



**STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**  
<http://lsp.stroud.gov.uk>

Meeting held on Friday 19 June 2026

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill

**Theme: Barriers and opportunities to youth participation in the Stroud district**

**Present:**

Angela Gillingham	Head of Community Services, Stroud District Council
Annie Gould	Trust Relationships Manager, Longfield Hospice
Barbara Piranty	Chief Executive Officer, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
Beth Whittaker	Third sector / community involvement
Cllr Elisabeth Newman	Randwick & Westrip Parish Council
Elizabeth Hall	Chief Executive Officer, Citizens Advice Stroud
Georgia Spooner	Climate Engagement and Advocacy Officer, Stroud District Council
Mark McShane	Stroud High Head Teacher
Niki Gould	Assistant Director of Services & Innovation Gloucestershire, Family Action
Rebecca Cleaver	Economic Development Officer
Russell Warner	Russell Warner
Thomas Haines	Member of Parliament - Stroud
Will Mansell (Chair)	Founder, The Grace Network

**Apologies received:**

Adrian Judge	Director, The Engine Room
Adrian Oldman	Director, Transition Stroud
Alan Inman-Ward	CEO, Age UK Gloucestershire
Alyssa Pearce	Youth Council Chair, Stroud District Council
Anna Bonallack	CEO, Creative Sustainability
Anna Herbert	Chief Executive Officer, OPENhouse
Ben Falconer	Corporate Communications Manager
Chloe Warden	Senior Economic Officer, Gloucestershire County Council
Chris Pockett	Head of Communications, Renishaw Plc
Chris Uttley	Climate Change and Sustainability Manager, Stroud District Council
Cllr Chloe Turner	Leader of the Council
Cllr Katy Hofmann	Leader of the Labour Group
Cllr Lindsey Green	Leader of Conservative Group
Dai Briley	NFU Mutual Agent at Gloucester
Dan Morris	Deputy Chairman, Howard Tenens
David Withey (Vice Chair)	Chief Executive & Principal, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS)
Dr Roma Walker	Stroud League of Friends
Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP	Member of Parliament - North Cotswolds

Hattie Severinsen	Gloucestershire County Advisor, NFU
Helen Edwards	NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
Ian Hunter	Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Stroud
James Brain	Strategic Director of Place, Stroud District Council
Kathy O'Leary	Chief Executive, Stroud District Council
LaToya Howe	Youth Participation Officer
Lee Taylor	Stroud & Nailsworth Station Manager, Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue
Lisa Wilson	Chief Executive, GL11 Community Hub
Max Comfort	Director, Stroud Commonwealth
Roz Savage	Member of Parliament - South Cotswolds
Sarah Clark	Head of Environmental Health, Stroud District Council
Steve Olczak	Partnership Manager, Department of Work and Pensions
Sue Eskins	Chair, Stroud Businesswomen's Network
Suzanne Booker	Lilian Faithfull Care

### Guests and Support Officers

Angele Presdee	Principal Economic Officer, Gloucestershire County Council
Claire Wardell	Chief of Staff for Roz Savage, Member of Parliament – South Cotswolds
Cllr Steve Robinson	District Councillor for Nailsworth & Horsley on behalf of Cllr Katy Hofmann
Elizabeth Bruce	Stroud Youth Action Network (SCYAN)
Emma Smith	LSP Coordinator
Penny Chislett	Director of Education Support Operations, SGS College
Rebecca Bound	Senior Early Careers STEM Outreach Officer, Renishaw
Richard South	Associate Assistant Headteacher, Thomas Keeble School
Sally Daley	Stroud Youth Action Network (SCYAN)
Year 9 Students (Dan and Arlo)	Thomas Keeble School

#### 1. Welcome, introductions, apologies.

The Chair explained the purpose of the LSP and why we have chosen to take a focus on youth. The Chair introduced all the speakers and requested the rest of the LSP introduced themselves.

#### 2. Updated LSP Terms of Reference

The Chair provided an overview of the terms of reference and pulled out key areas that resonate with the new LSP focus. Barbara Piranty made some suggestions for improvement to wording, and all Members of the LSP approved the Terms of Reference.

#### 3. Draft Youth Action Plan | Stroud District Council

Angela Gillingham highlighted that partnership working and youth services have not always gone hand in hand, making the development of the Youth Action Plan a significant milestone for the district. She outlined the journey to producing the plan, including work to increase young people's access to leisure opportunities and the role that providing safe spaces for young people to socialise can play in reducing anti-social behaviour.

The development of the youth strategy began in 2024. Early in the process, the team recognised the need for an independent facilitator to support consultation and engagement activities. The work was guided by a shared vision:

"For a community where every young person has their rights as a child respected; is empowered to thrive and actively participate in opportunities that will lead to their personal, social and educational development; and subsequently shape a future that reflects their hopes, talents and potential."

More than 70 partners were involved throughout the process, which began with a blank sheet of paper and a commitment to collaborative working. Three facilitated workshops brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including service providers, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Family Action, education representatives, youth clubs, health organisations and other partners.

The team wanted to take a fresh approach and explore ways of working that had not previously been attempted within the district. Consultants were brought in to support engagement with adults and partners, while ensuring that the voices of young people remained central to the process. There was a strong recognition that adults can sometimes assume they know what young people want. As a result, the team deliberately focused on meaningful engagement rather than making assumptions.

The purpose of the consultation and engagement exercises was to work together with partners to develop the initial strategy. Angela emphasised that meaningful engagement takes time. Over a 12-month period, extensive consultation and relationship-building activities were undertaken to bring together different groups, establish trust and determine what was within and outside the scope of the strategy. Although the original intention had been to produce a strategy within a year, feedback from partners suggested that the draft was not yet fit for purpose. The team therefore took time to reflect on the feedback, reconsider their direction and focus on what they were ultimately trying to achieve.

During this period, the wider youth sector was also evolving. The National Youth Agency and Gloucestershire County Council both published youth strategies, many aspects of which mirrored themes already emerging through the district's work. This demonstrated that local issues were aligned with national priorities. As a result, it became clear that producing another strategy would add limited value. Instead, partners concluded that a collaborative action plan, focused on agreed actions and outcomes, would be more effective.

A key message emerging from the consultation was that young people wanted their voices to be heard and to influence decisions affecting their lives. They were clear that they did not want adults making assumptions about their needs and priorities.

Mental health featured prominently throughout the consultation, with concerns raised about lengthy waiting times for support services, which can in some cases extend to months or even years. Young people also expressed a desire for safe spaces within their communities where they could meet, socialise and feel a sense of belonging. Transport was another recurring theme, having been identified through multiple workstreams. Given the district's rural nature, poor transport links can significantly limit young people's independence and access to opportunities. Education-related concerns also emerged, including examination pressures and a perceived lack of practical life skills education.

Angela provided an overview of the action plan themes, explaining that the actions focus not only on what the council can deliver, but also on the role of partner organisations. She stressed that the action plan is intended to be owned and delivered collectively across the district, rather than by the council alone.

The Youth Action Plan will be presented to the Community Services and Licensing Committee in September for approval, after which delivery can commence. Angela also highlighted the shortage of qualified youth workers and noted that increasing this workforce is a key objective of the action plan, ensuring that young people have access to high-quality support.

Angela also outlined recent work aimed at encouraging young people to access leisure centres in the north and south of the district. Over a five-week period during February and March, the team delivered activities to build trust and strengthen relationships with students from local schools. They were then invited to attend activity days at local leisure centres, with transport provided by the council. The sessions included guidance on accessing facilities, registering with the centres and navigating available information, helping to reduce barriers that can discourage their participation. Further activity is planned throughout the year in partnership with SGS College and Rednock School.

Angela highlighted that external funding has been secured to support initiatives focused on creating safer streets and tackling anti-social behaviour through sport, physical activity and educational programmes.

Thomas Haines asked about the future of the Youth Council and how it had been involved in the development of the action plan. Angela explained that Youth Council members played a central role in designing and delivering the consultation with young people, enabling their views and experiences to directly inform the action plan.

#### **4. Opportunities for Young People's Personal Development through Activity – Brimscombe | Thomas Keeble School**

Dan and Arlo (Year 9) from Thomas Keeble School introduced their proposal for the Brimscombe Port site, outlining their vision to transform the area into a space for sports and recreation. Their idea is to create a facility that could accommodate activities such as basketball, football and skateboarding. They added that sports equipment and a suitable pitch would be well used by local young people and suggested that, at a minimum, the area could be cleared and made more accessible for use.

The presenters explained that Brimscombe Port offers a large area of land that is currently underutilised and has potential to become a space that can be enjoyed by the whole community. They suggested that facilities supporting a range of outdoor activities, including cycling and biking, would encourage greater use of the site. They also referenced Rush Skatepark, highlighting its popularity among visitors from across Gloucestershire, including professional skateboarders, as an example of how recreational facilities can be valuable.

Dan and Arlo provided an overview of both the opportunities and challenges associated with delivering their proposals. They emphasised how they bring the community together, while also acknowledging practicality and what is realistic. In recognition of this, they presented alternative options on a smaller scale, including the development of a smaller outdoor skatepark or a pump track.

Richard South spoke about the importance of encouraging young people to spend time outdoors and be physically active. He highlighted that Dan and Arlo as excellent examples of young people who want to contribute to discussions about their local area and who want involvement in decision-making.

The Chair noted that he sits on the Brimscombe Port Regeneration Committee and outlined some of the ways in which the committee is seeking to involve local residents and communities in the regeneration of the site.

Rebecca Bound praised the presentation, commending the speakers for presenting an ambitious long-term vision while also recognising the importance of proposing realistic and achievable alternatives.

Annie Gould commented that Brimscombe Port does not currently feel particularly safe and asked whether there were opportunities to improve safety at the site. The Chair explained that the area is fenced and noted that there is a smaller section of land on the western side that is free from rubble and more suitable for immediate use. He advised that the short-term plan is to begin work in this area before expanding into the wider site as regeneration progresses.

Claire Wardell commended the presenters for the quality of their presentation, while Niki Gould noted that the proposal appeared both practical and achievable.

Angela Gillingham offered two options for support in the project. Firstly, she proposed bringing the officer currently leading consultation work on the Play Strategy to Thomas Keble School to engage directly with students. Secondly, she advised that the proposal appeared to align well with the values and eligibility criteria of the StroudFunding platform, which supports community projects through crowdfunding and match funding opportunities. Angela indicated that she could arrange for a member of the team to visit the school and support the students in developing an application. Thomas Haines suggested that the presenters engage with their local Member of Parliament and make use of online tools such as the [FindYourMP](#) and [WriteToThem](#) to raise awareness of their proposal and seek additional support.

Rebecca Cleaver added that, from a practical perspective, the presenters would be welcome to deliver their presentation to members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

In closing, the Chair reflected that the discussion demonstrated the importance of collaboration. He noted that the Local Strategic Partnership brings together organisations and individuals who can work collectively to help turn ideas such as this into reality.

## **5. Who we are and what we do | Stroud Collection Youth Action Network (SCYAN)**

Liz Bruce introduced the work of the Stroud Community Youth Action Network (SCYAN), a partnership of eight youth clubs operating across the Stroud district. Liz, who supports the youth club in Minchinhampton, explained that the network collectively engages with approximately 1,000 young people aged 8–18 each week.

Liz described youth clubs as an important “third space” for young people, somewhere that is neither home nor school, but a safe environment where they can develop, socialise and access support. She explained that SCYAN clubs work collaboratively to support young people and their families. The network benefits from strong geographical coverage across the district and is distinctive because it is community-led, reflecting local needs and priorities.

Liz provided an overview of SCYAN’s development, explaining that the network emerged following the withdrawal of funding for Gloucestershire youth services approximately 15 years ago. In response, parish and town councils sought to bridge the gap in provision. Minchinhampton and Nailsworth youth clubs began working together to establish community-led model. Avening, Wotton-under-Edge and Kingswood also seek to develop their own youth clubs.

SCYAN members meet every four to six weeks to share learning, discuss emerging issues and coordinate activity across the network. Liz highlighted the increasing challenges associated with social media and young people’s access to inappropriate online content, including digital pornography. She noted that youth workers have encountered concerns involving children as young as year 5 and that SCYAN is keen to develop educational programmes focused on healthy, realistic relationships and the harmful misconceptions that can arise from exposure to this content.

Liz also outlined how SCYAN responds to emerging trends affecting young people. This includes work addressing issues associated with the “manosphere” and the growing trend of young people taking supplements such as creatine at an increasingly young age. SCYAN has been working with the University of Gloucestershire, which has developed programmes exploring body image and body dysmorphia among young women. The network is interested in adapting similar approaches for young men, with a focus on promoting healthy attitudes towards fitness, wellbeing and body image.

The network also provides support around substance misuse. Liz explained that youth workers seek to help young people understand the risks associated with drugs and make informed choices. Alongside this, SCYAN delivers targeted activities and opportunities designed to provide positive alternatives and reduce risk-taking behaviours. She reflected that many of the challenges facing young people today are significantly different from those experienced by previous generations. Funding remains a challenge for the network. Liz explained that SCYAN did not receive dedicated funding until approximately three years ago and continues to rely heavily on volunteers. The network’s annual operating costs are approximately £50,000. A recent award of £25,000 from a local parish council has provided valuable support and will help strengthen delivery of the youth clubs. To maximise resources, clubs work collaboratively to share activities and equipment, including laser tag sessions, climbing walls and spray-painting equipment.

Transport was identified as a major concern across the district. Liz highlighted examples of young people travelling on scooters late at night, often in the dark, simply to access meals and activities at their local youth club. She stressed that such situations demonstrate the significant transport challenges faced by many young people in rural communities.

Sally Daley spoke about the importance of inclusion and diversity within SCYAN’s work. She explained that youth clubs actively consider who can access their provision and seek to understand and remove barriers to participation. Sally emphasised the importance of putting young people first and noted the continued success of the clubs, reflected in the fact that young people consistently return and remain engaged.

Sally highlighted the importance of maintaining open and honest relationships with both young people and their parents. She noted that both she and Liz are well known within their communities due to their regular presence.

The clubs provide a wide range of positive activities and work hard to ensure that all young people can participate, regardless of their circumstances. Sally noted that they also aim to provide food for everyone attending their Wednesday sessions. Drawing on her previous experience working in children’s mental health services, she explained that social isolation was one of the most significant issues she encountered. Many young people struggled to form meaningful connections with others, reinforcing the vital role that youth clubs play in creating opportunities for belonging, friendship and community.

Claire Wardell commented that transport appeared to be a recurring theme throughout the discussion and offered her support in exploring solutions. Thomas Haines noted that employment opportunities for young people had been a significant topic of discussion at the previous Local Strategic Partnership meeting and suggested that support from partner organisations in this area would be valuable. He also observed that the transition into adulthood can be particularly challenging for some young people.

In response, Liz explained that the Minchinhampton youth club operates a policy whereby young people with additional needs can continue attending senior youth club sessions and, where appropriate and supported by a DBS check, assist with activities for other groups. Councillor Steve Robinson reflected on Liz’s comments regarding the withdrawal of Gloucestershire County Council funding for youth services and the subsequent impact on youth

provision and youth centres. He explained that he had been involved in securing £56,000 of funding for young people in the Nailsworth area and observed that there is now greater recognition of the negative consequences of previous funding reductions. He noted that Gloucestershire County Council has started reinvesting in youth work and emphasised the importance of having dedicated youth workers embedded within local communities.

## **6. Future LSP meeting themes**

The chair asked the members to discuss future themes and to email any suggestions to Emma Smith on [emma.smith@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:emma.smith@stroud.gov.uk).

## **7. Partners' Updates**

- **Claire Wardell, Chief of Staff for Roz Savage, Member of Parliament – South Cotswolds**

Two weeks ago, Roz Savage launched a new project called the Stronger South Cotswolds, an initiative to empower local communities. They brought together 120 people in a room to talk about the gaps, the difficulties, best practice, and where funding opportunities exist. They are running another event in November where they involve more youth services, she asked that people contact her if they would like to get involved.

- **Babara Piranty, Chief Executive Officer, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council**

The Village of the Year competition is well underway; judges are pleased with the Stroud area submissions. This year they have an award for a young person up to the age of 21, who has overcome adversity, with the High Sheriffs Special Award.

- **Georgia Spooner, Climate Engagement and Advocacy Officer, Stroud District Council**

There are potential funding opportunities towards walking and cycling projects, please contact Georgia to discuss in more detail.

- **Rebecca Cleaver, Economic Development Officer, Stroud District Council**

The Economic Delivery Framework has been submitted to Strategy and Resources Committee, and there is money available as part of the Culture Grants, which awards community projects of up to £5,000.

- **Niki Gould, Assistant Director of Services & Innovation Gloucestershire, Family Action**

Successful family fun days developed in partnership with stakeholders for children and young people were held over May half-term, they are looking at doing more of those events in the summer half term.

- **Thomas Haines, Dr Simon Opher MP Office**

Government have announced free bus travel for kids under 15 years-old, however delivery of this initiative is up to the individual bus companies, therefore Simon Opher will be writing to the companies to ask if they can run this across the Stroud district.

- **Rebecca Bound, Senior Early Careers STEM Outreach Officer, Renishaw**

There are 70 places being offered to young people in Renishaw for summer placement.

- **Cllr Steve Robinson, District Councillor for Nailsworth & Horsley**

The Robin service is hopefully due to be set up in the autumn.

- **Angela Gillingham, Head of Community Services, Stroud District Council**

During August, every Friday, they will be doing picnic in the park at Stratford Park which includes some free activities, this is all about access to open spaces, physical activity and enjoyment, this event is targeted at families.

**Next meeting**  
Friday 11 September 2026

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