



Minutes of the meeting of the
Finance and Policy Committee
2nd December 2024

Present

Councillors Tony Davey, Sue Fenton, Liz Hillary, Craig Horrocks, Chris Minett and Lucas Schoemaker (Chair)

Absent

None

In attendance

Helen Bojaniwska (CEO, Town Clerk), Liz Dowie (Senior Finance Administrator), Hannah Emery, Stroud District Council (item 3 only)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Ananthan (personal)

2. Declarations of interest

None received.

The agenda was reordered as follows

4. Approval of minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 23rd September 2024, previously circulated, were **approved** and signed by the Chair.

5. Budget monitoring report to end October 2024

The report was noted.

Action: the CEO was asked to circulate a report on expenditure by ward from the Ward Projects budget.

6. Approval of payments

Payments from September to October 2024 as shown in **Appendix 1** were **approved**.

7. Receipts

Receipts from September to October 2024 were noted.

8. Bank reconciliation at the end of October 2024

The bank reconciliation was **approved**.

9. Report from the CEO

A verbal report was noted.

10. Updated internal control checks

The Committee reviewed updated internal controls to ensure consistency of checks. The new document included all information needed by councillors making checks and clear instructions. Previous checks relating to year end procedures had been removed because they duplicated the work of the Internal Audit. The updated checks were based on the latest version of the JPAG Practitioners' Guide and had been tested and improved by Cllrs Andrews and Oldman.

It was **agreed** to recommend the updated internal control checks to Council.

3. Questions from the public

Hannah Emery from Stroud District Council joined the meeting to share plans for an interpretation panel created by the Community Representation Taskforce, which will be installed at the junction of Castle Street, Nelson Street and Middle Street in Stroud. Cllrs thanked Ms Emery for attending the meeting and suggested that a similar panel be installed at the Paganhill Arch.

11. Verbal progress report on relocation to Locking Hill

The CEO provided a brief update and advised that a full report would be presented at the Council meeting on 9th December 2024.

12. Draft budget for 2025-26 and reserves movements for recommendation to Council

The CEO/RFO presented a draft budget for 2025-26. It was noted that all of the other committees had considered their draft budgets and made recommendations for 2025-26 expenditure.

The CEO reported that the tax base had not yet been confirmed, so a 1.5% increase had been assumed in line with Stroud District Council's budget strategy. The final figure would be known before the budget is considered at Full Council in January 2025.

It was noted that there had not yet been any commitments of further grant funding from Stroud District Council for community projects.

It was **agreed** to remove the review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) from the draft budget as recommended by the CEO. This was due to the lack of government funding for NDPs, the high level of staff resource required, the delayed approval of the Local Plan and uncertainty about potential changes to the planning system. It was noted that the NDP does not in practice lend any weight to the Shop Front Design Guide.

The CEO advised that the budget for Cycling and Walking projects would be used for research to support proposals to Gloucestershire Highways for improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, starting with a survey of traffic movements in the town centre.

There was a general discussion about the overall percentage increase in the Town Council precept and how it relates to other elements of the Council Tax bill. The Mayor felt that all of the proposed expenditure could be justified; the Town Council delivers good value for money; and there were no "vanity projects" included in the budget.

Cllr Schoemaker compared the council's budget to Stroud District Council's and felt that an increase of less than 10% would be preferred.

The CEO clarified that the increases in the staff budget over the last 2 years were partly due to nationally agreed pay deals and also due to the creation of new posts previously approved by Council.

It was **agreed** in principle to recommend the draft budget to Council subject to the outcome of the actions below.

Actions

CEO to:

- explore grant funding from Stroud District Council
- check an increase in the Environment Committee's budget for Contracted Infrastructure repairs
- review expenditure under Subscriptions
- notify the Committee when the tax base is known
- review expenditure under Communications with the Chair
- review total budget to bring the increase down below 10%
- draft news release about the draft budget in consultation with the Chair

13. Consultation on the Local Government Pension Scheme (England and Wales): Fit for the future

It was **agreed** that members of the committee would submit comments on the Consultation to the CEO by 31st December 2024.

14. Preliminary results of a NALC survey on allowances for information only

The results were noted.

15. Updated draft Fraud policy for recommendation to Council

An update from the Deputy CEO was noted. The Committee were uncomfortable with making Councillors subject to a credit check, due to concerns about privacy, the level of risk presented and no clear explanation of the worst-case scenario.

There was a general discussion about the potential fraud risks, including for example, the risk that married councillors, or a councillor and a staff member working in cahoots, could expose the Council to potential fraud. Or that the CEO might work independently to commit fraud.

The requirement for staff to take a mandatory two-week holiday was rejected, because it was felt to be unfair to staff and not contractually enforceable.

It was felt that the current requirements for dual signatures/authorisations were sufficient.

It was **agreed** to recommend the draft policy to Council with the removal of the requirements for councillor credit checks and mandatory two-week holidays for staff.

Action: Deputy CEO to amend draft and refer to Council for approval

**16. Minutes of the meeting of the Lansdown Hall Working Group on 24th
September 2024**

The minutes were noted.

The meeting ended at 9.50pm

Chair

Date

Appendix 1 – Payments

Date Paid	Payee Name	Ref	Amount	Detail
02/09/2024	Water Plus - cemetery standtap	3924	£1.95	Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
02/09/2024	Water Plus - Libbys Drive 7000	867	£19.27	Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
02/09/2024	Water Plus - Thanet House 0152	1632	£46.00	Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
02/09/2024	SDC	DD	£480.00	SDC rates 58a-b
02/09/2024	Indeed Ireland Operations Ltd	6919	£314.30	Job advert
02/09/2024	Squarespace Ireland Ltd	9984	£204.00	Website subscription
03/09/2024	The Webworks Computer Sales an	2024	£10.00	USB splitter
04/09/2024	REDACTED	FPO	£40.00	Expenses
04/09/2024	Chalford Building Supplies Ltd	6109	£18.72	Bricks
04/09/2024	Down to Earth Stroud	724	£422.40	Gardening
04/09/2024	Easy Window Cleaning	2584	£36.00	Window cleaning
04/09/2024	Extended Works Ltd	2	£4,628.26	Design work
04/09/2024	Fleet Solicitors LLP	3041A	£2,304.00	Counsel fees
04/09/2024	GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY	2956	£16,612.49	Feasibility study
04/09/2024	Ianto Doyle	05LH	£1,180.00	Bar area chair store
04/09/2024	The Management Centre	2132	£432.00	Training LB
04/09/2024	McCarthy Marland Recycling Ltd	3139	£351.54	Skip exchange
04/09/2024	Morelock Signs Ltd	7963	£53.76	Sign
04/09/2024	NALC	389	£39.22	Devolution local governance KM
04/09/2024	Plugtest Ltd	2133	£234.00	Pat competent course
04/09/2024	Premier Paper Group Ltd	3832	£134.58	Paper
04/09/2024	Primary Water Solutions Ltd	3128	£300.00	Water sampling
04/09/2024	The Salvation Army	1541	£270.00	Hall hire community cafe
04/09/2024	Stroud Alarms Fire and Securit	9546	£78.00	Intruder alarm
04/09/2024	NALC	5109	£39.22	Quest for devolution HB
05/09/2024	Land Registry	7248	£3.00	Title register
09/09/2024	PWLB	DD	£7,742.53	Loan repayment
09/09/2024	Allstar Business Solutions Ltd	2129	£161.10	Fuel
09/09/2024	Land Registry	2326	£6.00	Title register and plan
09/09/2024	Stroud District Council	2743	£120.00	Pre-application advice
10/09/2024	Master Cobbler	1883	£5.99	Key
11/09/2024	Waitrose & Partners	941	£18.65	Consumables
12/09/2024	TOWN CLERK IMPREST	Top Up SD	£1,000.00	Top up Clerk's Account
12/09/2024	Samsung UK Store	3327	£43.29	Cable and travel adapter

Date Paid	Payee Name	Ref	Amount	Detail
13/09/2024	Payroll	DD	£22,661.35	Payroll September
13/09/2024	The Wipe Shop	8495	£41.97	Centrefeed hand towel
13/09/2024	Midcounties Co-operative	2943	£4.20	Consumables
16/09/2024	SDC	DD	£1,117.00	SDC rates cemetery and depot
17/09/2024	Tesco	6945	£24.00	Batteries and bags
19/09/2024	HMRC	FPO	£5,957.91	PAY/NIC September
19/09/2024	REDACTED	FPO	£50.94	Supplies for community cafe
19/09/2024	Alan Price	1394	£3,080.00	Grave digging
19/09/2024	Extended Works Ltd	3	£7,650.00	Locking Hill needs and options
19/09/2024	GAPTC	580	£135.00	Climate and better councillor
19/09/2024	JAMES & OWEN LTD	522	£2.99	Stationery
19/09/2024	NALC	2369	£39.22	Empowering young people LB
19/09/2024	Nurture Development	3967	£364.00	ABCD course NM
19/09/2024	LGPS	DD	£7,032.16	Pension contribution
19/09/2024	Renault Finance	5152	£30.00	Battery hire
19/09/2024	Stroud Bookshop	5308	£84.95	Brene Brown books
20/09/2024	Stroud Book Festival	FPO	£1,500.00	Grant
20/09/2024	Pipercom Ltd	2416	£1,821.35	IT services
20/09/2024	Principal Hygiene	8936	£96.30	Feminine hygiene unit
20/09/2024	Smiths (Gloucester) Ltd	3649	£18.60	Recycling
20/09/2024	Stroud Alarms Fire and Securit	14	£1,381.36	Extinguishers
20/09/2024	Thirsty Work Ltd	2560	£7.80	Water rental charges
20/09/2024	T.W.HAWKINS & SONS	3517	£605.70	Mowing Uplands
20/09/2024	Ecotricity - Lobby - 10190574	6782	£32.24	Electricity
20/09/2024	Ecotricity - Flat A - 10191020	6921	£52.68	Electricity
20/09/2024	Ecotricity - Flat B - 10152716	7002	£46.42	Electricity
20/09/2024	Ecotricity - Libbys Drive 1014	9391	£33.62	Electricity
20/09/2024	Ecotricity - Office - 10153686	7189	£228.62	Electricity
20/09/2024	Ecotricity - Locking Hill Gas	6494	£5.67	Gas
20/09/2024	Ecotricity - Locking Hill Elec	6491	£41.22	Electricity
20/09/2024	The Webworks Computer Sales an	2024	£8.00	Gel mouse pad
23/09/2024	SDC	DD	£720.00	SDC rates Thanet House
23/09/2024	SDC	DD	£725.07	SDC rates Locking Hill
23/09/2024	Microsoft Ireland Operations L	S2G	£66.85	Monthly subscription

Date Paid	Payee Name	Ref	Amount	Detail
23/09/2024	Microsoft Ireland Operations L	S2H	£174.63	Monthly subscription
23/09/2024	Microsoft Ireland Operations L	S4R	£123.48	Monthly subscription
23/09/2024	HHGL Limited	768	£9.00	Site materials
24/09/2024	Superdrug Stores plc	3952	£20.00	Flowflex x12
25/09/2024	Storytel Audiobooks USA LLC	67L	£7.99	1 month subscription
25/09/2024	Storytel Audiobooks USA LLC	7EN	£7.99	1 month subscription
25/09/2024	NALC	7489	£39.22	Mastering emergency planning
25/09/2024	Samsung UK Store	30	£174.99	Galaxy A15
27/09/2024	Konica Minolta Business Soluti	160	£454.13	Photocopier
27/09/2024	Lister Unified Communications	3377	£242.82	Mobile phones
27/09/2024	Tesco	6957	£2.25	Coffee
30/09/2024	SGW Payroll Ltd.	7963	£63.30	Payroll month 6
01/10/2024	Water Plus - cemetery standtap	3924	£1.95	Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
01/10/2024	Water Plus - Libbys Drive 7000	867	£19.27	Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
01/10/2024	Water Plus - Thanet House 0152	1632	£46.00	Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
01/10/2024	SDC	DD	£480.00	SDC rates 58a-b
02/10/2024	Indeed Ireland Operations Ltd	8348	£7.18	Job advert
03/10/2024	Laptop Power Supply Shop	5901	£62.97	Power supply chargers
04/10/2024	Waitrose & Partners	3961	£5.80	Coffee and newspaper
04/10/2024	Car Smart	539	£28.00	Seat belt
07/10/2024	Ecotricity - Gas Thanet 101976	429	£20.35	Gas
07/10/2024	Allstar Business Solutions Ltd	4142	£63.41	Fuel
08/10/2024	Argos	433	£8.00	Inner tube
08/10/2024	Royal British Legion Poppy Sho	374	£50.00	Poppy wreaths
09/10/2024	Stroud Bookshop	6667	£33.98	Dare to Lead books
10/10/2024	TOWN CLERK IMPREST	Top up SD	£1,000.00	Top up Clerk's Account
10/10/2024	Creative Sustainability	FPO	£2,575.00	Grant
10/10/2024	HMRC	FPO	£7,843.41	PAY/NIC October
10/10/2024	REDACTED	FPO	£27.10	Expenses
10/10/2024	REDACTED	FPO	£90.52	Expenses
10/10/2024	Alan Price	1408	£2,310.00	Grave digging
10/10/2024	BrightHR England	4672	£362.88	Software
10/10/2024	Colors	665	£1,200.00	Planting water and maintenance
10/10/2024	Cotswold Flame	35	£90.00	Call out - boiler
10/10/2024	DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd	1490	£282.00	VAT partial exemption calc

Date Paid	Payee Name	Ref	Amount	Detail
10/10/2024	Extended Works Ltd	004	£4,628.26	Stage 3+ architectural
10/10/2024	Nailsworth Garden Machinery	5886	£98.28	Various
10/10/2024	Mrs Patricia Phipps	RENT	£2,875.00	Rent
10/10/2024	Somerset County Council	3314	£192.00	Nox tube analysis
10/10/2024	Thrupp Tyre Company Ltd.	6385	£24.00	Puncture repair
10/10/2024	TotalEnergies Gas & Power	7655	£178.37	Electricity
10/10/2024	Wheatley Printers Ltd.	1347	£126.00	Banner
10/10/2024	Fone Revive	1380	£20.00	Phone case
15/10/2024	SDC	DD	£1,117.00	SDC rates cemetery and depot
15/10/2024	Payroll	DD	£26,117.53	Payroll October
15/10/2024	Lloyds Bank	PAY	£250,000.00	Fixed term deposit
15/10/2024	The Stationery Office Ltd	7152	£16.43	HSE poster
16/10/2024	Water Plus - Park Gardens 0322	2076	£12.34	Water
17/10/2024	LinkedIn Ireland Unlimited Com	6394	£78.00	Job advert comms and eng
17/10/2024	The Webworks Computer Sales an	2024	£11.00	Keyboard
18/10/2024	LGPS	DD	£7,636.59	Pension contribution
18/10/2024	Canva Pty Ltd	7241	£477.99	Subscription
21/10/2024	Ecotricity - Gas Thanet 101976	2467	£27.12	Gas
21/10/2024	Ecotricity - Lobby - 10190574	2398	£32.21	Electricity
21/10/2024	Ecotricity - Flat A - 10191020	2528	£102.56	Electricity
21/10/2024	Ecotricity - Flat B - 10152716	2617	£49.02	Electricity
21/10/2024	Ecotricity - Libbys Drive 1014	2667	£148.22	Electricity
21/10/2024	Ecotricity - Office - 10153686	2815	£209.32	Electricity
21/10/2024	Ecotricity - Locking Hill Elec	1948	£145.13	Electricity
21/10/2024	Ecotricity - Locking Hill Gas	1956	£23.02	Gas
21/10/2024	Renault Finance	5152	£30.00	battery hire
21/10/2024	Zoro UK Ltd	2182	£25.77	Hose reducer
22/10/2024	Water Plus - Locking Hill 7004	3242	£294.38	Water
22/10/2024	SDC	DD	£720.00	SDC rates Thanet House
22/10/2024	SDC	DD	£727.00	SDC rates Locking Hill
22/10/2024	Microsoft Ireland Operations L	5R4	£148.32	Standard subscription
22/10/2024	Microsoft Ireland Operations L	5WF	£123.48	Basic subscription

Date Paid	Payee Name	Ref	Amount	Detail
22/10/2024	The Plastic Card Factory	130	£41.21	ID cards
23/10/2024	TOWN CLERK IMPREST	Top Up SD	£500.00	Top up Clerk's account
23/10/2024	Microsoft Ireland Operations L	TES	£29.64	Project plan 3
23/10/2024	Microsoft Ireland Operations L	5R3	£64.94	Defender subscription
24/10/2024	Lister Unified Communications	4471	£242.82	Moblie phones
24/10/2024	Creative Sustainability CIC	3976	£14.00	Tyre and inner tube bike
28/10/2024	REDACTED	FPO	£9.60	Expenses
28/10/2024	HMRC	FPO	£7,843.41	PAY/NIC October 2024
28/10/2024	REDACTED	FPO	£31.66	Community cafe supplies
28/10/2024	REDACTED	FPO	£300.00	Grave return
28/10/2024	GB Sport & Leisure UK Ltd.	6030	£157.20	Curve large flat seat
28/10/2024	Hattie Nicholson	4	£120.00	Newsletter autum edition
28/10/2024	HHGL Limited	4000	£20.00	Torch
28/10/2024	JAMES & OWEN LTD	591	£132.37	Stationery
28/10/2024	Lansdown Road Motors Ltd	6240	£821.43	Replaced heater resistor
28/10/2024	McCarthy Marland Recycling Ltd	6924	£316.50	Skip exchange
28/10/2024	Pipercom Ltd	2468	£817.60	IT services
28/10/2024	Play Gloucestershire	352	£4,044.84	After school play sessions
28/10/2024	Police and Crime Commissioner	6426	£57.25	Community sessions
28/10/2024	Primary Water Solutions Ltd	3376	£624.00	Leginella risk assessment
28/10/2024	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	797	£312.00	Innovation KM
28/10/2024	Smiths (Gloucester) Ltd	9560	£18.00	Recycling
28/10/2024	Stroud Electrical Services (UK	1700	£2,704.80	Supply and install EV charger
28/10/2024	TEK Fencing Ltd	138	£986.40	Fencing
28/10/2024	Thirsty Work Ltd	8640	£43.20	Bottled water
28/10/2024	Travis Perkins Trading Co Ltd	1161	£43.80	Concrete and pick
28/10/2024	UK Landscapes Ltd	4653	£929.22	Grass cutting cemetery
28/10/2024	SGW Payroll Ltd.	9982	£33.60	Payroll month 7
31/10/2024	Post Office Ltd	977	£337.50	Stamps