populations over 100,000, are also considering recreating themselves as town councils, in order maintain local control and preserve traditional mayoralities.

This may be relevant to urban areas in Gloucester and Cheltenham, but not in Stroud district, which is already fully parished.

There may, however, be a case for enlarging some councils through consolidation with their neighbours. Changes to parish boundaries would require a community governance review.

Staff

Many staff working for councils potentially abolished by this process will find employment with the new Unitary Authority or enlarged parish or town councils, but many will undoubtedly be fearful for their jobs, particularly where roles are duplicated across the current district/city/borough councils.

Councillors and officers will need to be mindful of the sensitivities around people being at risk of redundancy. TUPE arrangements will be in place for any staff whose role is transferred to a new council.

Town Council staff will also need to be consulted on any changes which affect their working arrangements. If services are transferred it may be necessary to either transfer in staff under TUPE or recruit to fill any new roles.

Pensions

Transferring staff are likely to already be in the Local Government Pension Scheme, but contribution rates may vary between councils. In 2023-24 Stroud District Council's pension costs across the General fund and Housing Revenue Account in 2023/24 was £4.1 million. At the last valuation the scheme was 107% funded

(meaning that projected assets were more than projected liabilities) so there may be potential to reduce pension costs in coming years².

Legal powers

Transfer of any assets or services to parish and town councils will in some areas be dependent on the relevant powers and duties available. Parish and town councils have very few duties, but a wide range of powers, including the General Power of Competence (GPC) under sections 1 to 8 of the Localism Act 2011. The GPC allows councils “the power to do anything that individuals generally may do” as long as they don’t break other laws. The GPC is time limited in that it depends on the number of properly elected councillors, which may change.

Stroud Town Council holds the GPC, but many smaller councils do not, either because they do not have qualified clerks or because not enough of their councillors were elected. These councils rely on Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, which enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure. This may limit their capacity to take on additional services.

Interestingly there are some local government powers, which are not extended to parish and town councils, including, for example, museums and highways.

There are however arrangements available through which a council may arrange for any of its functions to be discharged by any other local authority for example:

- Local Government Act 1972 s101(1), (5) and (6) – general functions.
- Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 s.12 to provide and maintain museums and art galleries.

The following potential co-operative arrangements are available:

- a) Joint arrangements, for example a joint committee through which the cooperating authorities are exercising a function jointly over the whole or parts of their area
- b) Consortia – also usually managed by joint committees – for example Ubico.
- c) Agency agreements – a higher-level authority empowers a lower-level authority to carry out a function on its behalf
- d) Loan of staff – the higher-level authority retains decision making powers, but borrows staff
- e) Joint teams – pooling of officers to work on specific projects
- f) Clustering - cooperative working across local councils to take on services.

Finance

All councils are funded by the precept, but local authorities also receive funding from Central government and other local income. It’s important to understand how this works in Gloucestershire and how it will change in the future. Taking an average Band D property in Stroud, their council tax bill in 2024-25 is £2,365.52. This is broken down as follows:

² [Stroud District Council Budget Strategy and Draft MTFP](#) paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9

COUNCIL	BAND D HOUSEHOLD in STROUD	TOTAL PRECEPT
Stroud Town Council	£221.60	£966,355
Stroud District Council	£236.02	£11,095,000
Police	£308.08	£14,469,605
Gloucestershire County Council	£1,599.82	£386,800,960
TOTAL	£2,365.52	£413,331,920

Excluding parish councils

£2,143.92 £412,365,565

For context, looking across the rest of the County the 2024-25 precepts for the other districts/borough and city councils were:

COUNCIL	BAND D HOUSEHOLD	TOTAL PRECEPT
Cheltenham Borough Council	£237.68	£10,404,000
Cotswold District Council	£153.93	£6,596,721
Forest of Dean District Council	£205.80	£6,415,090
Gloucester City Council	£230.16	£ 9,052,434
Stroud District Council	£236.02	£11,095,000
Tewkesbury Borough Council	£144.36	£12,463,511
	TOTAL	£56,026,756

Taken together the precepts of these councils are equivalent to about 1/8 of the County Council budget.

Given that many of the services delivered by Stroud District Council in Stroud town serve a much wider population, any decisions on asset or service transfers will need to ensure that town residents are not burdened by a disproportionate share of the cost.

Next Steps

It is recommended that a Working Group is set up to work with officers to steer the process. Draft Terms of Reference are attached in **Appendix 3**. The group should be made up of a politically balanced group of councillors who will be available for regular meetings over coming weeks. The Group will ideally include dual-hatted Councillors at District and County-level so they can support influencing/negotiation work.

Given the rapid timescale proposed by Gloucestershire County Council it's important to be prepared for discussions about issues impacting on the town, so a proposed action plan is therefore attached in **Appendix 4**.

The first task for the Working Group will be to review and refine the draft statement of principles for devolution decision making attached in **Appendix 5**.

Sources of more information are available in **Appendix 6**.

HB and BC 7/1/2025

Dear Minister McMahon,

Thank you for your letter of 16th December 2024 outlining the Government's vision for devolution and local government reorganisation, as well as the publication of the English Devolution White Paper. We welcome this opportunity to help shape a new era of streamlined, resilient, and accountable local government, and we are committed to working collaboratively to deliver the best outcomes for Gloucestershire.

Commitment to Devolution

Gloucestershire's unique position—characterised by its vibrant economy, nationally significant sectors such as cyber security and green energy, and a growing population—makes it ideally matched to meet your housing and economic growth agenda.

Gloucestershire's population is expected to grow significantly in the coming years with a projected increase of 16.6% between 2018 and 2043. Alongside this, by 2031, Gloucestershire's economy is predicted to require 182,708 new workers. To meet this demand, much-needed housing, employment land, transport and digital infrastructure must be delivered in a coordinated and sustainable way. We have a significant opportunity to deliver large scale housing and economic growth in Gloucestershire aligned with the government's missions. Our ambition is to deliver over 35,000 homes and double the size of our economy over the next twenty years.

The White Paper outlines the powers on offer through a devolution deal – these are fundamental to deliver the skills, infrastructure and housing needed at pace the release economic benefits.

Without these powers, progress against our ambition will be significantly slower, and the benefits in Gloucestershire will take longer to be delivered.

As such Gloucestershire's local authorities are committed to developing robust proposals that meet the criteria outlined in the White Paper and secure these powers as quickly as possible to capitalise on this opportunity. We had previously submitted a Devolution Level 2 Deal demonstrating our commitment to progressing at pace and relish the opportunity to take this agenda forward under a wider Strategic Authority. We are particularly interested in exploring opportunities to join the Devolution Priority Programme and to align our plans and opportunities with neighbours where economic links are strong, and the benefits of partnership can be optimised.

While we believe that our economy and the county's economic connections are strongest to the south and may be best served by joining an expanded West of England Strategic Authority, Gloucestershire remains open to strategic alignment to the north with Worcestershire and Herefordshire and to the east with Oxfordshire and Swindon. We propose exploring three pathways to meaningful negotiations with WECA, and neighbouring authorities north and east, to identify the potential for the strongest regional cooperation and maximisation of mutual economic potential.

Commitment Local Government Reorganisation

We recognise that government is keen to move two-tier government to single tier authorities and we strongly feel that making this move is a fundamental enabler to delivering on the housing and economic growth agenda articulated above. Accordingly, we are committed to creating a single unitary authority for our population of 659,000 meeting the Government's criteria of a population threshold over 500,000. We wish to progress this in tandem with developing our devolution plans under the Devolution Priority Programme to ensure Gloucestershire is best placed to deliver economic growth at pace and most effective at addressing challenges to delivery. This reorganisation will enable us to deliver sustainable, high-quality public services while maintaining strong local identities across our urban and rural communities.

We wish to be in the first tranche of Local Government Reorganisation recognising this is government's direction of travel and therefore want to minimise the period of uncertainty for our staff, residents and for all seven of the councils in Gloucestershire. By reducing the period of uncertainty, we will also reduce the risk of prolonged recruitment and retention challenges and provides the best opportunity and strongest negotiating position when joining with other councils to secure a devolution deal for the county.

We are concerned that any delay to our joining of the process will risk Gloucestershire being left behind at a time when we have significant progress to make and challenges to face to improve outcomes for residents.

Request to Postpone 2025 Local Elections

Following the points made above, we want to deliver devolution for our residents within the most ambitious timeframe and secure local government reorganisation to achieve this. To facilitate this and avoid duplicating the costs of local elections we respectfully request a postponement of the 2025 local elections to May 2026. We fully appreciate the democratic deficit agreeing this creates. However, these are unique circumstances created by the White Paper. The May election will cost around £825k and incur the additional cost of inducting a new council. This new council will be in place to effectively manage a time-bound council over a reduced term whilst a new unitary is created. A further election will then be run at a likely higher cost for a new council within 2 years. We believe this creates an even greater democratic deficit and value for money challenge.

Should our ask be agreed, we will focus our efforts on preparing and submitting detailed reorganisation proposals, whilst aligning our plans with the Devolution Priority Programme. We believe this additional time will be critical to ensuring the successful transition to new governance arrangements and the delivery of tangible benefits for our residents working with our existing cohort of committed councillors through the transitional period.

We are confident that this timeline will position Gloucestershire as a leader in delivering the Government's vision for empowered and simplified local governance while maintaining a clear focus on the needs of our communities.

Electoral Boundary Changes

You will be aware that the Gloucestershire (Electoral Changes) Order 2025 is due to introduce changes to the electoral arrangements for Gloucestershire by increasing the number of electoral divisions in Gloucestershire from 53 to 55 single-councillor divisions together with the consequential changes to several parish electoral arrangements. The Order is due to come into effect on 10 January and requires the County Council to immediately start preparing for the election of councillors in the lead up to the May 2025 elections. If you are minded to lay an order before Parliament to postpone the Gloucestershire local elections to May 2026, please will you also request Parliament to postpone the introduction of the electoral boundary changes to align with the revised May 2026 local elections. This will also require postponing the introduction of the parish electoral arrangements under Article 1 to 2027 and 2028 (under Article 4) and 2028 and 2029 (Articles 5 and 6) respectively. Furthermore, we understand the same challenge exists in Oxfordshire.

Next Steps

We will respond to your request for interim plans by March 2025 and will ensure that our proposals are developed in close collaboration with local MPs, all seven Gloucestershire local authorities, stakeholders, and sector partners.

Thank you for your leadership and support in driving this exciting programme. Gloucestershire's councils are committed to working constructively with your department to achieve reorganisation and devolution in a way that delivers lasting benefits for our residents, businesses, and communities.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Stephen Davies

Leader, Gloucestershire County Council
Chair of Leadership Gloucestershire on behalf of Gloucestershire's Local Authorities

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Yours sincerely,

Councillor Stephen Davies

Leader, Gloucestershire County Council
Chair of Leadership Gloucestershire on behalf of Gloucestershire's Local Authorities

Appendix 3 DEVOLUTION WORKING GROUP – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Objectives

- To review and refine the draft statement of principles for devolution decision making attached in **Appendix 5** and report back to Council.
- To advise the Council on all matters arising from Local Government Devolution, based on the reviewed principles in **Appendix 2**, including potential for:
 - transfers of assets
 - transfers of services
 - community governance reviews
- To consider potential resource impacts, including:
 - staff establishment
 - pensions including potential TUPE transfers
 - impact on wider budget
- To lead on community engagement and consultation
- To lead on consultation with neighbouring parishes, district and county councils, MP and any other relevant partners
- To promote open and transparent discussion with all interested parties.

Finance

The group has no delegated authority over council expenditure, but may make recommendations to the Town Clerk on spending required to support the above objectives from appropriate budgets.

Membership and meetings

Membership of the group will be: five councillors appointed by Council.¹

The Working Group will elect a chair whose role will be to oversee and chair meetings defining agenda and ensuring actions are followed up as necessary. The chair will also ensure that members' potential conflicts of interest are recognised and measures taken to address them, especially during meetings.

The Working Group will review its membership from time to time and those wishing to cease their membership of the steering group will notify the chair in writing.

Meetings of the group will be convened as required and normally held either on Zoom or at the Town Council's office during normal working hours.

Adequate notice of meetings will be provided and agendas and associated papers will normally be despatched by email within 3 clear days of the meeting

¹ Given the potential for political differences on this topic it is recommended that the make up of the Group is politically balanced, using the terms set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Regulations made under it if necessary.

Notes will be kept of meetings and made available to group members within 7 days of the meeting, then made available to the Town Council.

Where there is no specific provision in these terms of reference the law and custom of Stroud Town Council will apply.

Appendix 4 – Action Plan

Action	Due date	Officer
Tabulate District Council assets / services to be assessed	09/01/2025	PM
Draft a provisional list of criteria against which the Council should consider how to approach particular District assets or services. (Likely to be based around principle of subsidiarity; understanding of who uses/benefits; and feasibility.)	13/1/2025	CEO
Approach GAPTC to agree STC role in advocating with GCC on behalf of Parish/Town Councils in process	15/1/2025	CEO
Seek meeting with County Council Leader to identify key contact points and consider relationship holders at STC	<i>Meeting booked on 17/1/2025</i>	CEO
Set up Working Group	20/1/2025	Council
Convene a meeting with market towns in the district to seek common position and discuss interest in boundary changes at local level	31/1/2025	CEO
Convene a meeting with neighbouring Parish Council clerks to seek common position and discuss interest in boundary changes at local level	31/1/2025	CEO
Seek meeting with Simon Opher MP to advocate on behalf of Town/Parish Councils and seek support from his office for the STC position	After meeting with market towns	PM
Develop further steps based on the principles set out in Appendix 5	31/1/2025	CEO

Appendix 5: Draft Statement of Principles for Devolution Decision Making

Stroud Town Council will:

- Respect the impact of change on staff from all councils and service providers impacted by devolution
- Consider the impact of any changes on current Town Council staff and take account of any new staff capacity required
- Consult with any relevant trade unions where staff are impacted
- Assess devolution opportunities against the Council's current and emerging strategic priorities
- Ensure that local people are represented on matters relating to local services
- Consult the public on any changes to service delivery or ownership of assets
- Work constructively with local authorities to support the devolution process
- Facilitate discussions with other parish and town councils, and sector bodies (GAPTC, SLCC) about partnership opportunities
- Consider whether a community governance review will be required
- Only take on any new responsibilities after carrying out a full assessment of the costs and risks involved
- Be transparent about the cost implications of any decisions made
- Regularly report to the public on progress

Appendix 6: Additional sources of information

GAPTC, Blog: <https://gaptc.org.uk/blog/news-3/devolution-26>

Local Government Association (No date), *Devolution Deals and Combined Authorities Explained*, Online: <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/devolution/devolution-hub/devolution-explained> accessed 8/1/2025

Thomas Pope, Grant Dalton and Maelyne Coggins (2022), *Subnational government in England An international comparison*, Institute for Government online: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-12/subnational-government-in-england-international-comparison.pdf> accessed 8/1/2025

Update to Quarterly Internal Control Checklist

Recommendation

Approve changes to the checklist as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee.

Background

The JPAG Practitioners Guide sets out the proper procedures and practices to ensure the efficient operation of the Council and compliance with legislation.

The Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations also set out the controls approved by Council to achieve the above.

The independent internal auditor carries out a detailed check of procedures every year and the outcome of the auditor's findings will inform the Council's response to Assertion 2 of the AGAR Annual Governance Statement that the Council has "made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge"

This is covered in the Practitioners' Guide as follows:

- 1.15 Safe and Efficient Arrangements to Safeguard Public Money.
- Practical and resilient arrangements need to exist covering how the authority orders goods and services, incurs liabilities, manages debtors, makes payments, and handles receipts.

Authorities need to have in place safe and efficient arrangements to safeguard public money.

Amendments

The checklist has been updated as follows:

- To focus specifically on financial controls i.e. the safeguarding of public money.
- To provide a more user friendly document for the staff when preparing for the quarterly checks.
- To provide a more transparent and detailed explanation of the checks to be carried out in order to assist the checkers and to provide consistency across all checks carried out during the year.

Some checks have been removed:

- Procurement - this is covered in Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and forms part of the routine checks carried out annually by the internal auditor.
- Payroll checks – these have been amended to cover the HMRC payments and LGPS contributions rather than individual staff records for confidentiality and GDPR purposes. The internal auditor routinely checks that staff are paid in

accordance with their contracts and segregation of duties is achieved since the setting up of new staff and the processing of payroll payments are carried out by different staff.

- Check of authorisation of payments by F&P/Full Council since this is a routine agenda item and is checked by the internal auditor.
- Expenses – travel and subsistence is paid via payroll but reimbursement of staff expenditure falls within the payments process and can be included in the check of payments/invoices.

Additional checks:

- The creditors and debtors reports have been added to the checklist as a further safeguard to ensure that financial processes are being kept up to date.

INTERNAL CONTROL CHECKLIST

TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNCILLORS AT LEAST 4 TIMES A YEAR

Financial quarter under review. **QTR 1 / QTR 2 / QTR 3 / QTR 4**

Items needed for internal control check:

Bank reconciliations for the 3 months under review

Bank statements for the 3 months under review

Cashbook reports for the 3 months under review

Budget report for the 3rd month under review

VAT return for the quarter under review (hard copy)

Petty cash spreadsheets for the 3 months under review (hard copies)

Sales Ledger Outstanding Payments report as at date of check

Purchase Ledger Outstanding Balances Report as at date of check

Omega Payroll Journal reports for the 3 months under review

HMRC P32 reports and LGPS Employer Monthly Return summary pages (from the invoices files)

For all items checked please tick the sections below and initial the relevant items/balances on the cashbook reports/bank statements etc in evidence of your checks.

	✓
<p>BANK RECONCILIATIONS Check that the closing balance on each bank reconciliation matches that on the corresponding bank statement for all bank/investment accounts. (The Business Current Account and the Commercial Instant Access Account are treated as one account with a combined balance on Omega).</p>	
<p>ACCOUNTING RECORDS Check that cashbook reports balance Run Trial Balance Report under Data Check on Omega to ensure that that total of debits and credits are the same and that there is no difference recorded. Run comparison on Trial Balance against Nominal Ledger on Omega for year to date to ensure that no differences are recorded. <i>Omega/Management Reports/Data Check</i></p>	
<p>SPEND VS BUDGET Look at monthly budget report as at the end of the quarter under review. Obtain an explanation for any significant overspends (>10% or £1,000). If the explanation is not available at the time of the check the reason for the overspend will be advised to the checker by email. <i>Omega/Management Reports/Income&Expenditure Report/Date-Final day of the quarter/Month-Final month of the quarter-3, 6, 9, or 12</i></p>	
<p>RECEIPTS Choose 2 sales invoices at random and check: The amount received matches that recorded on the cashbook report. The receipt is shown on the bank statement (For cheque/cash receipts check to paying-in book)</p> <p>Choose 2 receipts from the cashbook reports and check: The details tally with the corresponding sales invoice The receipt is shown on the bank statement (For cheque/cash receipts check to paying-in book)</p>	

<p>PAYMENTS Choose 3 paid invoices and check: They are recorded on the cashbook report The budget holder's initials (HB, KM, PB) are recorded on the invoice The budget code on the invoice matches that shown on the cashbook report or on the Purchase Day Book report. The online signatories' initials are recorded on the invoice and that these match the payment report downloaded from Lloyds. For any payments which have a purchase order in place check the details against the original PO The payment appears on the bank statement</p> <p>Choose 3 payments at random from the cashbook reports (suggest 1 from each month) and check: There is a matching invoice on file The budget holder's initials (HB, KM, PB) are recorded on the invoice The budget code on the invoice matches that shown on the cashbook report or on the Purchase Day Book report. The online signatories' initials are recorded on the invoice and that these match the payment report downloaded from Lloyds. For any payments which have a purchase order in place check the details against the original PO The payment appears on the bank statement</p>	
<p>VAT For the invoices reviewed under PAYMENTS check that the individual amounts of VAT appear on the VAT return <i>Identify amount of VAT on VAT return under date of invoice</i></p>	
<p>CREDITORS Examine the Creditors Report and obtain an explanation for any invoices unpaid for more than 30 days <i>Omega/Purchase Ledger/Ledger Reports/Outstanding Balances</i></p>	
<p>DEBTORS Examine the Debtors Report and obtain an explanation for any debts outstanding for more than 30 days <i>Omega/Sales Ledger/Ledger Reports/Unpaid Invoices</i></p>	
<p>PAYROLL Check one month to ensure that the amount for PAYE on the P32 payroll report agrees with the amount on the Omega Payroll Journal report and the amount on the bank statement. Check one month to ensure that the amount for LGPS pension contributions agrees with the corresponding Employer Monthly Return.</p>	
<p>PETTY CASH Make sure the cash in the tin tallies with cashbook spreadsheet. Check a sample of 3 vouchers to ensure that they are recorded on the spreadsheet. Check that vouchers match recorded payments.</p>	

Signature of checker.....

Date.....

Fraud Prevention and new Policy

AUTHOR

CEO/Deputy CEO

CONSULTEES

Finance and Policy 2nd December 2024

Senior Finance Administrator

Finance Assistant

FOR MEETING

Council 20th January 2025

RECOMMENDATION

To approve the adoption of a new Anti-Fraud policy

REPORT

The Finance and Policy Committee considered a draft policy at their meeting 23rd September 2024. The committee requested that the CEO check which elements Stroud District Council undertakes when candidates stand for election before they could approve the new Anti-Fraud Policy.

The following report was then presented to the Finance and Policy Committee meeting on 2nd December 2024.

Unfortunately, no candidate checks are undertaken. It was therefore recommended that the Town Council undertakes this for any candidates standing for election or co-option.

The committee requested further explanation of anti-fraud measures.

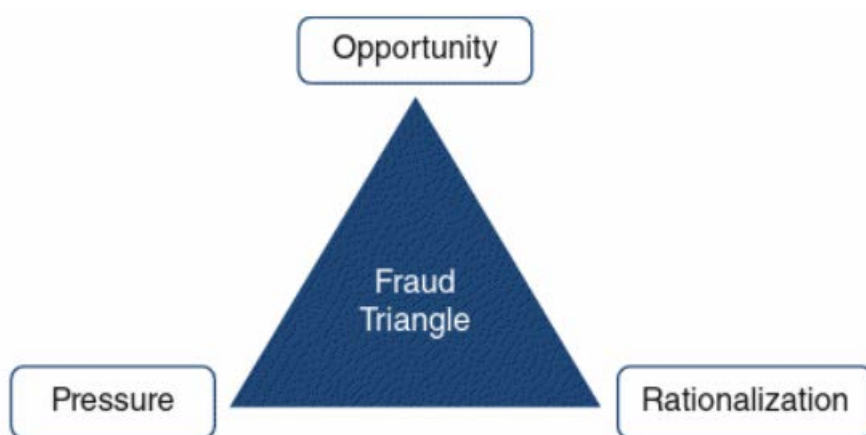


Figure 1

The Fraud Triangle shown in Figure 1, (Wells, 2018, pp. 5-6) categorises the risk of fraud into three areas: pressure, opportunity and ability to rationalise.

Pressure can be in the form of personal financial pressure from bankruptcy, gambling addiction, debt or financial crisis.

Rationalisation comes in the form of justification for actions of fraud. Thefts are often rationalised by the individual stating that they were going to put the money back. High level theft from organisations can be rationalised as there being a victimless element to the crime.

Opportunity speaks for itself, but can be minimised by robust prevention policies such as,

- Employee fraud awareness training
- Background checks on employees (where permitted by law)
- Hiring policies and procedures
- Segregation of duties
- Dual authorization on transactions
- Security measures to limit access to physical assets or company data

The attached Anti-Fraud Policy has been created to ensure that both preventative measures are robust and detective policies are in place.

As outlined previously, new elements suggested are:

- Councillor bankruptcy checks to be made upon election or co-option (to be done by Finance Admin) – to reduce risk from pressure
- Credit checks on councillors with fiscal responsibility or oversight – annually done (by Finance Admin) to reduce risk from pressure
- Fraud awareness training to be a requirement for finance staff – to reduce risk of rationalisation and opportunity
- Further segregation of duties for senior management – to reduce opportunity

The additional fraud prevention measures compliment the detection procedures already in place with the addition of the following;

- Update of supplier list - dormant suppliers removed/marked on system to reduce opportunity
- Mandatory time off enforced for finance personnel to reduce opportunity

The Anti-Fraud policy also has additional information regarding the recommended actions to be taken if fraud is detected. Although this is covered in the Personnel Handbook, the Anti-Fraud Policy details the exact action to be taken should this ever arise.

Following further debate, the Finance and Policy Committee agreed to recommend the draft policy to Council with the following amendments: removal of the requirements: for councillor credit checks; and mandatory two-week holidays for staff.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council may exercise the General Power of Competence in regard to expenditure and actions relating to this report.

The Local Government Act 1972 disqualifies individuals to stand for election if they are subject to any of the following;

- an interim bankruptcy restrictions order
- a bankruptcy restrictions order

- an interim debt relief restrictions order
- a debt relief restrictions order

(s.80(1)(b) LGA 1972)

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications

N/A

Staffing implications

N/A

CRIME AND DISORDER

The Council has a duty to consider the impact of all its functions and decisions on crime and disorder in the local area, under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This policy underpins the council's commitment to anti-fraud and public transparency in relation to the reporting of fraudulent activity.

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities or human rights issues

CO2 AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no CO2 or biodiversity issues.

HB/KM

10/1/2025

Stroud Town Council

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy

Introduction

In administering its responsibilities, the Town Council aims to prevent fraud and corruption whether it is attempted by someone who is not part of the council, or from within the council, by an employee or Member. The Council is committed to an effective Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy designed to promote high ethical standards, encourage prevention, and promote detection.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), (Town Clerk) as the “section 151 officer” has a statutory responsibility under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure the proper arrangements for the Council’s financial affairs and has developed financial codes of practice and accounting instructions.

The CEO has a statutory responsibility to advise the Council on the legality of its decisions and to ensure that the Council’s actions do not give rise to illegality or maladministration. It is therefore essential for employees to follow the Council’s policies and procedures to demonstrate that the Council is acting in an open and transparent manner.

Any suggestions of fraud, corruption or theft will be investigated, both from within the Council and from external sources. Any proven fraud will be dealt with in a consistent and proportionate manner.

Definitions

Fraud and Corruption are defined as:

Fraud

The Fraud Act 2006 defines fraud as follows:

A person is guilty of fraud if they are in breach of any of the following:

fraud by false representation; that is if a person:

- (a) dishonestly makes a false representation, and
- (b) intends, by making the representation-
 - (i) to make a gain for themselves or another, or
 - (ii) to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk of loss.

Fraud by failing to disclose information; that is if a person:

- (a) dishonestly fails to disclose to another person information which they are under a legal duty to disclose, and
- (b) intends, by failing to disclose the information-
 - (i) to make a gain for themselves or another, or
 - (ii) to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk of loss

Fraud by abuse of position; that is if a person:

- (a) occupies a position in which they are expected to safeguard, or not to act against, the financial interests of another person,
- (b) dishonestly abuses that position, and
- (c) intends, by means of the abuse of that position-
 - (i) to make a gain for themselves or another, or
 - (ii) to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk of loss.

Many of the offences referred to as fraud are covered by the Theft Acts of 1968, 1978 and the theft amendment act 1996. The term is used to describe such acts as deception, bribery, forgery, extortion, corruption, theft, conspiracy, embezzlement, misappropriation, false representation, concealment of material facts and collusion.

“Fraud” is usually used to describe depriving someone of something by deceit, which might either be misuse of funds or other resources, or more complicated crimes like false accounting or the supply of false information. In legal terms, all of these activities are the same crime – theft.

Corruption

The deliberate use of one’s position for direct or indirect personal gain. “Corruption” covers the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward, which may influence the action of any person to act inappropriately.

Theft

The physical misappropriation of cash or other tangible assets. A person is guilty of “theft” if they dishonestly appropriate property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it.

Money Laundering

Money laundering is the process by which criminals attempt to “recycle” the proceeds of their criminal activities to conceal its origins and ownership and which leaves them with money that cannot be traced back.

Bribery

The Bribery Act 2010 received Royal Assent on 8 April 2010. The Bribery Act 2010 introduces four main offences, simplified as the following:

- Bribing another person: a person is guilty of an offence if they offer, promise or give a financial or other advantage to another person.
- Offences relating to being bribed: a person is guilty of an offence if they request, agree to receive, or accepts a financial or other advantage. It does not matter whether the recipient of the bribe receives it directly or through a third party, or whether it is for the recipient’s ultimate advantage or not.

- Bribery of a foreign public official: a person who bribes a foreign public official is guilty of an offence if the person's intention is to influence the foreign public official in their capacity, duty or role as a foreign public official.
- Failure of commercial organisations to prevent bribery: organisations, which include the Town Council, must have adequate procedures in place to prevent bribery in relation to the obtaining or retaining of business.

Note: a "financial" or "other advantage" may include money, assets, gifts, or services.

Prior to entering any business arrangements, all Council officers should ensure that they have taken all reasonable steps to identify any potential areas of risk relating to bribery or corruption.

Reporting Procedure

The Council's expectation is that Members and employees at all levels will comply with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Council Policies.

The Council recognises that the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with management. It is essential that employees of the Council report any irregularities, or suspected irregularities to the CEO.

The CEO will, depending on the nature and anticipated extent of the allegations, determine how the allegations are to be investigated. The CEO will then determine the method of further investigation and will then initiate an investigation team where appropriate.

The CEO will:

- Deal promptly with the matter.
- Record all evidence received.
- Ensure that evidence is sound and adequately supported.
- Ensure security of all evidence collected.
- Contact other agencies e.g. Police.
- Notify the Council's insurers.
- Implement Council disciplinary procedures where appropriate.

The Council will also work in co-operation with the following bodies that will assist in scrutinising our systems and defences against fraud and corruption:

- Internal Audit
- External Audit
- Central Government Departments and Parliamentary Committees.
- HM Customs and Excise.
- Inland Revenue.
- Department for Work and Pensions.
- Police.

Culture

There is an expectation and requirement that all individuals and organisations associated in whatever way with the Council will act with integrity and that all employees and Members will lead by example in these matters.

Employees have an important role to play in relation to protection against fraud and corruption. They will be encouraged to report any concerns, associated with the Council's finances, resources and responsibilities and these will be thoroughly investigated. Any concern thus raised in confidence will be treated in confidence as far as possible, but relevant information may be passed on to those who need to know.

The CEO is expected to deal promptly under the necessary procedures with those who are suspected of defrauding the Council or who may be corrupt.

There is, of course, a need to ensure that any investigation process is not misused and, therefore raising unfounded malicious allegations by an Officer/Member may amount to misconduct. Similar allegations raised by other parties may result in legal action.

Prevention

The Council recognises that a key measure against fraud and corruption is prevention. The first step in prevention is to take effective measures at the recruitment stage to establish propriety and integrity as far as reasonably practicable. In this regard temporary and contract employees should be treated in the same manner as permanent employees.

Employees must be appointed in accordance with the Council's recruitment and selection procedures. Also, written references should be obtained and should include information regarding honesty and integrity of potential employees. Employment will be conditional upon the receipt of two satisfactory references.

Employees are required to follow the Council policies and procedures as well as any relevant professional standards. In addition, employees must also abide by the law.

Staff must ensure that data protection is not breached and must refer to Town Council's information and data protection policy in compliance with Data Protection Act 2018.

The Council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system for internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. This is set out in the Council's Risk Register. The Council has developed systems and procedures, which incorporate efficient and effective internal controls, and which include adequate separation of duties.

Members of the Council are required to follow the Member's Code of Conduct including the appropriate declaration and registration of interests, the compliance with which will be subject to review by the CEO.

Members will be checked via the Individual Insolvency Register and Disqualified Directors Register when first elected and co-opted, however it is still the responsibility of individual councillors to notify the CEO should they be subject to a bankruptcy order.

Staff with any fiscal responsibility or oversight will be subject to annual credit checks.

All staff and councillors with fiscal oversight (to include members of the Finance and Policy Committee) will be required to undertake Fraud awareness training.

Money Laundering and E-Mail Scams

All employees should be aware of the increasing possibility of receiving requests that could be used for money laundering and illicit requests for money through e-mails.

Any Service that receives money from any external person or body is potentially vulnerable to a money laundering operation. The need for vigilance is vital and if there is any suspicion concerning the appropriateness of the transaction then advice must be sought.

E-mail scams can take the form of either requests for personal financial information such as bank account details or a suggestion of the depositing of funds for money laundering purposes. Employees are advised to forward the email to the CEO and to then immediately delete the email without responding or copying the email to any other person.

The CEO will decide what further action, if any, needs to be taken, including possible referral to the police.

Detection and Investigation

Internal controls have been established for financial and other systems within the Council. They are designed to discourage fraud and provide indicators of any fraudulent activity. We also rely on employees, members, and the public to be alert and to report suspicion of fraud and corruption.

Frauds are often discovered by a “tip-off” but nevertheless it is essential that officers and other employees have clear monitoring and supervision arrangements in place, particularly in relation to high-risk areas.

Employees are required to report every suspected irregularity to their line manager and/or the CEO. Reporting is essential to the Anti-Fraud Policy and:

- a) Ensures the consistent treatment of information prior to or during an investigation.
- b) Facilitates proper investigation; and
- c) Ensures the proper implementation of a fraud response investigation plan.

The CEO will be expected to act in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedures where the outcome of the investigation indicates improper behaviour.

The Council will normally wish the police to be made aware of and to prosecute independently offenders where financial impropriety is discovered. The CEO is responsible for referring the matter to the police.

Reporting Arrangements

Where a suspected irregularity is material or could seriously affect the reputation of the Council then the Members must be informed of this by the CEO.

The type and nature of report(s) to the Council will vary according to the type of alleged fraud being investigated. These reports although confidential may need to be passed on to those who need to know e.g., police, officers or Members and may be oral or written and either interim or final. The usual procedure will be a preliminary investigation followed by a brief report which may recommend an in-depth investigation, with further interim reports as required. The final report will supersede all interim reports and is the definitive document on which the CEO will base their further action.

For major incidents of fraud/corruption the CEO will, within 6 months of the submission of the final investigation report, submit a summary report, in closed session, to Members. These reports will contain details of the area investigated, the outcome, action taken to prevent future occurrences, any losses suffered by the Council and the action taken to recover such losses. The CEO as Section 151 Officer as part of the annual report, will submit a summary of the control issues arising from completed investigations to Members from Internal Audit Service. Depending on the nature of the alleged fraud being investigated it may be necessary to have some informal briefings to both officers and Members.

Post Investigation

The Council wishes to see that following an investigation action is taken to minimise future occurrence. This may be a change in the management of specified area, IT systems, procedures in place and the retraining of employees.

Training

The Council recognises that the continuing success of its Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and its general credibility will depend largely on the effectiveness of programmed training and responsiveness of employees and Members throughout the organisation.

To facilitate this the Council supports the concept of induction and re-induction training for Members and particularly for employees involved in internal control systems to ensure that their responsibilities and duties in this respect are regularly highlighted and reinforced.

Employees, who fail to follow such training and guidance, or fail to follow proper working practices, may face disciplinary action.

Investigation of fraud and corruption may require specialist training.

Conclusion

The Council has in place a clear network of systems and procedures to assist it in the fight against fraud and corruption. It is determined that these arrangements will keep pace with any future developments in both preventative and detection techniques regarding fraudulent or corrupt activity that may affect its operation.

Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England

AUTHOR

Deputy Chief Executive

CONSULTEES

Chief Executive

FOR MEETING

Council 20th January 2025

RECOMMENDATION

To delegate a response to the consultation as outlined to officers
To encourage elected members to respond personally to the consultation

REPORT

Introduction

This report accompanies the central government's consultation on proposals to strengthen the standards and conduct regime for local authorities in England. The government is seeking views on a series of measures intended to enhance accountability, transparency, and ethical governance within local authorities. The Council has previously indicated strong support for measures that promote higher standards in public life.

Background

The consultation arises from a recognised need to improve the existing framework governing standards and conduct within local authorities. These proposals are part of a broader effort to ensure that public office holders operate with integrity and accountability, in line with the principles set out in the Nolan Principles.

Key Proposals

The government is consulting on the following key proposals:

- **Introduction of a Mandatory Minimum Code of Conduct**
A mandatory minimum code of conduct would be established for all local authorities in England, ensuring a consistent baseline for ethical behaviour across the sector.
- **Requirement for Formal Standards Committees**
Principal authorities would be required to convene formal standards committees tasked with making decisions on breaches of the code of conduct. These

committees would also be required to publish the outcomes of all formal investigations, enhancing transparency.

- **Power to Suspend Councillors or Mayors**

Local authorities, including combined authorities, would be granted the power to suspend councillors or mayors found in serious breach of their code of conduct. For the most serious and complex cases, involving police investigations, interim suspensions could also be imposed.

- **New Category of Disqualification**

A new category of disqualification would be introduced for gross misconduct. Additionally, individuals subject to suspension more than once in a five-year period would face disqualification, further deterring repeated unethical behaviour.

- **National Body to Handle Appeals**

A national body would be established to manage appeals against decisions made under the new regime, ensuring a fair and consistent approach to disciplinary actions across the country.

Alignment with the Nolan Principles

These proposals align with the Nolan Principles of Public Life, reinforcing the commitment to:

Selflessness, by ensuring decisions are made in the public interest.

Integrity and Honesty, by setting clear expectations for conduct and mechanisms to address breaches.

Accountability and Openness, through the requirement for standards committees and the publication of investigation outcomes.

Objectivity, by instituting fair and transparent processes for handling misconduct.

Leadership, by establishing a national body to uphold the integrity of the regime.

Consultation Process

The consultation process, managed by central government, is open for a specified period during which feedback from stakeholders is being sought. Responses will be reviewed and considered in finalising the proposals.

Conclusion

The proposed measures represent a significant enhancement to the standards and conduct regime for local authorities in England. They aim to foster a culture of integrity and accountability, thereby strengthening public confidence in local democracy. A full list of the consultation questions are attached in Appendix 19A with a ministerial forward in Appendix 19B

It is recommended that the response to the consultation is delegated to officers in line with the council's previous commitment to end harassment and bullying in the Local Government sector, and its dedication to the underpinning of best practice. Sanctions as outlined form an important mechanism to allow officers to

undertake necessary steps when behaviour and standards fall below required standards.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council may exercise the General Power of Competence in regard to expenditure and actions relating to this report.

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications

N/A

Staffing implications

Minimal staff time to respond to the consultation.

CRIME AND DISORDER

There are no crime and disorder issues.

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities or human rights issues.

CO2 AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no CO2 or biodiversity issues.

KM

13/01/2025

[Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

[Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space](#)

Overview

This consultation seeks views on introducing measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England and ensure consistency of approach amongst councils investigating serious breaches of their member codes of conduct, including the introduction of the power of suspension.

Who we would like to hear from

Responses are invited from local authority elected members and officers from all types and tiers of authorities, and local authority sector representative organisations. We are also particularly keen to hear from those members of the public who have point of view based on their interest in accessing local democracy in their area or standing as a candidate for local government at any tier to represent their local community at some future point.

Please be assured that all responses to this consultation are anonymous, and no information will be disclosed in any future published response to the consultation, or reporting of the consultation results, that will compromise that anonymity.

a) Mandatory minimum prescribed code of conduct

The government proposes to legislate for the introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct which would seek to ensure a higher minimum standard of consistency in setting out the behaviours expected of elected members. The Government will likely set out the mandatory code in regulations to allow flexibility to review and amend in future, this will also provide the opportunity for further consultation on the detail.

Codes of conduct play an important role in prescribing and maintaining high standards of public service, integrity, transparency, and accountability. At their best, they establish clear guidelines for behaviour and expectations that members always act ethically in the public's best interest. Currently, there is significant variation between adopted codes, ranging from those who choose to adopt the LGA's full model code to those who simply conform with the minimum requirement of restating the Nolan principles.

A prescribed model code which covers important issues such as discrimination, bullying, and harassment, social media use, public conduct when claiming to represent the council, and use of authority resources could help to uphold consistently high standards of public service in councils across the country and convey the privileged position of public office. It could also provide clarity for the public on the consistent baseline of ethical behaviour they have a right to expect.

We would be interested in understanding whether councils consider there should be flexibility to add to the prescribed code to reflect individual authorities' circumstances. They would not be able to amend the mandatory provisions.

2. Do you think the government should prescribe a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England?

Yes No

3. If yes, do you agree there should be scope for local authorities to add to a mandatory minimum code of conduct to reflect specific local challenges?

Yes – it is important that local authorities have flexibility to add to a prescribed code

No – a prescribed code should be uniform across the country

Unsure

4. Do you think the government should set out a code of conduct requirement for members to cooperate with investigations into code breaches?

Yes

No

Unsure

b) Standards Committees

Currently, there is no requirement for local authorities to constitute a formal standards committee. The only legal requirement is for local authorities to have in place “arrangements” to investigate and make decisions on allegations of misconduct.

The Government believes that all principal authorities should be required to convene a standards committee. Formal standards committees would support consistency in the handling of misconduct allegations, applying the same standards and procedures to all cases and providing a formal route to swiftly identify and address vexatious complainants. Furthermore, having a formal standards committee in place could support the development of expertise in handling allegations of misconduct, leading to more informed decision-making. Removing the scope for less formal and more ad hoc arrangements would also enhance transparency and demonstrate to the public that

standards and conduct issues will always be dealt with in a structured and consistent way.

This section of the consultation seeks views on two specific proposals to enhance the fairness and objectivity of the standards committee process. Firstly, it considers whether standards committee membership would be required to include at least one Independent Person, as well as (where applicable) at least one co-opted member from a parish or town council. Secondly, it seeks views on whether standards committees should be chaired by the Independent Person.

5. Does your local authority currently maintain a standards committee?

Yes

No

6. Should all principal authorities be required to form a standards committee?

Yes

No

7. In most principal authorities, code of conduct complaints are typically submitted in the first instance to the local authority Monitoring Officer to triage, before referring a case for full investigation. Should all alleged code of conduct breaches which are referred for investigation be heard by the relevant principal authority's standards committee?

Yes, decisions should only be heard by standards committees

No, local authorities should have discretion to allow decisions to be taken by full council

Unsure

8. Do you agree that the Independent Person and co-opted members should be given voting rights?

Yes – this is important for ensuring objectivity

No – only elected members of the council in question should have voting rights

Unsure

9. Should standards committees be chaired by the Independent Person?

Yes

No

Unsure

10. If you have further views on ensuring fairness and objectivity and reducing incidences of vexatious complaints, please use the free text box below.

Strengthening the Standards and Conduct framework

c) Publishing investigation outcomes

To enhance transparency, local authorities should, subject to data protection obligations, be required to publish a summary of code of conduct allegations, and any investigations and decisions. This will be accompanied with strong mechanisms to protect victims' identity to ensure complainants are not dissuaded from coming forward for fear of being identified.

There may be a range of views on this, as publishing the outcome of an investigation that proves there is no case to answer could still be considered damaging to the reputation of the individuals concerned, or it could be considered as helpful in exposing instances of petty and vexatious complaints.

11. Should local authorities be required to publish annually a list of allegations of code of conduct breaches, and any investigation outcomes?

Yes - the public should have full access to all allegations and investigation outcomes

No - only cases in which a member is found guilty of wrongdoing should be published

d) Requiring the completion of investigations if a member stands down

In circumstances where a member stands down during a live code of conduct investigation, councils should be required to conclude that investigation and publish the findings. The Government is proposing this measure to ensure that, whilst the member in question will no longer be in office and therefore subject to any council sanction, for the purposes of accountability and transparency there will still be full record of any code of conduct breaches during their term of office.

12. Should investigations into the conduct of members who stand down before a decision continue to their conclusion, and the findings be published?

Yes

No

Unsure

Strengthening the Standards and Conduct framework

e) Empowering individuals affected by councillor misconduct to come forward

The Government appreciates that it can often be difficult for those who experience misconduct on the part of elected members, such as bullying and harassment, to feel that it is safe and worthwhile to come forward and raise their concerns. If individuals believe there is a likelihood that their complaint will not be addressed or handled appropriately, the risk is that victims will not feel empowered to come forward, meaning misconduct continues without action. We recognise that standing up to instances of misconduct takes an emotional toll, particularly in unacceptable situations where the complaints processes are protracted and do not result in meaningful action. We are committed to ensuring that those affected by misconduct are supported in the right way and feel empowered to come forward. This section seeks feedback from local authorities with experience of overseeing council complaints procedures, or sector bodies and individuals with views on how this might be carried out most effectively. We are also keen to hear from those who work, or have worked, in local government, and who have either witnessed, or been the victim of, member misconduct.

13. If responding as a local authority, what is the average number of complaints against elected members that you receive over a 12-month period?

Number of complaints

13a. For the above, where possible, please provide a breakdown for complaints made by officers, other elected members, the public, or any other source:

Complaints made by officers

Complaints made by other elected members

Complaints made by the public

Complaints made by any other source

14. If you currently work, or have worked, within a local authority, have you ever been the victim of (or witnessed) an instance of misconduct by an elected member and felt that you could not come forward?

Yes

No

Please give reasons if you feel comfortable doing so.

15. If you are an elected member, have you ever been subject to a code of conduct complaint?

Yes

No

If so, did you feel you received appropriate support to engage with the investigation?

16. If you did come forward as a victim or witness, what support did you receive, and from whom? Is there additional support you would have liked to receive?

Add your comments

17. In your view, what measures would help to ensure that people who are victims of, or witness, serious councillor misconduct feel comfortable coming forward and raising a complaint?

Add your comments

Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

The Government believes that local authorities should have the power to suspend councillors for serious code of conduct breaches for a maximum of six months, with the option to withhold allowances and institute premises and facilities bans where deemed appropriate. This section of the consultation explores these proposed provisions in greater detail.

While the law disqualifies certain people from being, or standing for election as, a councillor (e.g. on the grounds of bankruptcy, or receipt of a custodial sentence of three months or more, or it subject to the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 - meaning on the sex offenders register) councillors cannot currently be suspended or disqualified for breaching their code of conduct.

Feedback from the local government sector in the years since the removal of the power to suspend councillors has indicated that the current lack of meaningful sanctions means local authorities have no effective way of dealing with more serious examples of member misconduct.

The most severe sanctions currently used, such as formally censuring members, removing them from committees or representative roles, and requiring them to undergo training, may prove ineffective in the cases of more serious and disruptive misconduct. This may particularly be the case when it comes to tackling repeat offenders.

The Government recognises that it is only a small minority of members who behave badly, but the misconduct of this small minority can have a disproportionately negative impact on the smooth running of councils. We also appreciate the frustration members of the public and councillors can feel both in the inability to deal decisively with cases of misconduct, and the fact that offending members can continue to draw allowances.

18. Do you think local authorities should be given the power to suspend elected members for serious code of conduct breaches?

Yes – authorities should be given the power to suspend members

No – authorities should not be given the power to suspend members

Unsure

19. Do you think that it is appropriate for a standards committee to have the power to suspend members, or should this be the role of an independent body?

Yes - the decision to suspend for serious code of conduct breaches should be for the standards committee

No - a decision to suspend should be referred to an independent body

Unsure

Add your comments

20. Where it is deemed that suspension is an appropriate response to a code of conduct breach, should local authorities be required to nominate an alternative point of contact for constituents during their absence?

Yes – councils should be required to ensure that constituents have an alternative point of contact during a councillor’s suspension

No – it should be for individual councils to determine their own arrangements for managing constituents’ representation during a period of councillor suspension

Unsure

Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

a) The length of suspension

The Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended in their 2019 Local Government Ethical Standards (CSPL) report that the maximum length of suspension, without allowances, should be six months and the Government agrees with this approach. The intent of this proposal would be that non-attendance at council meetings during a period of suspension would be disregarded for the purposes of section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, which states that a councillor ceases to be a member of the local authority if they fail to attend council meetings for six consecutive months.

The Government believes that suspension for the full six months should be reserved for only the most serious breaches of the code of conduct, and considers that there should be no minimum length of suspension to facilitate the proportionate application of this strengthened sanction.

21. If the government reintroduced the power of suspension do you think there should be a maximum length of suspension?

Yes – the government should set a maximum length of suspension of 6 months

Yes – however the government should set a different maximum length (please specify)

No – I do not think the government should set a maximum length of suspension

Unsure

If you think the government should set a different maximum length, what should this be, in months?

22. If yes, how frequently do you consider councils would be likely to make use of the maximum length of suspension?

Infrequently – likely to be applied only to the most egregious code of conduct breaches

Frequently – likely to be applied in most cases, with some exceptions for less serious breaches

Almost always – likely to be the default length of suspension for code of conduct breaches

Unsure

Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

b) Withholding allowances and premises and facilities bans

Giving councils the discretion to withhold allowances from members who have been suspended for serious code of conduct breaches in cases where they feel it is appropriate to do so could act as a further deterrent against unethical behaviour. Holding councillors financially accountable during suspensions also reflects a commitment to ethical governance, the highest standards of public service, and value for money for local residents.

Granting local authorities the power in legislation to ban suspended councillors from local authority premises and from using council equipment and facilities could be beneficial in cases of behavioural or financial misconduct, ensuring that suspended councillors do not misuse resources or continue egregious behaviour. Additionally, it would demonstrate that allegations of serious misconduct are handled appropriately, preserving trust in public service and responsible stewardship of public assets.

These measures may not always be appropriate and should not be tied to the sanction of suspension by default. The government also recognises that there may be instances in which one or both of these sanctions is appropriate but suspension is not. It is therefore proposed that both the power to withhold allowances and premises and facilities bans represent standalone sanctions in their own right.

23. Should local authorities have the power to withhold allowances from suspended councillors in cases where they deem it appropriate?

Yes – councils should have the option to withhold allowances from suspended councillors

No – suspended councillors should continue to receive allowances

Unsure

24. Do you think it should be put beyond doubt that local authorities have the power to ban suspended councillors from council premises and to withdraw the use of council facilities in cases where they deem it appropriate?

Yes – premises and facilities bans are an important tool in tackling serious conduct issues

No – suspended councillors should still be able to use council premises and facilities

Unsure

25. Do you agree that the power to withhold members' allowances and to implement premises and facilities bans should also be standalone sanctions in their own right?

Yes

No

Unsure

Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

c) Interim suspension

Some investigations into serious code of conduct breaches may be complex and take time to conclude, and there may be circumstances when the misconduct that has led to the allegation is subsequently referred to the police to investigate. In such cases, the Government proposes that there should be an additional power to impose interim suspensions whilst and until a serious or complex case under investigation is resolved. A member subject to an interim suspension would not be permitted to participate in any council business or meetings, with an option to include a premises and facilities ban.

We consider that members should continue to receive allowances whilst on interim suspension and until an investigation proves beyond doubt that a serious code of conduct breach has occurred or a criminal investigation concludes. The decision to impose an interim suspension would not represent a pre-judgement of the validity of an allegation.

We suggest that:

- Interim suspensions should initially be for up to a maximum of three months. After the expiry of an initial interim suspension period, the relevant council's standards committee should review the case to decide whether it is in the public interest to extend.
- As appropriate, the period of time spent on interim suspension may be deducted from the period of suspension a standards committee imposes.

26. Do you think the power to suspend councillors on an interim basis pending the outcome of an investigation would be an appropriate measure?

Yes, powers to suspend on an interim basis would be necessary

No, interim suspension would not be necessary

Any further comments

27. Do you agree that local authorities should have the power to impose premises and facilities bans on councillors who are suspended on an interim basis?

Yes - the option to institute premises and facilities bans whilst serious misconduct cases are investigated is important

No - members whose investigations are ongoing should retain access to council premises and facilities

Unsure

28. Do you think councils should be able to impose an interim suspension for any period of time they deem fit?

Yes

No

Any further comments

29. Do you agree that an interim suspension should initially be for up to a maximum of 3 months, and then subject to review?

Yes

No

Any further comments

30. If following a 3-month review of an interim suspension, a standards committee decided to extend, do you think there should be safeguards to ensure a period of interim extension is not allowed to run on unchecked?

Yes – there should be safeguards

No – councils will know the details of individual cases and should be trusted to act responsibly

30a. If you answered yes to above question, what safeguards do you think might be needed to ensure that unlimited suspension is not misused?

Add your comments

Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

d) Disqualification for multiple breaches and gross misconduct

When councillors repeatedly breach codes of conduct, it undermines the integrity of the council and erodes public confidence. To curb the risk of repeat offending and continued misconduct once councillors return from a suspension, the Government considers that it may be beneficial to introduce disqualification for a period of five years for those members for whom the sanction of suspension is invoked on more than one occasion within a five-year period.

This measure underlines the Government's view that the sanction of suspension should only be used in the most serious code of conduct breaches, because in effect a decision to suspend more than once in a five-year period would be a decision to disqualify an elected member. However, we consider this measure would enable councils to signal in the strongest terms that repeated instances of misconduct will not be tolerated and would act as a strong deterrent against the worst kind of behaviours becoming embedded.

Currently a person is disqualified if they have been convicted of any offence and have received a sentence of imprisonment (suspended or not) for a period of three months or more (without the option of a fine) in the five-year period before the relevant election. Disqualification also covers sexual offences, even if they do not result in a custodial or suspended sentence.

31. Do you think councillors should be disqualified if subject to suspension more than once?

Yes – twice within a 5-year period should result in disqualification for 5 years

Yes – but for a different length of time and/or within a different timeframe (please specify)

No - the power to suspend members whenever they breach codes of conduct is sufficient

If you think councillors should be disqualified if subject to suspension more than once over a period different to 5 years, what should this be, in years?

If you think the government should set a different disqualification period, what should this be, in years?

Any other comments

32. Is there a case for immediate disqualification for gross misconduct, for example in instances of theft or physical violence impacting the safety of other members and/or officers, provided there has been an investigation of the incident and the member has had a chance to respond before a decision is made?

Yes

No

Unsure

Any other comments

Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

e) Appeals

The Government proposes that:

- A right of appeal be introduced for any member subject to a decision to suspend them.
- Members should only be able to appeal any given decision to suspend them once.
- An appeal should be invoked within five working days of the notification of suspension; and
- Following receipt of a request for appeal, arrangements should be made to conduct the appeal hearing within 28 working days.

The Government believes that were the sanction of suspension to be introduced (and potentially disqualification if a decision to suspend occurs a second time within a five-

year period) it would be essential for such a punitive measure to be underpinned by a fair appeals process.

A right of appeal would allow members to challenge decisions that they believe are unjust or disproportionate and provides a safeguard to ensure that the sanction of suspension is applied fairly and consistently.

We consider that it would be appropriate to either create a national body, or to vest the appeals function in an existing appropriate national body, and views on the merits of that are sought at questions 38 and 39 below. Firstly, the following questions test opinion on the principle of providing a mechanism for appeal.

33. Should members have the right to appeal a decision to suspend them?

Yes - it is right that any member issued with a sanction of suspension can appeal the decision

No – a council’s decision following consideration of an investigation should be final

Unsure

34. Should suspended members have to make their appeal within a set timeframe?

Yes – within 5 days of the decision is appropriate to ensure an efficient process

Yes – but within a different length of time (please specify)

No – there should be no time limit for appealing a decision

If you think the government should set a different appeals timeframe, what should this be, in days?

35. Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when a decision is taken not to investigate their complaint?

Yes

No

Unsure

36. Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when an allegation of misconduct is not upheld?

Yes

No

Unsure

37. If you answered yes to either of the previous two questions, please use the free text box below to share views on what you think is the most suitable route of appeal for either or both situations.

Add your comments

Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

f) Potential for a national appeals body

There is a need to consider whether appeals panels should be in-house within local authorities, or whether it is right that this responsibility sits with an independent national body. Whereas an in-house appeals process would potentially enable quicker resolutions by virtue of a smaller caseload, empowering a national body to oversee appeals from suspended members and complainants could reinforce transparency and impartiality and help to ensure consistency of decision-making throughout England, setting precedents for the types of cases that are heard.

38. Do you think there is a need for an external national body to hear appeals?

Yes – an external appeals body would help to uphold impartiality

No – appeals cases should be heard by an internal panel

Any further comments

39. If you think there is a need for an external national appeals body, do you think it should:

Be limited to hearing elected member appeals

Be limited to hearing claimant appeals

Both of the above should be in scope

Please explain your answer

Public Sector Equality Duty

40. In your view, would the proposed reforms to the local government standards and conduct framework particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

Please tick an option below:

It would benefit individuals with protected characteristics

It would disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics

Neither

Please use the text box below to make any further comment on this question

Ministerial foreword

The government is determined to fix the foundations of local government so councils can sustainably provide decent public services and shape local places, and so elected representatives can be fully accountable to the public they serve. Doing so is critical to national renewal, our missions, and our plans to push power out of Westminster and into the hands of local people with skin in the game.

At the core of this agenda is a plan to make local government across England fit, legal, and decent – so that councils have the backing from central government to deliver the high standards and strong financial management that they strive for, without needless micromanagement of day-to-day local decision-making. This plan includes:

- fixing our broken audit system
- improving oversight and accountability
- giving councils genuine freedoms to work for, and deliver in the best interests of, their communities
- improving the standards and conduct regime

This consultation is focused on the proposed reforms to the standards and conduct regime that will contribute to making sure England is covered by effective local and strategic authorities that are well-governed, with high standards met and maintained.

It is an honour and a privilege to be elected as a member and with it comes an individual and collective responsibility to consistently demonstrate and promote the highest standards of conduct and public service.

Members take decisions affecting critical local services such as social care, education, housing, planning, licensing, and waste collection. With greater devolution, local authorities will increasingly be taking decisions to shape local transport, skills, employment support, and growth. Decisions that are the responsibility of members impact virtually every citizen's life at some level, and the electorate has a right to expect that it can trust its local elected members to uphold the highest ethical standards and act in the best interests of the communities they serve.

I strongly believe that the vast majority of local elected members maintain high standards of conduct and that they are driven by duty and service. I believe that people stand for elected office in their local communities with the best intentions to act in the interests of those communities, bringing an energy and commitment to working collaboratively, creatively, and respectfully.

Members, officers, reporters and members of public are entitled to support and participate in the local democratic process in the confidence that high standards are maintained. This government wants to celebrate the positive power of public service

and, in doing so, we want to give individual authorities appropriate and proportionate means to deal with misconduct effectively and decisively when it does occur. We also want to ensure that anyone can rightly feel confident about raising an issue under the code of conduct whether it impacts them personally and/or is a code of conduct breach that brings the reputation of the council into disrepute.

With approximately 120,000 councillors in England across all types and tiers of local government, we know there are rare instances of misconduct. Robust political debate is part of our democratic system, but we know from local councils that there are examples of bullying, harassment or other misconduct, when from even a very small minority of members can have a seriously destabilising effect, potentially bringing a council into disrepute and distracting from the critical business of delivering for residents.

This government is committed to working with local and regional government to establish partnerships built on mutual respect, genuine collaboration and meaningful engagement. Our ambition is to create a rigorous standards and conduct framework that will actively contribute to ensuring that local government throughout the country is fit, legal, and decent. With this in mind, this consultation seeks your views on a range of proposals to give local leaders the tools they need to establish and maintain a strong and ethical public service and democratic culture, and the people they serve the confidence that local democracy works for them.

Stroud Town Council Training and Development Policy

Stroud Town Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Councillors and employees to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's aims and objectives.

The Council recognises training and development are key to enhancing the organisation management, capacity and efficiency of the Council.

According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2016), training can be defined as: *'A planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy current and future needs of the organisation.'* Development describes the formal, ongoing efforts that are made within organisations to improve the performance and self-fulfilment of Members and employees through a variety of educational methods and programmes.

Stroud Town Council recognises that its most important resource is its Members and Officers and is committed to encouraging both Members and Officers to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. It recognises that some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements. The Council expects senior officers to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies.

Our commitments

We will:

- Review our organisational plan regularly to ensure that training and development needs are assessed and sufficient resources are provided to meet these needs.
- Provide information about training courses, induction programmes and development opportunities to all staff and councillors.
- Comply with Equal Opportunities and other council policies when assessing training and development needs.
- Ensure each employee receives annual appraisals, feedback and assessment of personal development needs from their manager.
- Evaluate all training activities to ensure that delivery is relevant to needs, cost effective and that the quality of training is consistent.

The Identification of Training Needs

Members

On a regular basis and following every election, members will be asked to complete a Training Needs Assessment form. The Town Clerk (CEO) will use the information gathered from this exercise to produce a training programme which addresses these needs, particularly as they reflect the priorities set out in the Council's Strategic Plan. The CEO will identify suitable external training opportunities or, where there is sufficient demand, arrange in-house training sessions.

Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements or changes to legislation

- Changes in systems
- Complaints to the Council
- Devolved services / delivery of new services

Employees

Employees will identify their development needs with advice from their line manager during their annual appraisal or regular meetings with their line manager. Special arrangements will be made to provide induction training for new members of staff.

Employees who wish to be nominated for a training course should discuss this in the first instance during their appraisal; where it will be determined whether the training is relevant to the Council's needs and/or service delivery.

Corporate Training

Corporate training is necessary to ensure that employees are aware of their legal responsibilities or corporate standards.

Financial Assistance

It is important to note that all supported training must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, be relevant to the individual's role and is subject to the availability of financial resources. Training support for employees will be assessed against the following priorities:

Priority	Training	Examples (not a complete list)
1	Training identified in risk assessments as essential for the safe performance of the role (including periodic refresher courses)	Manual handling, First aid, Fire warden Data Protection
2	Skills and qualifications described as essential in the job description and person specification	CiLCA or equivalent (Town Clerk (CEO)/Deputy) Bookkeeping Customer service Planning Health and safety management
3	Refresher training or continual professional development requirements to maintain skills and qualifications in priority 2	Attendance at relevant conferences, seminars and branch events for relevant sector bodies. Mental Health First Aid
4	Skills and qualifications described as desirable in the job description and person specification	SLCC Community Governance course (levels 4 to 6)
5	Other training which supports personal/career development	

Supported training for members will typically include:

- "Being a Better Councillor" – recommended for all new councillors

- Employment law and practice – recommended for all councillors, required for members of Personnel Committee
- Code of Conduct
- Finance/budget setting – recommended for all members of F&P Committee
- Chairmanship
- Standing Orders
- Planning

Each request will be considered on an individual basis and the benefits to the individual and the organisation will be identified. Other considerations include the following:

- Implication of employee released for training course(s) on the operational capability of the council
- The most economic and effective means of training
- Provision and availability of training budget

For approved courses Members and employees can expect the following to be sponsored:

- The course fee*
- Examination fees
- Associated membership fees
- One payment to re-take a failed examination
- Travel and accommodation costs in accordance with the Personnel Handbook

For some courses there will be a need for employees to study in their own time or take TOIL, although reasonable time off will be allowed to attend mandatory study days and exams.

Consideration will be given to purchasing study books and materials. Where these are purchased by the Council they will remain the Council's property and should be returned if the employee leaves the Council's employment either during or having completed the course,

Where the Council is covering the costs of an employee's training course or qualification at priority level 4 or 5 a written agreement may be required that if the employee leaves the Council's employment within a set period of time during of having completed the course, the employee will be expected to reimburse the Council for some or all of the course fees.

* Members who book training and fail to attend will be required to pay for any non-refundable training fees, except in the case of sudden illness or emergency.

Feedback and Evaluation of Training

Records of all training undertaken by employees will be kept in the personnel files of each member of staff. A register of courses completed by members will be maintained.

As part of Stroud Town Council's continuing commitment to training and development, members and employees are expected to provide a summary report to the CEO, Committee or Council. This report will summarise the training and identify any key implications of new legislation, guidance and/or good practice for the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the Council. This report will also contain feedback on the value and effectiveness of the training

Link with Other Council Policies

Relationship with other Council policies:

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Member and officer development;
- A training policy and training record for both Members and staff is a requirement for the accreditation of the national Local Council Award Scheme.
- Risk Management Policy – a commitment to training and development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of risk management;
- Health and Safety Policy – ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to health and safety is embedded throughout the authority;
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of continuing professional development.

Reporting on Progress

The CEO will report annually to the Personnel Committee detailing attendance at training over the year and provide a summary of the Member and staff feedback and evaluation of courses attended.

Conclusion

The adoption of a training and development policy should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuing professional development and enhancing the skills of both Elected Members and staff.

The adoption of a training and development policy has a practical implication for the Council's budget and ensures that the Council is aware of the implication of its commitments and allocates adequate and appropriate funding in a long term and sustainable platform that supports these aspirations and commitments.

Approved XXXXX