



STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

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

Meeting held on Friday 10 March 2023

Online via Teams

Theme: Education and apprenticeships

Present:

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| Carole Stubbs (Chair) | Job Centre Plus, Avon, Somerset and Gloucestershire District | Kathy O'Leary | Chief Executive, Stroud District Council |
| Russell Warner (Vice Chair) | Gloucestershire Area Lead, Federation of Small Businesses | Kevin Hamblin | Group Chief Executive Principal, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College |
| Anna Bonallack | Chief Executive Officer, Creative Sustainability | Lisa Ferneyhough- Moss | Deputy Director Care Operations, Lilian Faithfull Care |
| Anna Herbert | Chief Executive Officer, OPENhouse | Mark McShane (in part) | Head, Stroud High School |
| Beth Whittaker | Stroud Businesswomen's Network | Matt Amey | Stroud and Nailsworth Station Manager, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service |
| Cate James- Hodges | SDYC Leader | Max Comfort | Director, Stroud Commonwealth |
| Cllr Catherine Braun | Leader of Council | Cllr Stephen Davies | Leader of the Opposition, Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire |
| Geoffrey Beckerleg | Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Stroud | Steve Olczak | Partnership Manager, Department of Work and Pensions |
| Helen Edwards | Deputy Director of Primary Care and Place, NHS Gloucestershire | Will Mansell | The Grace Network |
| Jason Spinney | Community Capacity Builder, GRCC | | |

Apologies and absent:

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| Adele Kendall | Head of HR, Ecotricity | Katie Jarvis | Group Secretary Gloucestershire, National Farmers' Union |
| Alison Robinson | Chief Executive Officer, GAPTC | Kerrin Cocks | Strategic Support Officer, GAPTC |
| Alison Truphet | Executive Director, New Ventures Trust | Matt Fellows | CEO, Age UK Gloucestershire |

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| Barbara Piranty | Chief Executive, GRCC | Cllr Natalie Bennett | Deputy Leader of Council |
| Brandon Watkins | SDYC Chair | Paul Cruise | Stroud and Dursley Inspector, Gloucestershire Police |
| Chris Pockett | Head of Communications, Renishaw | Dr Roma Walker | Stroud League of Friends |
| David Owen | CE, Gfirst Local Enterprise partnership | Sarah Scott | Executive Director Adult Social Care, Gloucestershire County Council |
| Eilis Cope | Director, Cope Sales and Marketing Ltd | Simon Bernstein | Chief Executive, Longfield |
| Elizabeth Hall | CE, Citizens Advice Stroud & Cotswolds | Siobhan Baillie MP | MP for Stroud |
| Fred Barker | Director, Transition Stroud | Cllr Symon Ackroyd | Mayor, Dursley Town Council |
| Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP | MP for The Cotswolds | | |

Guests and Support Officers

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| Sara-Jane Watkins | Principal, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College | Steve Miles | Senior Youth Officer, Stroud District Council |
| Rachael Lythgoe | Communications Officer, Stroud District Council | Cara Laver | Communications Apprentice, Stroud District Council |
| Hannah Barton | LSP Co-ordinator, Stroud District Council | | |

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone and noted the apologies. A number of new LSP members were introduced and welcomed to the group.

2. Developing education and apprenticeships at SGS Stroud – Sara-Jane Watkins, Principal, SGS College (presentation attached)

Sara-Jane gave a presentation on the SGS campuses in the Stroud district: Stroud and Berkeley.

In 2012 Filton and Stroud Colleges were merged to provide stability in anticipation of a period of government austerity. There are now six main campuses covering South Gloucestershire and Stroud. This includes the new SGS Horizon campus on the edge of Bristol which offers 500 construction apprenticeships.

Stroud College currently has 760 full time 16-18 learners but there is potential to grow this up to 1200. Some points raised regarding the offering at Stroud College were:

- Education for 14-16 year olds, including GCSE Plus, is an area of focus. This offering is for young people who have previously elected to be home educated or for whom mainstream education might not be suitable.
- 250 apprentices are offered with some of the biggest names in employment in the area including the NHS and Boeing.
- They have 150 full time high needs learners studying foundation studies. This is focussed on progressing people into independent living, employment or back into mainstream education.
- Arts and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are thriving.
- SGS are working with refugee communities regarding ESOL courses, including offering ESOL for employment and collaborating with hotel chains where refugees in the area are housed.
- They are one of the largest colleges in the country for art and design, with nearly 500 learners studying a Foundation Art Diploma.
- 250 adults are undertaking GCSE resits at SGS College.
- There is not an A Level offering at Stroud College, as 4-500 students would be needed to provide a suitable offering and there are multiple other sixth forms in the area that provide this already.
- They are growing the offering of health and wellbeing courses and are looking to become a centre of excellence in the region for their counselling provision.
- Animal science is in its third year of provision, and they have also recently launched forensic science and criminology.
- There is a Growth Hub at the Stroud campus with incubation units and a place for people to come and work from.

The Berkeley campus was purchased in 2015 as an output of the merger between Filton and Stroud and as part of an agreement to continue to invest in engineering in the area. Some points covered regarding this campus were:

- This site is now home to a University Technical College (UTC) that is developing into a vibrant campus that responds to the new nuclear agenda with a science and technology park.
- It is one of the strongest UTCs in the country and is focussed on engineering, cyber and digital courses for 14-18 year olds.
- There are 300 full time students with the capacity to grow to 600.
- It was recently graded as 'good' by Ofsted at its first inspection.
- There is a focus on green technologies and in September 2023 a Low Carbon Training Centre will open.
- £2.8m has been secured to develop additional training for digitisation and de-carbonisation.

Opportunities and areas of growth for Stroud College were discussed. There has been a rebrand to focus on creativity, sustainability, and wellbeing at the Stroud campus. This includes a new facility called SGS Create which is a dedicated facility for 14-16 year olds looking for a school-type experience but for whom mainstream education is not right. This will combine GCSEs with creative opportunities. There is capacity for 80 students from September 2023, and 50 applications have already been received.

There is further investment in science with additional science laboratory opening in September. This will support their growing work in forensics and animal science courses.

A Sustainable Futures programme is being launched in September, and T Levels have been piloted at Filton with a view to launch them at the Stroud campus from 2024.

There were previously only a small amount of higher education courses at the Stroud campus, and from September degree provision will be retracted at this campus.

Cllr Braun thanked Sara-Jane for her presentation and asked to share it with other district councillors, so they also have this overview of the SGS provision. Stroud District Council are glad to be able to support the work at Berkeley and to continue to be involved in the work that SGS are leading on.

Helen Edwards asked if there would be any potential for dental courses in the local area. From 1 April the Integrated Care Board will have responsibility for dental provision in Gloucestershire, and they are considering how to best support the dental workforce, including apprenticeships and possibly T Levels. Sara-Jane confirmed that if the numbers work and there is demand then this could be considered.

Beth Whittaker congratulated SGS on their continuing innovation, especially given the funding issues around further education. Beth asked whether the growing provision for those who find mainstream education a challenge is because young people are becoming more disaffected with mainstream education, and therefore if more needs to be done earlier on in schools so young people have the support they need. Sara-Jane noted that young people's mental health was a concern pre-pandemic, and this is now worse post-Covid. Of 4000 students aged 16-18, there were 1000 safeguarding cases last year, of which were 56% were regarding mental health. This is worse for pre-16. Mental health and special educational needs or disability (SEND) diagnoses are some of the leading causes of people leaving mainstream education, and there is expertise needed to work with people experiencing these issues. With the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis, young people are scared about their futures.

Kevin Hamblin noted that there are also young people who have chosen to be home-educated. For some of these people they need their confidence building, and offering a creative curriculum alongside GCSEs gives young people an opportunity to engage in something they enjoy. Maths and English are important and home education can mean qualifications in these subjects are harder to come by. As home education is not regulated SGS are aiming to have as much on offer as possible to support and help young people, enthuse them, and show that education can be fun.

3. Youth Voice through Informal Education – Cate James-Hodges, Stroud District Youth Council Leader and Steve Miles, Senior Youth Officer, Stroud District Council (presentation attached)

Cate and Steve gave a presentation on informal education and youth voice. Informal education is a spontaneous process of helping people to learn and is a skill that needs to be at the heart of any interaction with young people. Some parts of informal education overlap with formal education, particularly around democracy, citizenship, voting and social action.

Stroud District Youth Council (SDYC)'s work is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child, in particular three of the articles – 12, 13 and 15. A video on the National Youth Work Curriculum video was shown in part and can be viewed [here](#).

Celebrating success is key to encouraging and empowering young people. Some of SDYC's highlights of 2022/23 include participating in the 2030 Community Engagement Board, being involved with the recruitment of SDC's Head of Community Services, working with Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership regarding the annual safeguarding audit, and holding summer events to allow SDYC members to socialise and develop relationships. These demonstrate that youth voice is considered an integral part of SDC's decision making.

SDYC have recently launched a new website (<https://www.stroudyouthvoice.co.uk/>) and they are also improving their social media presence.

The impacts and outcomes of youth voice are measured through a framework and were noted as being different for different young people, but some highlights of being involved in youth voice through SDYC include learning about decision-making, training days, collaborating with other youth groups and enacting change. Young people find their involvement meaningful and enjoyable.

Beth Whittaker asked whether it is common for Council's to have a Youth Council as it feels like Stroud is pioneering in this area. Some councils are doing youth voice work but do not have the same set up as SDC at this stage. SDYC are members of the British Youth Council and this helps to gauge national ideas and groups, and in terms of district councils SDC is very progressive.

Max Comfort noted that he has mentored many people over a number of years, but he recently came across the idea of reverse mentoring where a more junior person mentors someone more senior. This brings new ideas and energy and was suggested as something SDC might consider. Kathy O'Leary noted that SDC prefer to take a mutual mentoring approach, when both parties learn from each other, and this is really encouraged at SDC. Steve Olczak noted that he has seen first-hand how beneficial reverse mentoring can be with senior people from Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)'s care leavers team being mentored by care leavers. This has been really positive. Cllr Davies is GCC's Member for Children's Services and has had a care leaver mentor and noted that he would really recommend it.

Cllr Braun thanked Cate and Steve for their presentation and noted that SDC really benefit from the input of SDYC into committee work and the development of projects and policies.

Will Mansell asked whether SDYC have much input into housing issues. Cate noted that SDYC are involved in performance monitoring of all of SDC's committees, including the Housing Committee. Housing has been raised as an issue before and there have been discussions, but as people aged 18 and under are not typically looking to buy or rent a house it is not an easy subject to get young people to engage with.

4. Nomination of Vice Chair from the voluntary and community sector

Will Mansell was nominated as a candidate for LSP Vice Chair. A poll was held online via Teams and Will Mansell was confirmed as the Vice Chair for the next two years.

5. Partners' Updates

Cllr Catherine Braun, Leader, SDC

- There are 19 apprentices across teams and services at SDC.
- For National Careers Week the HR team have been out to local careers fairs and schools, and they have noted that it has been great to be able to connect with young people.
- A number of work placements have been arranged for this summer at SDC, including in the planning department as there is a national shortage of planners.
- SDC really benefit from the involvement of SDYC in committee work and performance monitoring.
- SDC's budget for 2023/24 has just been unanimously supported, and despite inflationary pressures SDC are able to continue all services and start some new initiatives as well.
- The evaluation of Stroud district's Local Plan has been streamed live online this week, and the videos are now available on SDC's YouTube for anyone who is interested: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joMjeZ_HBdE
- Cost of living pressures continue to affect residents, and a range of help is available on SDC's website: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/costofliving>
- A progress report on SDC's 2030 Strategy will be published imminently and this can be shared once ready.

Matt Amey, Station Manager, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service

- There are four watches and 12 on-call staff at Stroud, and 13 on-call staff at Nailsworth.
- Although a lot of their work is preparing and responding to emergencies, the Fire and Rescue Service undertake Safe and Well visits for homes and businesses to support the community to protect themselves and their homes from fire.
- They also undertake familiarisation visits in large and complex buildings such as Stroud College, so they are prepared in the event of a fire.
- Community engagement is of great importance and the doors to the stations are open to partners.
- Neurodiversity Celebration Week is being recognised within the service next week.
- Firefighter apprenticeships have started with three in Stroud. It takes two years to qualify, and they are exploring something similar for on-call staff as well.

Anna Bonallack, CEO, Creative Sustainability:

- Creative Sustainability primarily work with marginalised and young people. They would love to welcome LSP at their upcoming open days and Anna will send an invitation to the group.

- Through their programmes they are able to meet young people who are going through a transitional part of their lives. They provide resources, connections, support, and advocacy. Some of the activities they put on for young people include residentials, place-based activity trips, and workshops.
- Creative Sustainability's physical location is a nice place for young people to spend time.
- They work with young people on their independence and raising self-esteem, which can often be barriers to mainstream education.
- Creative Sustainability work closely with the DWP to bring young people to them, rather than them having to attend the job centre.

Beth Whittaker, Stroud Businesswomen's Network:

- Fiona Hammond, a Careers Advisor from SGS, came to speak to Stroud Businesswomen's Network recently and this was well received.
- The network are linking into other local groups and businesses.
- Beth volunteers with [Read with Me](#), an organisation that arranges volunteers to read with and listen to primary school children reading. Schools find it very helpful, and it shows children reading can be fun and not a chore. Beth encouraged members to become a volunteer.

Helen Edwards, Deputy Director of Primary Care and Place, NHS Gloucestershire:

- The Integrated Care Board (ICB) will take commissioning responsibility for dental, optometry, and pharmacy from 1 April (this currently sits with NHS England). There are challenges in some of these services.
- NHS dentists are only intended to cover 50% of the adult population, however in Gloucestershire in 2020-21, only 28.6% of adults accessed an NHS dentist. This is compared to an England figure of 36%. The figures for children are better, with 43.9% of children accessing a dentist in Gloucestershire, which is above the national average.
- There are three main issues in relation to dentistry: workforce, access to services, and oral health promotion.
- The ICB is one member of Integrated Care Partnerships, the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Partnership. There are three unifying themes of this partnership: smoking cessation, hypertension, and employment. This partnership is in its early stages, but Helen wanted to inform the LSP as many LSP members may have contributions to make towards these three themes.
- There has been media attention regarding access to General Practice services in Gloucestershire, including TV coverage in Stroud. There have been 22.9% more General Practice appointments than pre-covid and this represents a huge increase in workload.
- The Government has a target for additional roles supporting primary care such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists – 26,000 post-holders in post by March 2024. In Gloucestershire this represents 260 posts to fill by this date, and there are already 246 in place. Of these, 52 are in the Stroud district, and they are set to exceed the national target.
- The ICB received some non-recurrent funding before Christmas to support the health impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. They used this to make contributions to the existing community hubs and food pantry in the district.

Geoffrey Beckerleg, Stroud Chamber of Trade and Commerce:

- The Chamber, in conjunction with some members of the Stroud District Tourism Partnership, are starting to see if there is a way of working with SGS College, where there is an intention to start a hospitality programme and help turn around the misconceptions of this important sector in our economy. This is both important to those seeking their first career and work returners.

Jason Spinney, Community Capacity Builder, GRCC:

- Jason is relatively new in post at GRCC and is deputising for Barbara Piranty at today's LSP meeting. His role at GRCC is to help individuals set up new community groups or charities and support them with implementing governance and structure. Jason is also available to support parish and town councils with their community engagement.
- There are lots of new ideas and initiatives in the Stroud district.
- GRCC have been assessing grant applications for DEFRA's Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund.
- GRCC's centenary is in July so they are planning lots of celebrations.
- Jason is looking to broaden his network so please send any community groups his way if they would like any support.

Kevin Hamblin, Group Chief Executive Principal, SGS:

- SGS were approached by UK Research and Innovation to take on their Active Building Centre assets. This resource has now been transferred, and the local sub-regional project of Eco-Futures now has national significance.
- There is an opportunity to develop their retrofit courses.
- Financial pressure on SGS will be significant. They have received an 0.5% increase in funding, but staff are expecting pay awards north of 5%. Their energy costs have also doubled.
- Recruitment and retention of staff is extremely difficult.
- The demographics in Stroud don't allow for much growth compared to Bristol, where there is much more house building.
- It is predicted that the quality of education provision will be reduced across the country, particularly as peripheral support services will not be affordable, which in turn will have an impact on the mental health of young people.

Cara Laver, Communications Apprentice, and Rachael Lythgoe, Communications Officer, SDC:

- Tricorn House has been in the news as it has a new owner after 27 years, and there is some activity on the site. SDC have put some FAQs on their website: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/tricorn>
- SDC are holding a Canal Spring Festival on 13 and 14 May which includes [The Lock Challenge](#) where you can run or walk along part of the canal route. SDC are looking for volunteers for the festival, and you will receive food during the day and a free t-shirt for volunteering. If you would like to volunteer, or know someone who would, please email hello@cotswoldcanalsconnected.org
- SDC are celebrating International Women's Day over a month with lots of activities planned. This includes a walk with Stroud Women's Refuge who are

SDC's Charity of the Year, SDC's apprentices interviewing the Leader and Deputy Leader, and a new Women's Group being launched.

- SDC's Contract Services team have recently been shortlisted and highly commended for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund demonstrator at Hamfallow Court, in the Retrofit Academy's national awards for 'Best Local Authority or Social Housing Retrofit Programme'.

Max Comfort, Stroud Commonwealth:

- Stroud Commonwealth are a social business that run The Exchange in Stroud – an affordable community venue and workspace for local businesses.
- The Exchange has been a success story and they are completely full.
- Their meeting rooms are well used by the community, and they are freely available to Ukrainians.
- The Exchange has been around for 16 years and the Commonwealth are planning to explore if they can buy the building. One idea is to demolish the building and rebuild it with genuinely affordable flats on top.

Cate James-Hodges, Leader, Stroud District Youth Council:

- SDYC have launched a new website: <https://www.stroudyouthvoice.co.uk/>
- They have 14 manifesto statements which are being profiled on social media, and the full document is available on their website.
- The annual review of these statements is due in April 2023.

Steve Olczak and Carole Stubbs, Department of Work and Pensions:

- Steve is the Partnership Manager at the DWP and supports all the job centres in Gloucestershire.
- The DWP is passionate about youth voice, and it was noted that unless youth engagement is targeted in different ways, the results will always be the same.
- Steve highlighted the work Creative Sustainability do as they really help and support people who have barriers that prevent them from entering the workforce.
- The DWP are focussing on people aged 50 and over, who are out of work due to health conditions and increasing numbers of redundancies. They are looking at getting the right support in place.
- On 22 March, 10.30am-1pm, a Work Ability Fair is being held at Standguide in Stroud (above Sports Direct). This will include 6-8 disability confident employers and 8-10 provider organisations who support those with health conditions. A Ukrainian translator will be at the event all day. Please contact Steve if you are interested in this event.

Russell Warner, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Gloucestershire Area:

- Russell thanked Carole for her time as the LSP Chair over the last two years. She stepped in last minute to fill the role and has guided the group through Covid and moving the meetings online at short notice.
- The South West FSB Celebrating Small Business Awards 2023 were held on 1 March, with the Business & Product Innovation Award being sponsored by Renishaw. Nearly all prizes in all categories mentioned sustainability.
- The FSB are working on Together Gloucestershire, encouraging large businesses to meet with smaller ones.
- The Gloucestershire Business Show is coming up.

- Russell sat on a judging panel for some business awards at Hartpury College.

Cllr Stephen Davies, Leader of the Opposition, SDC:

- A Care Leavers Awards evening is being held later this month.

Will Mansell, The Grace Network:

- Glad to be joining the LSP as Vice Chair.
- Good to hear about education and employment for young people but housing needs to be a consideration too.

Carole noted that it has been a pleasure to be Chair of the LSP, where everyone has a common goal to help people in the Stroud district. Carole will carry on attending the meetings as and when she can.

Please send any requests for future agenda items or suggestions for future meeting themes to Hannah Barton, hannah.barton@stroud.gov.uk

Next meeting

Friday 9 June

The meetings are 9:00am for a 9:15am start, with meeting end by 11:30am.