

# Stroud District Councillor Report – December 2020

## Report of meetings during November

### Coronavirus Response

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#### Business Grants

- **Local Restriction Support Grant (Closed) addendum LRSG**

The government has announced further grants fund support for businesses that have been forced to close due to the national restrictions.

- **Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)**

Funding has also been made available to Local Authorities under the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) and will be used for discretionary payments. SDC has now determined the local ARG policy and is inviting applications until 11 December 2020. Businesses are invited to claim using a secure online form on the SDC website here: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/business/business-rates>

### Council meetings

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*All Stroud District Council and Committee papers can be found here:*

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings>

#### Audit & Standards Committee – 17 November

- Update on the actions taken in relation to key recommendations made in the audit report relating to **empty homes**. The [report](#) states that 1040 homes were classed as empty in 2019 (just less than 2 % of total dwellings in Stroud District). (For information - a new part time “Empty Homes Officer” has recently started in post, with the objective of reducing the number of empty homes in the District, see: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/housing/private-sector-housing/empty-homes>.)
- Update on internal audit activity progress in relation to the revised Internal Audit Plan 2020/21.
- Half year treasury management activity report 2020/21
- Approved the statement of accounts 2019/20

#### Community Services & Licensing Committee – 26 November

- Community resilience & wellbeing grants

A **revised grant criteria** and decision making process were approved by the Committee.

It was agreed that the existing grant process was not fit for purpose and Members have been working with Officers to devise a fairer and non-political method of grant aid.

The annual budget will set aside an appropriate amount (£300k in 2020/21) to cover such grants.

However, it is expected that the SDC contribution to the running costs of Stroud based Citizens Advice, currently £120k/yr, will be found from more appropriate budgets from 2022 onwards. The new system will be by application, with deadlines to meet. Support will be provided to organisations through the change in grant funding and it was noted that other other sources of funding (including the new District Council lottery) will also be available.

The committee report includes a list (on page 9) of all the community groups which received grant funding in 2020/21. Another report provided consultation feedback on the proposed changes.

- There were member reports on the following issues
  - Gloucestershire Health Overview Scrutiny Committee & Gloucestershire Covid-19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board
  - Museum in the Park
  - Police and Crime Panel
  - Gfirst LEP - visitor economy/tourism business group
  - Citizens Advice
  - Performance monitoring
- Discussion of the draft Stroud District 2030 climate change.
- Review of Committee budgets for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.
- Discussions are still on going with our sports leisure provider, SLM, over the £150k (max) grant that was approved by CS&L to support the facilities at Stratford Park until March 2021. There have been further difficulties due to the recent changes in government restrictions for such venues, but a positive outcome is being sought asap.

## **Climate change strategy consultation**

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The SDC consultation remains open until 16 December. It sets out a Strategy and Action Plan on how Stroud District can lead the way in limiting, adapting, recovering, and responding to climate change, to protect future generations. The Council's operations are already carbon neutral and the aim of this strategy is to facilitate the whole district becoming carbon neutral by 2030, recognising that urgent action is needed to avoid severe impacts.

For more information: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/draft2030strategy>