

Stroud District Council Report December 2025

Council meetings

Link to meeting agenda and documents in the committee title.

Development Control Committee - 2nd December

- Solar photovoltaic farm at Epney, Framilode (S.25/1011/FUL) - REFUSED
 - Committee followed the planning officer recommendation to refuse the application. There was considerable local opposition due to the proposed location in flood zone and visual impact. Noted insufficient biodiversity-net-gain and habitat-regulation assessments for protected sites, lack of consideration of construction traffic and inadequate mitigation for public rights-of-way users.
- Symn Lane Car Park, Wotton - Variation of approved plans (S.23/2101/VAR) - PERMITTED
 - Committee followed the planning officer recommendation to grant permission. This will change the previously approved plans and removing 12 of the parking bays that had been planned adjacent to the access road. It will also require landscaping, improvement of the car park layout, provision of disabled parking and ancillary works.
- Demolition of outbuilding and two story extension, Sheepscombe, Stroud (S.25/1431/HHOLD) - PERMITTED
 - Committee followed the recommendation to permit and also consented to the Listed Building application.
- Video recording

Environment Committee - 4th December

- Approved the new Climate and Nature Strategy for Stroud district.
 - Allows the council to increase our emphasis on restoring nature and adapting our district to the impacts of a changing climate (heat, floods, drought, storms), as well as continuing to focus on reducing carbon emissions from the council's direct operations and the goods and services purchased, capital works and pensions.
- Litter Code of Practice
 - Reducing litter is a key priority for the council. Currently there is a national 'Voluntary Code of Practice for Food on the Go' that was agreed over 20 years ago and is outdated and ineffective at addressing the scale of modern litter pollution. Agreed that the Council will seek national support for this voluntary code to be made mandatory. Noted that businesses have a vested interest in keeping their premises and surrounding area free and clear of litter to attract custom and achieve financial stability. However, there is little incentive for them to contribute to community cleanliness beyond their

boundaries and no requirement for them to comply with the current voluntary code.

- Member - Officer Reports
 - Strategic Planning Advisory Board
 - Noted that the recent correspondence between the Council and the planning inspectors about the draft Local Plan, in relation to new National Highways evidence, that changed the requirements for junctions 12 and 14 of the M5 motorway. The Council has requested a dedicated hearing to consider this new evidence and reaffirmed it will not withdraw the draft Local Plan if such a hearing is denied. Instead the Council will request that the Inspectors issue a final report explaining why they consider the Plan unsound. This report would provide Development Management with an assessment of all draft sites, identifying any potential issues or confirming their suitability for development.
 - Climate Leadership Gloucestershire
 - New Climate & Risk Vulnerability Assessment for Gloucestershire. Some gaps such as the risk of sea-level-rise were noted. This assessment will help to inform the council's assessment for Stroud district. An update on the county-side Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) had identified five priority actions (community energy, up-skilling, data & mapping, energy stakeholder engagement, and deployment of renewables) for implementation.
 - Cotswold National Landscape Board
 - Presentation of the international nature target of 30% of land for nature by 2030, and the 40% target for the Cotswolds, stressing urgent habitat restoration and the need for quantifiable land-use ambitions for sectors across the Cotswolds.
 - Called for stronger links between the Landscape Board's work and the district's Local Plan, plus greater funding for large-scale projects like the Cotswold Landscape Initiative.
 - Cotswold Voluntary Wardens - currently 373 active wardens. Core activities are Work Parties, Parish Wardening, Walk Leading and Outdoor Learning.
 - Stroud Valleys Project Board
 - Discussed restructuring core posts to add a Project Development Manager, aiming to secure core funding and expand project delivery capacity.
 - Highlighted recent community-driven achievements: sensory garden award, river-guardian work, volunteer-led habitat restoration, and upcoming volunteer-run litter-pick events.
 - Gloucestershire Resource & Waste Partnership

- Summarised findings about hidden holiday-let costs falling on councils due to business rates/council tax misclassification.
- Govt regulatory changes for household collection of plastic bags and wrappings expected within a couple of years. Until then people can drop off plastics at supermarkets.
- Updated on national waste-policy changes (including producer responsibility and deposit return scheme) and their financial impact on councils, emphasising the need for coordinated lobbying and funding strategies and greater coordination in the county ahead of Local Govt Reorganisation.
- Litter Champion Update
 - Update on 15 areas of work, including launch of a network of Litter Champion Hubs, partnering with supermarkets, fast-food chains, schools, and community groups to install bins, run education events, and organise litter-pick days
 - Introduced AI-driven hot spot mapping, new anti-litter messages on parking tickets, and expanded “Litter-Pickers for Little Pickers” program with 45 schools signed up and over 7000 children set to benefit.
- Lower Severn Independent Drainage Board
 - Reported upgrades to two pump sites (Lapperfield, Marshfield) due by March 2026 and a new office hub, while recruiting apprentices to sustain expertise
 - Raised concerns about rising flood-risk impacts and the Environment Agency’s commitment to only maintain river-defences to their current level, prompting a risk-register upgrade
- Walking and Cycling Annual Report
 - Committed £217k of walking-and-cycling projects, including feasibility studies for new cycleways (Cam-Dursley-Uley and Wotton-Kingswood-Charfield), Stroud town-centre way-marking, Access Bike sessions to support young people, projects in Standish, Frampton, Minchinhampton and Berkeley and the community e-bike hire scheme.
- Stroud Valleys Natural Flood Management Scheme Update
 - Work started in 2014, and there are now 1,234 Natural Flood Management interventions (leaky dams, flood-plain re-connections, tree planting) covering 40% of the catchment, delivering 40km of improved watercourses and 41ha. of habitat which has been improved or created.
 - Highlighted partnership with the Wilder Frome group, ongoing monitoring with the Environment Agency, and secured £110k annual funding through regional flood-risk grants
- Climate and Nature Grant Update

- Awarded £50k to 33 community projects targeting climate adaptation, behaviour change, and nature recovery; 23 were NGOs, 9 parish/town councils, 1 school
- Projects included sensory gardens, swift nest boxes, rain-garden installations, and repair-café workshops, with interim reporting showing high applicant satisfaction
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Progress Report
 - Since BNG became mandatory for all planning applications (Feb 2024), 119 applications were submitted: 35 granted, 44 pending, 40 withdrawn/refused; 9 granted sites have discharged the pre-commencement BNG condition
 - Discharged BNG sites have collectively added 18.76 habitat units (93% on-site), with three habitat-bank sites (Frocester, Orchard House Farm, Elmore Court) under final legal agreements.
- [Video recording](#)

[Housing Committee - 9th December](#)

- Approved a further grant application to Government for funding to support temporary accommodation for homeless households and for people on the Afghan Resettlement Programme. The grant would be matched from the Housing Revenue Account (for council housing only) totalling £1.3m.
- Noted that SDC has been allocated £60k to assist with developing a bid for the new national 10 year Social & Affordable Homes Programme worth £39 billion that launches in 2026.
- Adopted the [Resident Engagement & Communications Strategy](#) which has been co-produced with tenants and leaseholders.
- Adopted the [HRA Asset Management Strategy](#) SDC's long-term approach to managing, maintaining, and investing in our housing stock to ensure it remains safe, sustainable, and fit for purpose
- Member - Officer Reports
 - Housing Oversight Board
 - The Board highlighted progress on stock-condition surveys (up to 50% completed) but noted the target of 90% is still unmet, prompting a procurement push for external surveys
 - Key safety metrics were strong (gas safety and fire-risk assessments 100%), yet concerns were raised over rising rent-arrears, high void-turn-around times and a low call-answer rate, leading to agreed actions on data-clean-up, performance dashboards and service-improvement plans.
 - Private-Sector Housing Team Officer Report
 - The team support tenants living in the private rented housing. Their workload is dominated by processing Disabled Facilities Grants and

handling Anti-Social Behaviour/nuisance complaints in the private-rented sector; staffing shortages (2.4 vacancies) are limiting capacity.

- Upcoming challenges include the new Renters' Rights Act (phased from May 2026) which will increase enforcement duties and most likely complaints, prompting a request for a dedicated enforcement officer and additional funding from Govt to cope with the expanded duties.
- Domestic Energy Efficiency Update - Warm & Well scheme
 - The Warm and Well scheme is managed by Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) on behalf of the seven local authorities in South Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire and working with the NHS, charities and other partners. The scheme gives energy efficiency advice and support to householders and administers grants to help address fuel poverty. In Stroud district, the scheme delivered 21 energy-saving home improvements during Q1 and Q2, though the number of installations lagged behind the previous year due to Government rollout delays.
 - Client engagement surged with a notable rise in residents reporting health conditions and continued high fuel-poverty levels.
 - (For homeowners keen to invest in their own home energy efficiency measures, the [Furknow Gloucestershire](#) scheme provides advice and end-to-end project management).

- [Video recording](#)

Community Services and Licensing Committee - 11th December

- Active Lifestyles Dursley - Gym Refresh
 - Refurbishment and enhancement including the replacement of outdated fitness equipment, installation of new studio cycling units, and essential facility improvements costing £110k approved.
- Officer of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) Funding
 - Acceptance of grant funding from the OPCC for Stroud Community Safety Partnership for Sport for Safer Streets and Graffiti removal projects
- Member - Officer Reports
 - Gloucestershire Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee
 - South West Ambulance Service is ending its partnership with the fire service for emergency co-response and will rely more on volunteer Community First Responders (CFRs) who can reach incidents faster, especially in rural areas, and that the change improves both effectiveness and cost-efficiency.
 - Winter preparedness (NHS Gloucestershire) a review of the previous winter's 'critical incident' highlighted several improvements: quicker ambulance response times, reduced 12-hour trolley waits, a more holistic approach for patients with complex needs, increased

discharge of patients back home, and better communication across services.

- Police & Crime Panel
 - Highlighted ongoing efforts to curb anti-social behaviour and serious violence—via the ASB case-review programme, Hotspot Action Fund deployments, Safer Streets campaigns, and a strengthened neighbourhood policing guarantee. Also noted major upcoming governance shift that will replace the Police and Crime Commissioner model with local-authority policing boards by 2028.
 - A technical overhaul is underway to replace legacy systems (WAN rollout, modern analytics, citizen portal, expanded ANPR) to reduce cyber risk, and although the OPCC has mostly met its cost-saving targets, anticipating a larger budget gap by 2029/30.
- Citizens Advice
 - From April - Nov 2025, over 2,500 clients were advised on over 10,400 issues in Stroud and Cotswold districts. Personal Independence remains by far the biggest benefits enquiry area
 - In terms of debt queries, the increase in queries about credit and store card debt which exceeded the number of council tax arrears and fuel debts issues.
- Kingshill House, Dursley - Creative Centre
 - All courses and workshops fully booked and other events. Repair works and other House and grounds maintenance have been completed successfully.
- Active Lifestyles Lido - Stratford Park
 - Report on a strong season in 2025 with challenges noted on financial sustainability due to high operational costs and aging infrastructure.
- [Video recording](#)

Full Council - 18th December

- Independent Remuneration Panel - Members' Allowances
 - Council agreed the independent panel's recommendations to increase basic allowance for district councillors by £358 per year by 2029/30, to add some Special Responsibility Allowances, and remove the restriction of attending just one full council meeting of each parish/town council per month.
- Updates to the Constitution
 - The Constitution is a live document which requires regular review and revision. These updates were viewed as a tidying up exercise
- Councillor dispensation
 - Council authorised the absence of Cllr Nigel Prenter (Rodborough ward) for more than 6 months due to medical treatment.

- [Video recording](#)

Licensing Sub-Committee - AM 19th December

- Studio 18, Hope Mills Business Centre, Brimscombe
 - Premises licence for sale of alcohol. The Council received five representations against the application. Three were from local residents, one was from a local business, and one was from the Parish Council. Granted subject to conditions. (Police; occupancy limits. Incident logs, Challenge 25, CCTV etc.)

- [Video recording](#)

Licensing Sub-Committee - PM 19th December

- Standish Gatehouse, Horsemarling Lane, Standish
 - Premises licence for sale of alcohol and films in a rural area, for a new café space named Standish Gatehouse. Application granted subject to hours restriction and number of films per year.

- [Video recording](#)

Licensing Sub-Committee - PM 22nd December

- Woodchester Valley Vineyard and Winery
 - To vary a premises licence to extend hours for sale of alcohol and opening and extend the licensed area. Objections about traffic and pedestrian safety as well as pushing the boundaries of permitted agricultural use. Variation granted with conditions.

- [Video recording](#)

Other news

- £1.8 million investment at [Nouncells Cross](#) in Stroud, to upgrade 57 flats across two blocks, is underway.
- More than [£600,000 invested](#) in Stroud district's rural communities, under the Rural England Prosperity Fund.
- 'Food on the go' outlets [urged to help more](#) to tackle litter.
- Working together to [tackle anti-social behaviour](#) - Report It to Sort It.