

# Stroud District Council Report



June 2020

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## Business support grants

From 9 June, eligible businesses could apply to a new business support grant scheme offering priority to businesses who were not eligible for support in the previous schemes. Over 270 businesses applied by the deadline on 21 June. So far 76 businesses have received funding totalling £850,000 from this discretionary grant fund.

In relation to all the business support grants available, by 26th June, a cumulative total number of 2,235 grants totalling £24.9m had been distributed (some businesses have received more than one payment within the grant total).

## Strategy & Resources Committee – 18 June

- **Council Tax Hardship Scheme – Covid-19** - Changes were approved to the Hardship Policy to allow for the immediate implementation of the Government Covid-19 funding. This will go to the next meeting of Council for formal adoption.
- **Covid-19 Recovery Strategy** - Councillor endorsed the approach outlined in the Draft Recovery and Renewal Strategy document and the proposed governance arrangements. Meetings are now underway to progress this work.
- **Financial Impact of Covid-19 on Stroud District Council** Councillors considered a report which set out that the pandemic is having a significant impact on the Council's financial resources. There is a real need for support from Government to local authorities in the longer term. It was agreed to use the Council's Equalisation Reserve to meet the cost of the pandemic.

## Tackling racism

This issue was discussed during the Strategy & Resources meeting, and the Council Leader made a statement to say that SDC needs to do all we can as a Council to ensure we are an inclusive and anti-racist organisation with zero tolerance for racism and discrimination. This followed a statement by all four party leaders in support of the Black Lives Matter campaign. Complaints had been made about the activities on twitter of Councillor Debbie Young (Conservative). The Monitoring Officer found that Cllr Young had not significantly breached the Council's Code of Conduct. All Councillors are undertaking training on Equality and Diversity. Cooperative Alliance leaders (Labour, Green, Lib Dem) issued a statement to put on record their disappointment that explanations for the judgement shows very limited understanding of the lived experience of direct and indirect racism, the impact of structural and institutional racism or the experiences that sparked the Black Lives Matter protests around the world.

## Community Services & Licensing Committee Meeting – 25 June

The Committee met to discuss the revised **street trading policy** and to finally adopt a new Street Trading Resolution following statutory public notice of intention to adopt, and to consider a Draft **Statement of Licensing Policy** prior to formal consultation. The Statement outlines the principles Stroud District Council

will apply when exercising its functions under the Licensing Act 2003 from January 2021 when the current Statement expires. Appointments were also approved to the Committee's outside bodies, in addition to appointing a Member to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

### **Development Control Committee – 16 June**

This was the first remote meeting of the Committee which discussed five planning applications.

### **Environment Committee – 4 June**

The Committee accepted (subject to the recommended modifications of Examiners' reports) the **Neighbourhood Development Plans** for both Horsley and Cam. These will now progress to referendums no sooner than May 2021.

In relation to the **paper recycling contract extension**, the Committee resolved to extend the existing contract for a period of 12 months and to investigate the headline potential for enlarging the depot at Gossington, or other locations, exploring enhanced sorting and/or storage facilities, beneficial to minimising greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Housing and homelessness**

The June meeting of the Housing Committee was cancelled due to lack of business. Councillors held an informal discussion with officers on 30 June which focused on preventing housing debt in all sectors as a result of the coronavirus crisis. The Housing Advice team are providing to households as needed, which includes funding mediation, supporting a CAB financial advice post, working with Clean Slate on budgeting, and helping to get people set up in private rented accommodation.

Work continues at the county level to ensure that homeless people continue to be housed and provided with the support they require, as lockdown eases. Many more homeless people who had previously been informally sharing with friends or family as 'sofa surfers' came forward requiring housing during the lockdown. The need for more smaller units and one bed properties in the District was noted.

### **Reopening of public conveniences.**

Some public toilets have now reopened on a reduced service. Opening hours are 10am-4pm and there are additional cleaning schedules to ensure that they are safe for public use. During cleaning, toilets may be shut to allow the cleaning staff to do their job safely.

### **Reintroduction of parking changes in Stroud**

SDC will be reintroducing car parking charges in Stroud town centre from 21 July. To help shoppers and businesses some changes will be made, including removal of the 10p per transaction for use of the MiPermit app, and making changes to the Brunel Mall and Church Street car parks, in line with recommendations from the Stroud Town Council Parking Working Group.