



STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

<http://lsp.stroud.gov.uk>

Meeting held on Friday 10 January 2020
Council Chamber, Ebley Mill

Theme for this meeting: Housing

Present:

Janice Banks (Vice Chair)	Gloucestershire Rural Community Council	Anna Hurbert	CEO OPENHouse
Sgt Andrew Burfoot (in place of Inspector Sarah Blake)	Gloucestershire Constabulary	Kathy O'Leary	Chief Executive, Stroud District Council
Cllr Doina Cornell	Leader, Stroud District Council	David Owen	Chief Executive, GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership
Brendan Cleere	Strategic Director of Place - SDC	Carol Stubbs	Job Centre Plus, Gloucestershire & West of England District
Hayley Dalby (in place of John Colquhoun)	Uplands Care Service	Alison Truphet	Executive Director, New Ventures Trust
Ben Falconer	Corporate Communications Manager, SDC	Dr Roma Walker	Chair, Stroud Hospital League of Friends
Neil Grecian	Mayor of Dursley	Beth Whittaker (Chair)	Stroud Businesswomen's Network
Lilly Haines	Stroud District Youth Council	Geoff Beckerleg	Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Stroud

Apologies and absent:

Sue Bailey	Sue Bailey Consulting	Kevin Hamblin	South Gloucestershire & Stroud College (SGS)
Simon Bernstein	Chief Executive, Longfield	Mary Hutton	NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
Inspector Sarah Blake	Gloucestershire Constabulary	Richard Kerry	Station Manager, Stroud District Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service
John Colquhoun	Chairman Uplands Care Service	Will Mansell	The Grace Network
Max Comfort	Social Enterprise & WCCG	Helen March	Stroud District Youth Council Chair
Ellis Cope	Cope Sales & Marketing	David Nairn	Fluid Transfer
Cllr Stephen Davies	County Councillor and District Councillor	Chris Pockett	Renishaw PLC

Helen Edwards	NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group	Barbara Pond	Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
Rob Fountain	Age UK Gloucestershire	Alison Robinson	Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils
William Frazer	National Farmers Union	Russell Warner	Federation of Small Businesses
Emily Gravestock	UK Space Agency	Margaret Wilcox OBE	Gloucestershire County Council

Guests & Support Officers:

Ramona Amuza, Homeshare Gloucestershire Manager	Steve Miles, Senior Youth Officer
Rachel Brain, Carbon Neutral Officer, Stroud District Council	Jo Stenner, Advice and Project Worker, Gloucestershire Nightstop
Hannah Emery, Stroud District Council	Anne Sutcliffe, Former Uley Parish Councillor

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and Terms of Reference

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Council Chamber, Ebley Mill and a number of apologies had been received.

The Chair reminded members to share the notes of the meeting with their organisation.

2. SDC Overview of Housing

The District Council plays a big role in local housing provision. The Local Plan is under review and currently out to consultation for future district housing needs. The Council owns and manages its own council housing stock of just over 5,000 council houses but must also consider provision of housing for other residents. The Housing strategy broadly sets out how the following issues are tackled:

- Providing affordable housing;
- Duty to prevent homelessness - the most vulnerable residents which are mostly the Council's 10,000 council house residents are offered support if they get into financial difficulty;
- Assessing the social mobility for young people to encourage them to stay living and working in Gloucestershire. Affording a property within the district is a big issue;
- Assessing the housing needs of elderly people. Stroud has a large number of 4-5 bed houses and elderly people are living in these houses because they don't have other options of smaller houses in the same location with the same amenities to move to; and
- Helping communities to work out their own housing needs such as the Community Land Trust sites in Eastington and Stonehouse.

The Carbon Neutral 2030 (CN2030) commitment provides a new tension for housing as the Council must introduce new standards into building new homes and encourage developers to do the same, but this costs twice as much; should the priority be new homes or good homes?

The Council is looking at retrofitting its current housing stock, this will help poorer tenants at risk of poverty by reducing their bills but how can the Council also encourage private owners of the 50,000 other houses in the district to retrofit their own houses?

3. Gloucestershire Nightstop

Presentation by Jo Stenner, Advice and Project Worker, Gloucestershire Nightstop.

The Nightstop concept originated in Leeds in the 1980s to support young homeless people aged 16-25 – many of whom are facing homelessness due to family or relationship breakdowns.

Gloucestershire Nightstop is a small charity covering the whole of the County. It recruits volunteer hosts to provide a spare room to young people who are at risk and have nowhere else to go, providing safe, appropriate and short-term shelter within their communities. This solution to homelessness requires no investment or new builds and can be developed in any area.

Staff at the charity vet the host's accommodation and the young people. The average age of the young people is 19 and they are mostly students, in employment or may be asylum seekers - a long way from the stereotypical view of homelessness. Hosts can be anyone and generally take up hosting for variety of reasons such as faith, wanting to help community, give back etc.

The average stay is 12 nights and the longest stay is 5-6 months. The charity works with the young people and local councils to identify their future housing needs; some return home or some go to supported housing, social housing, private renting, stay with friends or foster care for 15-16yr olds.

Gloucestershire Nightstop currently has 36 hosts across the County so wherever a young person needs support, there should be a home nearby. The charity helps 100 people a year across the Gloucestershire consisting of 626 bed nights. Stroud is a generous area with 12 registered Hosts which is the highest in the County.

Nightstop was The Guardian's 2017 charity of the year.

<http://www.gloucestershirenightstop.org.uk/>

4. Community-Led Housing – Gloucestershire Rural Community Council

Presentation by Janice Banks (GRCC) and Anne Sutcliffe (Former chair, Uley Parish Council)

Community-led housing is about local people playing a leading and lasting role in solving housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing.

Community-led homes can include:

- Community Land Trusts (CLT) (Eastington is a good example of a successful CLT with one scheme completed and another underway)
- Cooperatives and tenant managed housing
- Collective self-build/custom build
- Co-housing
- Self-help housing
- Mutual home ownership
- Community development trusts
- Almshouses

Stroud has great enthusiasm for community-led projects and GRCC are currently working with a number of communities to bring forward some of the schemes.

The benefits of community-led homes include:

- Long term investment of local houses in perpetuity
- Affordable homes for local people
- Activating local public support for new homes
- Increase housing supply in rural exception sites that are not attractive to developers
- Leads to longer term sustainability of the community as the community is more connected and more likely to support itself
- Applicable to people who want to deliver more environmentally friendly builds and more interested in health and wellbeing

The projects start through a community champion or community-led groups. A housing needs survey is then completed to identify what exists in the area and what is needed. The process is supported by a housing enabler from GRCC.

The challenges faced in developing community-led homes include lack of awareness of the community options available, finding suitable land available and negotiating a way through the process from acquiring funding to negotiating with landowners and having the cash flow to do this.

GRCC has worked with a number of organisations in Stroud including Stroud Commonwealth to submit an application to Homes England to fund the establishment of a Community-led housing enabling hub to serve the County and will know at the end of January if the bid has been successful.

GRCC also facilitate rural affordable housing to address housing needs in parishes and establish whether the planning process can open up sites that would not normally be available to use for affordable housing. This process is not quick and typically takes 5-6 years, but 11 years is not uncommon. This means that the housing needs survey might identify a dozen houses but by the time they have been built those people who were in need have found another solution.

<https://www.grcc.org.uk/affordable-housing/stroud-district-community-led-housing>

Case study – Uley

Anne Sutcliffe was a Uley Parish Councillor for 12 years and Chair of the Parish Council from 2010 to 2014. In her role as Chair, Anne led the process for rural affordable homes in Uley and explained that the role of the Parish Council was to help identify sites and landowners, oversee and provide leadership within the village.

The whole process can take a long time and it is important that any Parish Council attempting this has the time, skills and determination to see it through. Uley Parish Council first attempted to provide rural affordable homes in 2003/04 but failed because the landowner withdrew. However, a second survey in 2010 reinforced the need for affordable housing in the parish. GRCC conducted the housing needs surveys to ensure that they are confidential and independently assessed. It then took 4 years to get to the point of planning approval.

The Parish Council developed good relations with Stroud District Council planning and housing services, the County Council and most importantly the Housing Association, which in this case was Gloucestershire Rural Housing Association with the management done by Severn Vale Housing Society on their behalf.

It is also the Parish Council that finds the landowners willing to sell their land. Uley Parish Council found four appropriate sites but it is for the Housing Association to negotiate their preferred site.

The Parish Council manages the relationship with the local community and must communicate the process to residents; Uley Parish Council held walk-in meetings, put time aside at council meetings for questions and published detailed information on their website. It was also important to plan on how to deal with opposition and ensure that information is provided to everyone so all sides are given a chance to be represented.

The affordable houses for Uley are now complete and are established within the local community; 3 of the properties are family homes and 4 are single units. The houses are for rental only meaning that they will always be for the people who need them.

Uley Parish Council would not have been successful in building their rural affordable homes without the organisations that supported them; GRCC in particular and without which no organisation could manage the process, Stroud District Council, County Highways and the police also provided valued support.

<https://uleyparishcouncil.gov.uk/affordable-housing-in-uley-how-it-was-achieved/>

Discussion points –

- Strong opposition and bullying is a challenge; it happens at all levels including big developments and can result in bad development. The development of large executive homes is most common because they make large profit margins but the system needs to be turned around so planning authorities are proactively encouraging the right development that meets the needs of the communities. This means that Councillors need to be brave and fight back against the vocal minority around affordability. Housing is not currently affordable for those who want to get into the housing market.
- It helps when the District Council are timely in responding to planning and site evaluations, the longer it goes on the more difficult it is to maintain motivation.
- We are increasingly seeing a number of elderly people in large houses because there is nowhere for them to move to that is smaller and provides the same social network. We should therefore be encouraging developers to build smaller homes.
- The Local Plan includes policies to support smaller housing development, but developers want to build houses that can sell and these tend to be the larger developments.
- The Right to Buy scheme for Council properties is also a challenge for the Council because although 200 new Council homes have been developed the current stock is being bought.

5. Homeshare, Age UK Gloucestershire

Presentation by Ramona Amuza, Homeshare Gloucestershire Manager

The concept of Homeshare has been in place since the 1980s, it works to bring together older people who have spare rooms, with people who need affordable accommodation and who are happy to provide friendship and lend a hand.

The Householder is the older person and benefits from low-level support and company at home. The Homesharer is the younger person who is offered a place to live in a real home. Together they can share home life, time, skills and experience and provide reassurance to families that they are not alone.

The arrangement works through a careful matching process starting with an application process followed by an interview, home visit and background checks. The whole matching process can

take up to 8 months as Homeshare focuses on matching similar personalities and considers the safety of the householder paramount so the householder can say no as many times as they want to.

The sharing begins with a trial period of 4 weeks to see if the arrangement works for both the Householder and the Sharer. The Householder and Sharer pay £150.00 a month to Homeshare from the date the Sharer moves in. These fees are to cover the cost of the service. Sometimes the Householder asks the Sharer to make a contribution towards household bills and Council tax and the Sharers are recommended to spend 10 hours a week with the Householder, offering companionship, a bit of help around the house (i.e. tidying up, putting bins out, cooking a few meals or doing the food shop). This is different for every match and depends on the Householder's needs.

The Homeshare agreement is not legally binding and Homeshare and Age UK Gloucestershire continue to monitor and support both parties to make sure that the arrangement works equally for both people. There is a 4 week notice period for the Sharer and the Householder for when circumstances change.

The challenges faced by Homeshare are:

- Raising awareness across the whole of the County.
- Attracting the 'right' type of Sharers.
- Working with local councils to find support for these types of shared households to ensure that any discounts such as council tax exemptions are not taken away from the Householder and if a council property, the Sharer can remain in the house for 4 weeks if the Householder passes away.

homeshare@agegloucestershire.org.uk

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire/our-services/homesharing/>

6. Carbon Neutral 2030 (CN2030) Board update – Rachel Brain

Continuing to build an action plan which has enough support to bring the Council towards the district commitment. The stakeholders of this commitment are every person and organisation in the district and therefore opportunities to talk to the LSP are vital for engagement.

Rachel is currently building capacity to make sure they have the necessary support structure and needs available when putting projects together and in developing extra funding. The Council is set to deliver a piece of research funded by the Department of Energy and Strategy. The research is to support council tax and business rates to support energy efficiency.

Any views or ideas can be sent to Rachel.brain@stroud.gov.uk

7. Partners' updates

The partner updates were focused on housing.

SDYC

- The Youth Council are not currently working on any specific project associated with housing but have discussed the broader matter when talking about the SDC Health and Well-being Plan in 2019.
- Youth Voice discussions in relation to housing have focused on housing development and local development sites, and the issues around affordable housing for young people in particular. At the moment, many people over the age of 19 are having to move out of the District to find affordable rent and housing.

Stroud District Council

- There has been an investment in sheltered housing for older people across the district.
- The Council is liaising with existing stakeholders, to ensure that their homes are at the right level for energy efficiency and insulation.
- Housing is a major priority for the Council and a lot of work is being done to find land that can be considered for development; a consultation period for the [Draft Local plan](#) closes on the 22 January 2020;
- Central government dictate how many houses must be built which is a challenge for all councils to find the right land for development. Whilst the general public agree we need more houses, they do not always agree with the sites chosen for development, so this is a challenge.
- The focus is not just on housing development but also on policies and working with private landlords to ensure housing across the district is of a good standard.

Chamber of Commerce

- Increase awareness of housing needs in the town centre and opportunities for brown field sites and sites that haven't been allocated to anything.
- Keen to have a mixed tenure of development and a variety of housing and will carry on raising awareness for these.

Gloucestershire Constabulary

- The Police have a good working relationship with housing departments, tenant services and wardens and it is important to maintain these links.

Stroud Job Centre Plus

- Looking for individuals and organisations to deliver mentor circles which will be an employer-led initiative consisting of a group of people taking a 2-3 hour session to talk to those seeking employment about how they have got to where they are now, what to include in a CV, talking through the application process and providing mock interviews. If you are interested in mentoring, please contact Carol Stubbs at Job Centre Plus via hannah.emery@stroud.gov.uk
- Local employers are being encouraged to sign up to the Disability Confident employer scheme. The aim is to encourage employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

New Ventures Trust

- The work of New Ventures Trust predominantly revolves around community engagement and helping young people to engage with adults and become responsible citizens.
- Alison and the New Ventures Trust would be happy to support any engagement initiatives put forward.

Uplands Care Centre

- Pamela Tawse has recently retired.
- Two new members of staff have been recruited and the Centre is offering lots of new activities for visitors and continuing to support individuals with dementia. The Centre is also trying to reach out to younger adults that have been diagnosed with dementia to volunteer and be involved in some of the activities.
- Introduced new key worker roles to enable better communication between visitors and their families.
- Staff undertaking dementia awareness training and Safeguarding Level 3 training.
- Trying to establish the possibility of meeting centres which would be voluntary based and run by volunteers so anyone with a disability can come to the centre.

Ben Falconer – SDC Corporate Communications Manager

- Inspired by today's presentations and looking forward to supporting all the organisations represented on social media and including in the Leaders Diary which is published weekly in local newspapers.

OPENhouse

- The focus of OPENHouse is supported accommodation; the young people move on after 12 months to live within the community, but there are not many places for them to go so the aim is to encourage people to find employment and build relationships with local businesses to find a way in.
- Anna Hurbert has been CEO for 5 months and has focused on reviewing their resources and accommodation which are not currently in use. One upcoming project is to work with Social Services to introduce 'crash pads' as accommodation for young people who find themselves homeless to give them somewhere to stay for 7-14 days until Social Services can find them somewhere more permanent.
- Refurbishing their top floor, and working with SDC's Housing Advice Manager to find accommodation that could be used as a solution for short term homelessness.

Neil Grecian – Mayor of Dursley Town Council

- Parish and Town Councils are looking at draft housing provisions for the next few years; small sites proposed in Dursley would be good for local housing and local needs, and benefit not just the needs of individuals but also to the community.
- Increase of housing being built in the south of the district; it is important that infrastructure is in place early to provide for the houses as this has a knock on effect for communities.
- Looking to create a new car park for long stay within the town, but as the community grows, the number of cars increase, so this is a challenge.

Stroud Hospital League of Friends

- Will be inviting Homeshare to do a presentation to the General Committee.
- Seeking two additional Trustees and will be advertising in due course.

Stroud Businesswomen's Network

- Stroud Businesswomen's Network is an environment made up of women supporting other women and growing in confidence together. It has 100 full members, 150 friends of the network and meets monthly at Old Lodge. There is also a drop in at the Curio Lounge on the second Thursday of the month to pop in and have a chat and meet other local women setting up their own businesses.

Please send any requests for future agenda items to Hannah Emery,
hannah.emery@stroud.gov.uk

Future meeting dates

2020

Friday 6th March	Council Chamber, Ebley Mill
Friday 5th June	Council Chamber, Ebley Mill
Friday 4th September	Council Chamber, Ebley Mill
Friday 4th December	Council Chamber, Ebley Mill

All meetings are 9.00am for a 9.15am start, with due finish 11.30am

The theme for the next meeting is Community-led Projects