



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

**Meeting held on Friday 28 November 2025**

**Council Chamber, Ebley Mill**

**Theme: Town Centre Regeneration**

**Present:**

Adrian Oldman	Director, Transition Stroud
Alan Inman-Ward	CEO, Age UK Gloucestershire
Alyssa Pearce	Youth Council Chair, Stroud District Council
Angela Presdee	Principal Economic Officer, Gloucestershire County Council
Annie Gould	Trust Relationships Manager, Longfield Hospice
Chris Pockett	Head of Communications, Renishaw Plc
Cllr Elisabeth Newman	Randwick & Westrip Parish Council
Cllr Katy Hofmann	Leader of the Labour Group
David Withey (Vice Chair)	Chief Executive & Principal, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS)
Elizabeth Hall	Chief Executive Officer, Citizens Advice Stroud
Ian Hunter	Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Stroud
Margaret Greaves	Stroud League of Friends
Russell Warner	Russell Warner
Sue Eskins	Chair, Stroud Businesswomen's Network
Will Mansell (Chair)	Founder, The Grace Network

**Apologies received:**

Alison Truphet	Amberley Shop & Cafe
Anna Bonallack	CEO, Creative Sustainability
Barbara Piranty	Chief Executive Officer, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
Beth Whittaker	Third sector / community involvement
Chloe Warden	Senior Economic Officer, Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Chloe Turner	Leader of the Council
Cllr Lindsey Green	Leader of Conservative Group
Dai Briley	NFU Mutual Agent at Gloucester
Dan Morris	Deputy Chairman, Howard Tenens
Dr Simon Opher	Member of Parliament - Stroud
Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP	Member of Parliament - North Cotswolds
Hattie Severinsen	Gloucestershire County Advisor, NFU
Helen Edwards	NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
Kathy O'Leary	Chief Executive, Stroud District Council
Keith Gerrard	Strategic Director of Communities, SDC
Lee Taylor	Stroud & Nailsworth Station Manager, Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue
Lisa Wilson	Chief Executive, GL11 Community Hub
Mark McShane	Stroud High Head Teacher
Max Comfort	Director, Stroud Commonwealth

Steve Olczak	Partnership Manager, Department of Work and Pensions
Suzanne Booker	Lilian Faithfull Care

## **Guests and Support Officers**

Adrian Judge	Director, The Engine Room
Dr Nicholas Falk	Executive Director, The URBED Trust
Emma Smith	LSP Coordinator
LaToya Howe	Youth Participation Officer

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

The chair introduced the theme for the meeting and spoke about the importance of the Stroud Local Strategic Partnership. The chair welcomed everyone and noted the apologies.

### **2. What are the real needs?**

Adrian Judge introduced himself and described his career and background, Adrian is the chair of the Chantry Centre, which is a community centre in Cam and Dursley, as well as Director at The Engine Hub.

The Engine Hub was established following a conversation about what the local economy might look like in Cam and Dursley post-covid. They were inspired by the work that the Chair has done through The Grace Network and wanted to replicate something similar.

The purpose of The Engine Hub was to be able to support the local economy through a social enterprise using a show and tell type model. This was to encourage others to set up new businesses in places like Cam and Dursley to show them how they could be successful.

It was identified that there was a lack of local entertainment in the area for younger people, and after exploring many ideas, they decided to develop and run an escape room. To date, 900 games have been run, and attendees have utilised other services like local pubs or restaurants nearby, generating business for more than just themselves.

Adrian and his partners conducted an exercise to understand the local demography. Younger families have migrated from places like Bristol, and they wanted to provide some touchpoints and places for them to go in the local area. They conducted a survey with local businesses and found that there was a significant number of small single person businesses set up in the local area, with less of a focus on high street shops. There was also a need for a business network with so many independent businesses. It also was established that there is no central hub in Cam and Dursley and rather multiple community assets.

Adrian began to discuss the needs identified for the local area. Feedback from the survey identified that there was nowhere in the local area for independent businesses to expand into to support with business growth, most respondents worked out of their own properties and wanted to see some smaller business units available to work from. The Engine Hub took over an empty high street location for pop-up markets and co-working, but unfortunately uptake was limited.

The survey identified the need for co-working spaces, this was trialled, but the demand wasn't there. Small businesses are less likely to pay for a space to work, when they can work from home, despite feedback from the survey.

Adrian explained that for all town centre shops, there needs to be footfall. Large local events are a successful mechanism to encourage newcomers to come to the town centre and discover high street shops outside of the event.

Adrian noted that Leaf and Ground café and shop in Cam has been successful, the weekly car boot sale has also become another staple to bring footfall into town.

There was a discussion about how social media needs to be innovative and continual to encourage visitors to local businesses, which can be a difficult craft to master.

Adrian noted that it can be tempting to say that you can't do things, but if you scale things down and provide a great experience within the natural constraints, you can still be successful. An example of this is the micro-brewery called The Hoptician in Dursley, which has been hugely successful despite being in a very small venue. They have overcome their constraints for space by hiring the area underneath the town hall on days where it is busier.

Adrian advised that they are relocating the escape room into the Chantry Centre to enable it to become part of a wider community, it also means other provisions at the centre are also available for a wider pool of customers.

The Engine Room are constantly adapting to what they are learning all the time, fundamentally what they have discovered is that it takes a lot of perseverance and resilience to set up your own business. Anything that they can do to support others in setting up their own business is important; this also includes making the environment better so independent businesses feel part of the community.

Alyssa Pearce asked how many young people they get coming to the escape rooms. Adrian advised that although they certainly attract young people, the activity is typically intergenerational, he estimated that a third of groups have someone under the age of 16 with them. There was a discussion about developing the escape room in partnership with young people to attract them to the venue.

There was a discussion about what support Adrian had acquired from other organisations in the district as part of the development of The Engine Hub, this was followed up with a conversation about how the escape room has successfully self-funded itself so far.

Sue Eskins and Alan Inman-Ward raised some interesting points about utilising co-working space for independent workers and charities, this was agreed to be discussed outside of the session.

### **3. Renewing Old Town Centres**

Dr Nicholas Falkner introduced himself by noting his involvement with the renovation of Ebley Mill. He provided some background on his career in America and spoke about how older buildings were being repurposed into alternative businesses.

Dr Falk explained that one of his first opportunities to redevelop a town was the Sowerby Bridge Heritage Action Zone. The headmaster of a local school wanted someone to revitalise what was a derelict and run down space into somewhere more desirable.

A lot of work by The URBED Trust has been based on research about what drives cities growth, part of that included an analysis of suburbs in greater London, this is where they developed the report of 'A city of villages.' Dr Falk elaborated that train stations were crucial for the suburbs eco-system, and he developed the idea of a 'string of pearls.' This was demonstrated through an image on the presentation.

The URBED Trust were commissioned to advise how to revive the town centres. They came up with a simple framework which could do town centre health checks, the three A's of action: Accessibility, Amenity and Attractions.

Dr Falk described an event in Birmingham where they got 100 people together in one weekend from a variety of different areas and backgrounds, and proposed the question; what do you think is needed to make the town centre successful?

Several key conclusions were made; town centres were no longer the ideal place for families, there are many more online retail competitors, and cars were dominating the town centres. Many towns have lost their landmarks, it's essential that people rethink what town centres are for, consider setting up beacon projects that sow the way, share lessons with one another and recast charges on property.

Dr Falk described what the town centres are good for, he outlined that town centres are a hub of information and knowledge, they have creative quarters for people to visit, community services, places to visit for food and drink, enterprise clusters and places where you can learn like museums, and various places that people choose to meet.

Stroud Futures was an initiative developed over 10 years ago where the idea that Stroud could be a linear city was developed, it was identified that residents and businesses could make the most of the area by linking up the stations. Dr Falk advised that people should be making the most of existing places rather than building new ones.

Dr Falk introduced a project at Brighton Station in the New England Quarter. They were approached by the community to develop the local area, and it was completely transformed. Dr Falk finished by outlining that there are three things that underpin success: Ambition, brokerage and continuity.

Cllr Katy Hofmann commented about how she likes the advice about being bold and to just go for what can be achieved.

There was a conversation about what Dr Falk means by beacon projects, he defined this by a building or point for others to see and be inspired from. Dr Falk followed this up with a description of an eco-house project in India and the involvement from the local community.

#### **4. 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). The theme of the next LSP meeting will be circulated in January 2026.

## 5. Partners' Updates

- **David Withey, Chief Executive and Principal, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS)**

David asked that any feedback members have about The Growth Hub are to be sent to him.

- **Adrian Oldman, Director, Transition Stroud**

As part of the Pedal Power scheme, 17 electric bikes are available to all adult riders for hire. These can be hired from £30 - £70 per month, you can find out more information on the website [www.pedal-power.bike](http://www.pedal-power.bike). Transition Stroud also have allocated £5,000 of funding for local organisations to apply for, please contact [admin@transitionstroud.org](mailto:admin@transitionstroud.org) for more information.

- **Angela Presdee, Gloucestershire County Council**

City region board is pleased to say they have agreed to support the Gloucestershire Local Growth Plan. GCC is working with the local plan authorities about future strategies, they have commissioned a piece of work for a housing and economic needs assessment.

- **LaToya Howe, Youth Participation Officer**

They have recently completed the consultation for the Youth Strategy, please find this circulated with the papers.

- **Chris Pockett, Head of Communications, Renishaw Plc**

Families of Renishaw's founders have created a joint holding company to hold a majority stake in the business. Deltam Holdings Ltd have taken a 50.25% share of Renishaw's issued share capital.

- **Alan Inman-Ward, CEO, Age UK**

They are growing their Voice of Older People Panel in partnership with Gloucestershire Older Persons' Association. It's developed from 33 to over 275 over the past few months and they are keen to ensure a good range of diversity, especially across all parts of the county, including Stroud. If anyone is interested in having their voice heard, or would like to share the opportunity, details can be found here:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire/get-involved/voiceolderpeople/>

- **Annie Gould, Trust Relationships Manager, Longfield Hospice**

Longfield Community Hospice invites you to make a difference this holiday season through their annual Christmas Tree Recycling Event. Participate in this eco-friendly and charitable initiative to responsibly dispose of real Christmas trees. In return for a voluntary donation, Longfield's team of volunteers will collect trees from homes at the end of the festive season to be recycled.

<https://just-helping.org.uk/register-tree>

Last year they recycled more than 4,000 trees, raising over £80,000. They are hoping to increase these figures this year by recycling even more trees. £85,000 could help fund over 2000 hours of Hospice at Home care or be used to support wellbeing, counselling and bereavement support services.

They are looking for extra hands right now. This can include bringing a corporate or community team or volunteering individually. If anyone can assist with transporting trees,

please reach out to them directly. They can provide vans but appreciate the offer of vans – or perhaps a company can sponsor the cost of van hire – around £150 per van, per day.

- **Margaret Greaves, Chair, Stroud League of Friends**

Development of static Breast Screening Facility within Stroud Hospital building is awaiting a confirmed date next year for commencement of refurbishment works in the designated location, to be followed by installation of screening equipment.

Following the joyous service at Holy Trinity Church (Stroud) attended by Bishop of Gloucester Rachel Treweek in July, other events will take place within the hospital and local community to extend the celebratory spirit of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Stroud General Hospital into the first half of 2026. These include a fundraising festive concert by the Stuart Singers at Holy Trinity Church (Minchinhampton) on **Friday 12th December** and an exhibition of archives from all fifteen decades at the Museum in the Park in the spring (date to follow shortly).

- **Elizabeth Hall, CEO, Citizens Advice Stroud**

Please see the child poverty report circulated with the papers.

Please send any requests for future agenda items or suggestions for future meeting themes to Emma Smith, [emma.smith@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:emma.smith@stroud.gov.uk).

**Next meeting**  
27 March 2026

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