

## SDC Councillor report - February 2025

### Council meetings

Link to meeting agenda and documents in the committee title.

### Development Control Committee - 21st January

- Land At Betworthy Farm, Coaley - S.24/0672/FUL  
17 dwellings including 6 affordable. Speculative application in outside the village's settlement boundary. Permitted - Despite concerns about sewerage infrastructure

- [Video recording](#)

#### **Update on planning changes:**

Due to the Government's reform of the National Planning Policy Framework in December, and changes to rules on housing land supply, Stroud District is now assessed as having only a 3.24 year housing land supply, as against the required 5 year housing land supply. As a result, a so-called 'tilted planning balance' now applies when planning applications for housing developments are considered.

This 'tilted balance' makes it much harder to resist housing applications on sites that haven't been consulted on, identified and allocated by the district council, through our Local Plan process, as the most suitable places for new development. Its aim is to boost house building in line with the new Government's policy. In particular it is now much harder to refuse speculative housing applications on land on the edges of the district's towns and villages, outside the settlement limits. The harm from such development now needs to be demonstrably much greater than before, to warrant refusal of planning permission.

The National Planning Policy Framework does provide considerable protection for protected landscapes saying "Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues."

### Environment Committee - 23rd January

- Recommended the [Draft Council Plan 2025-2029](#) to Strategy & Resources Committee
- Approved the new [Air Quality Strategy](#) for Stroud District
- Questions from members of the public on:
  - Litter Management Action Plan
  - Planning strategy – noting that [Consultation responses](#) on the new National Planning Policy Framework have been "almost entirely" ignored. The Govt. has raised target from 620 to 840 homes per year for Stroud District.

- [Video recording](#)

### **Audit and Standards Committee - 28th January**

- Audit update of the Out of Hours Service - Improved
- [External Audit 2023/24](#) Approved
- Approved prudential indicators and [Treasury Management Strategy](#)
- Strategic Risk Register update
- Review Internal Audit progress
- [Video recording](#) (interrupted due to technical issues)

### **Community Services and Licensing Committee - 30th January**

- Recommend the [Draft Council Plan 2025-2029](#) to Strategy & Resources Committee
- Household Support Fund - Delivery Plan – Approved. Important funding for Food Banks and Community Hubs etc.
- Community Safety Partnership - Review & Refocus on three themes: Anti Social Behaviour ([ASB](#)) Violence Against Women and Girls ([VAWG](#)) and [Community Cohesion](#).
  - Powerful videos due on impact of ASB (featuring Rope Walk toilets) and knife crime
  - Funding concerns for the Gloucestershire Police esp. from [OPCC](#)
- Resolved to support [Dr Jenner House Museum](#)'s application for World Heritage Site status
- [Stroud Funding](#) round two open for applications
- [Video recording](#)

### **Other news**

- Local Government Reorganisation  
Stroud District Council is working with Gloucestershire County Council and the other 5 districts to explore options for one or two unitary councils in the county, and for alignment with a new or existing strategic authority. We await details from Government of their proposed timeframe and tests for change to the current local government structures. GAPTC will be part of discussions as part of the Place Model workstream looking at reorganisation for Gloucestershire.
- In the Stroud District Council budget for 2025/26, we are set to invest more than £1million in extra [improvements](#) to our district. We are also investing up to £110m in increasing and improving our council homes over the next 4 years.

- We asking for peoples' views on a new policy which will ensure that equality, fairness, inclusion, and good relations are at the heart of everything it does. [Consultation here](#).
- [Museum in the Park](#) reopens with its annual snowdrop celebration.
- [Careline scam warning](#)
- Work started on the site for eight homes for affordable rent Gloucester St/Bradley St.
- [Public Notice - Audit of Accounts 2023/24](#)
- At the full Council meeting on the 13th February it was confirmed that the premium on second homes and empty homes would proceed. Second homes will be subject to a 100% premium and empty properties will now be subject to a 100% premium after one year. There are a number of exemptions to these premiums. There are currently 70 second homes in Painswick parish.