

## COUNCIL

# 3

22 September 2011

7.00 pm – 10.52 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

### Minutes

#### Membership:

John Hudson **	P	Chas Fellows	P	Roger Sanders	P
Ray Apperley*	P	Joe Forbes	P	Norman Smith	P
Dennis Andrewartha	P	Paul Hemming	A	Paul Smith	P
Philip Bevan	P	John Jones	P	John Stanton	P
Dorcas Binns	P	Daniel Le Fleming	P	Alex Stennett	P
Rowland Blackwell	P	Graham Littleton	P	Ken Stephens	A
Philip Booth	P	John Marjoram	P	Nigel Studdert-Kennedy	P
Chris Brine	A	Brian Marsh	P	Barbara Tait	P
Paul Carter	P	Alan O'Connor	A	Brian Tipper	P
Molly Cato	P	Keith Pearson	P	Len Tomlins	P
Nigel Cooper	P	Elizabeth Peters	P	Graham Travé	P
June Cordwell	P	Simon Pickering	P	Geoff Wheeler	P
Gordon Craig	P	Gary Powell	P	Martin Whiteside	P
Karon Cross	P	Nigel Prenter	P	Rhiannon Wigzell	P
Paul Denney	P	Andy Read	P	Tom Williams	P
David Drew	P	Mark Rees	P	Penny Wride	P
Catherine Farrell	P	Frances Roden	P	Debbie Young	P

\*\* = Chair of Council \* = Vice Chair of Council P = Present A = Absent

#### **Officers Present**

Chief Executive	Head of Communications
Strategic Head (Development Services)	Principal Marketing Officer
Head of Finance	Principal Democratic Services Officer
Legal Services Manager	Business Support Assistant

#### **Also Present**

The Reverend and Mrs Barry Coker

#### **CL.020 PRESENTATION TO THE REVEREND BARRY COKER**

The Chair of Council made a presentation on behalf of the District Council to the Reverend Barry Coker to mark his retirement as vicar of Stroud after 21 years.

Rev Coker returned his thanks.

Council applauded the occasion.

**CL.021      APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Brine, Paul Hemming, Alan O'Connor and Ken Stephens.

**CL.022      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**(a)      Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

There were none.

**(b)      Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**

There were none.

**CL.023      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 July 2011 are accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**CL.024      ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**(a) Chair of Council**

Former Councillor Robert Winter

The Chair referred to the recent death of former Councillor Robert Winter who was a District Councillor from May 2002 to May 2006. He had served on various Committees and Outside Bodies.

Former Councillor Sheffie Mohammed

The Chair referred to the death of former Councillor Sheffie Mohammed who was first elected to the Council in June 1973. He was the longest serving Member of the Council, retiring in May 2007. He had served as Vice Chair of Council on four occasions and on numerous Committees and Panels. He was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2006. He had always worked closely with the local community and had been involved in a number of local projects.

Councillors David Drew, John Marjoram, Dennis Andrewartha, Roger Sanders, Joe Forbes, Dorcas Binns and Frances Roden spoke of his friendship and dedicated service to the Council and the community.

Mrs Molly Hoy

The Chair referred to the death of Mrs Molly Hoy who was one of the founder members of the Council's German twinning link.

Council stood in silence in memory of Robert Winter, Sheffie Mohammed and Molly Hoy.

**CL.025      PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The following question received from **Mr David Gauci** relating to land at Aston Down was submitted to and answered by the **Leader**, as set out below.

**Question**

1.) In December 2009 following a public enquiry the Secretary of state attached the following conditions to the Aston Down site. **"No commercial vehicle shall enter or leave the site nor any machinery be operated or any process carried out outside the hours of 06:00 to 19:00 on Mondays to Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.**

**Reason - To prevent noise adversely affecting conditions of nearby residential properties and in the interests of the character and appearance of the area."**

On the 26th April 2011 S.D.C's Development and Control committee endorsed the very same conditions when they gave consent to the parking of the H.G.V's on the site. On the 26th July 2011 an application for the variation of the conditions was refused and the case officer set out the reasons why it had been refused **"The proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of the occupiers of the adjacent properties on Cowcombe Lane contrary to Policy G E1 of the adopted Stroud District Councils local plan November 2005".**

I am being woken by Sindel's tankers leaving the Aston Down site on a daily basis not at 06.A.M not at 04.30 A.M but at 03.40.A.M. Can you please give me the reasons as to why your officers have refused to take any action to stop the breaches of conditions.

**Supplementary Question**

This matter has been going on for 10 months with ample opportunity to resolve it. Why has it taken so long?

2.) In July 2011 I was assured by one of your legal officers that if the application to vary the condition was refused then a breach of conditions notice would be served on Sindle at the **same time as the refusal notice**; Why was the breach of conditions notice never served on Sindle.

There was no supplementary question

3.) The conditions were put in place by the Secretary of state, endorsed by **your own council's Development and control Committee** and the latest refusal to vary the

**Response**

It would be inappropriate in a public meeting such as this to provide detailed information on the work that has been and is going on in respect of the planning position at Aston Down. The reason why it would be inappropriate is that such detail would necessarily involve the possible disclosure of matters of evidence and of the relative strengths and weaknesses of any prosecution proceedings which may be brought by the Council. However, I am able to say that the Council is fully aware of the concerns expressed by certain members of the community about activities at Aston Down and continues to work towards a conclusion which is correct within the parameters of planning law which is consistent with the public interest. In view of this on-going matter, Members and Officers have had a meeting and this was not prompted by this question and the Council will be writing to you very shortly to set out the proposed course of action.

**Response**

As I have just said, I think that it is inappropriate for this matter to be dealt with in public and will be dealt with in writing to yourself.

For the reasons set out in relation to question 1, this matter will be dealt with in writing to yourself.

The role of Officers and Members are different and the Officers are employed to give their professional advice on how to deal with matters. As I have stated,

operating hours on the site by ***your very own planning officer*** therefore is it not only undemocratic but also unlawful for unelected unaccountable individuals within the council to continuing to refuse to enforce democratically reached decisions by the ***Secretary of State*** and the local Authority which employs them.

Officers and Members have discussed this case to decide upon the appropriate way to deal with the matter and this will be set out in writing to you very shortly.

#### Supplementary Question

I have written to you (the Leader) and you have referred me to Peter Cruden who has not given me an answer. The M. P. Mr Clifton-Brown wrote to the Council and I believe never got a response. My Ward Councillors do not know why no action has been taken.

#### Response

I have had an opportunity to speak to Mr Clifton-Brown the week before last and I think that it is inappropriate to deal with this matter in public and a letter will be written to you very shortly setting out the proposed course of action.

### **CL.026**      **PETITION**

Councillor Paul Denney presented to the Chair of Council a petition opposing the proposed 2000 houses in Cam as part of the Core Strategy and urging that the additional housing be dispersed around the District.

### **CL.027**      **PETITION TO OPPOSE THE IMPOSITION OF PARKING CHARGES BY STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL ON NAILSWORTH**

The Council considered, in accordance with their Petition Scheme, the following petition organised by Gordon Pearce dated 8 September 2010 containing approximately 3,000 signatures:-

“We the below show our opposition to the imposition of charges by SDC on our town. The Action is ill conceived at a time of unprecedented financial hardship on our residents, customers, businesses and traders. This imposition will severely damage our town.”

In presenting the petition, the petition organiser said that the petition had been requested, undertaken and supported by their customers, visitors, shop traders and Chamber of Trade members. The people of Nailsworth and the surrounding district wished to show their support for the retention of free parking in the Town. The petition suggested that the Council should reconsider the options and take a positive stance to help support the local businesses in their area through free parking, instead of taking a negative one which would subsequently damage the Town. Whilst welcoming the review, he said that no accurate costings were available and he urged the Council take a positive step forward by wealth creation rather than taxation.

The Council then considered the petition and the following were the main points raised:-

- The car parking review impacted across the District and not only to Nailsworth, the subject matter of the petition.
- The three objectives of the car park review were firstly, should the Council continue to own and manage all their car parks and, if so, which ones. Secondly, a review of owning and managing the car parks and looking at the case for introducing charges at other locations and thirdly, making recommendations regarding alternative uses or disposal of any which the Council no longer wished to own or manage. No

decision on the review had been taken; it was still subject to consultation and Councillors were encouraged to respond to the consultation document.

- The outcome of the review should be fair across the District.
- A full impact assessment of the proposals should be undertaken.
- In determining whether to make any recommendations to Cabinet to inform the decision on the Car Parks Review, it was moved by Councillor Nigel Cooper and seconded by the Leader that this Council notes the petition and in accordance with the Petition Scheme refers the matter to Cabinet for further investigation as part of its district-wide Car Parks Review. On being put to the meeting the Motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED: that this Council notes the petition and in accordance with the Petition Scheme refers the matter to Cabinet for further investigation as part of its district-wide Car Parks Review.**

## **CL.028      CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

### **(a) Housing Requirements for Stroud District 2006 - 2026**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment presented the report considering the housing requirement for the District to cover the period 2006 to 2026 as a basis for allocating land to accommodate housing needs in the Council's Core Strategy. Since the presentation of the report to Cabinet in September 2010 the Department for Communities and Local Government had issued updated household projections which indicated a need for 9,344 dwellings in the District between 2006 and 2026. Joint work commissioned by all local authorities in the County providing more local and up to date robust evidence to establish housing requirements had now been completed. This projected 9,728 dwellings for the District between this period. However, the housing requirement for the District was currently contained within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West. Although the Government was committed to the abolition of the RSS, Cabinet in September 2010 decided to retain the figure of 9,100 new dwellings for the Stroud District until they were reviewed by all the Gloucestershire authorities.

Appendix A to the report set out the range of evidence which existed to inform the Council in determining an appropriate housing requirement for the District. The various housing requirements were set against the latest data on housing completions since April 2006 and the position on housing commitments at 1 April 2011 to indicate the residual housing requirement for which allocations may be needed in the Core Strategy. The Council's responsibility for setting appropriate housing targets should not be undertaken in isolation from neighbouring Councils. The RSS provided a strategic approach to housing and employment distribution which recognised the principle of a higher level of sustainability at larger urban areas and settlements relative to that at smaller towns and villages. Given the range for housing requirements for the District was between 9,100 and 9,700 it was considered reasonable to adopt a mid range figure of 9,350 as the housing requirement for the District for the period 2006 – 2026. The impact of using this figure for the calculation of the five year housing supply was set out in Appendix B to the report which had been prepared on the basis that the advice in the report had been adopted. It may need to be modified in the light of responses received from landowners/developers as to their assessment as to the delivery of their sites. This may modify the figures to the effect that the Council could not demonstrate that it had a five year housing supply. It could be argued that the Council had a 5.04 year housing supply although this was finely balanced and was likely to be challenged if used as a reason for refusing planning permission for new residential development.

The Cabinet Member moved the recommendation set out in the agenda item which was duly seconded.

During the course of the discussion, the following were the main points made:-

- The proposed 9,350 dwellings was supported by employment figures. However, no decisions had been taken as to the location of these dwellings. Members would be given the opportunity to visit the proposed sites shortly.
- Whilst the proposed figure of 9,350 dwellings was accepted, consideration should be given to a dispersal option.

**RESOLVED: that for consultation purposes the figure of 9,350 dwellings form the basis for a District-wide housing requirement 2006 – 2026, prior to the adoption of a final requirement figure to be contained in the Publication Version of the Core Strategy.**

**(b) Planning Scheme of Delegation, Public Speaking and Application Fee Setting**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment presented the report providing feedback on the first six months of operation of the Planning Scheme of Delegation, recommending that public speaking is introduced at Development Control Committee meetings and that authority to set planning fees is delegated when regulations are enacted.

Council in November 2010 agreed that the revised Scheme of Delegation would be reviewed after 12 months. While a year had not elapsed since the introduction of the Scheme, it was evident that, from the success to date (based on six months) and feedback from the Planning Officer Society, the introduction of public speaking could be brought forward. While the Scheme of Delegation was revised in November 2010 it did not start to have an impact until the January 2011 Development Control Committee. There had been no complaints made about the process and it appeared to be operating effectively. A Parish Council forum was held in June 2011 where the Scheme of Delegation was highlighted by the Head of Planning and no issues or concerns were expressed. Comments were made about possible public speaking. Parish Councils appeared to be pleased with the additional contact they received following a referral request and the feed back provided by the Head of Planning, the case officers, and the reasons for the decision included with every planning decision now sent to the town and parish councils.

There still appeared to be some confusion amongst Councillors as to how the current Scheme worked even though it was far simpler than before. For that reason it was discussed at length at the Councillors training session in June 2011.

The releasing of staff time as a result of the changes to the current Scheme of Delegation had enabled a shift towards greater pre-application support and consultation. Case officers had been released to carry out delicate negotiations which had resulted in tangible improvements in the permitted schemes. Officers had reviewed the outcomes from large scale applications and considered that the front loading of the process had resulted in better schemes and improved community engagement together with an enhanced appreciation by the public of the issues and the role of the local authority. The reduced schedule of applications to DCC had also given the opportunity for Members to delve deeper and probe more thoroughly into the applications of importance to the community. With focused agendas becoming the norm, it was now opportune to consider the introduction of public speaking in detail.

Officers and some Members had viewed Public Speaking in action at Cotswold District Council in July. Generally it was reserved for matters of major importance and wider significance and limited to verbal emphasis of submitted evidence, with the arguments for and against the proposal being made. Most systems allowed around three minutes for each side of the discussion, those opposing the application to voice their concerns, with an opportunity for the applicant to support their application. Invariably public speaking did not

allow for multiple appearances, (i.e. 3 minutes for each argument on each application). Therefore each side was encouraged to use the opportunity effectively and efficiently.

The current arrangements did not permit town or parish councils to address DCC, but they were invited to the pre-meeting site inspection panel. On numerous occasions, council solicitors, Monitoring Officer and others had expressed concerns that this private site meeting may leave the Council open to challenge. It was therefore proposed that, in addition to the Ward Member addressing DCC, the town/parish council, those opposing the application, and the applicant (or their agent) be given the opportunity to address the DCC. This modification would reduce the risk of judicial review, and greatly improve the external perception of the sites inspection panel process.

The Government planned to end the centralised setting of planning fees and to issue regulations requiring each Local Planning Authority to set charges for their planning service on the basis of self-financing. It was understood that the proposed charges would be prescriptive and would concentrate on processing applications and unlikely to cover pre-application and general advice, enforcement, appeals or planning strategy. Councils should review their procedures so that they best reflected the needs of the local community. There was a requirement to consult on the fees schedule which should include a service level document matching income expectations. Based on the evidence and financial data collected to date, it was likely that current charges would rise significantly. The regulations had not yet been implemented, but were expected to be shortly.

The Cabinet Member moved the recommendation set out in the agenda item which was duly seconded.

During the course of the discussion, the following were the main points made:-

- Concerns were expressed that the current Scheme of Delegation had not been in operation for 12 months before the review was undertaken.
- In response to comments expressed about the proposal not to continue with the current arrangements for a representative of Town and Parish Councils to attend Sites Inspection Panels, the Monitoring Officer stressed that there was considerable risk of challenge to the Council by the continuation of this arrangement which was effectively attendance at a private meeting. Such representatives, however, would be able to address Development Control Committee as part of the proposed public speaking.
- An amendment was moved by Councillor Paul Denney and seconded by Councillor Paul Smith that the current Scheme of Delegation continue in operation for 12 months with a review taking place at the end of that period. Recommendation 1 and the first 9 words of recommendation 2 would be deleted. On be put to the meeting the amendment was declared LOST.
- A further amendment was moved by Councillor Geoff Wheeler and seconded by Councillor David Drew that words be added to recommendation 1 so it now read that Council ratifies the current Scheme of Planning Delegation except that a Ward Councillor's request for an application to go to the Development Control Committee would be discussed with the Chair of DCC and the Head of Planning, but the default would be that if the Councillor disagrees with their decision the application would go to DCC. It was requested by the requisite percentage of Members that a recorded vote be taken on the amendment, the result of which was as follows:-

**FOR: Councillors**

**(17)**

Dennis Andrewartha  
Philip Booth  
Molly Cato  
June Cordwell  
Paul Denney

Catherine Farrell  
John Marjoram  
Brian Marsh  
Simon Pickering  
Gary Powell

Andy Reed  
Paul Smith  
Geoff Wheeler  
Martin Whiteside  
Tom Williams

David Drew

Nigel Prenter

**AGAINST: Councillors**

<b>(24)</b>	Philip Bevan	Daniel Le Fleming	Alex Stennett
	Dorcas Binns	John Jones	Barbara Tait
	Rowland Blackwell	Graham Littleton	Brian Tipper
	Paul Carter	Keith Pearson	Len Tomlins
	Nigel Cooper	Elizabeth Peters	Graham Travé
	Gordon Craig	Frances Roden	Rhiannon Wigzell
	Chas Fellows	Norman Smith	Penny Wride
	Joe Forbes	John Stanton	Debbie Young

**ABSTAIN: Councillors**

<b>(3)</b>	Ray Apperley	John Hudson	Nigel Studdert-Kennedy
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(Councillors Karon Cross, Mark Rees and Roger Sanders were not present in the Chamber at the time the vote was taken).

The amendment was LOST

- A further amendment was moved by Councillor David Drew and seconded by Councillor Paul Denney that words be added to recommendation 1 that a Parish or Town Council's request for an application to go the DCC would be discussed with the Chair of DCC and the Head of Planning, and their relevant Ward Councillor(s) but in the event of no agreement being reached the Parish and Town Council would have the right to make a brief presentation to the DCC on why that application should be heard by the DCC which will take a decision accordingly. Both the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer in their respective capacities as statutory officers advised Members that this proposal was deemed unsafe in that only one party to an application would have access to DCC when the Committee were not considering the application and the influence or perceived influence that would have could lead to legal challenge. On be put to the meeting the amendment was declared LOST.

**RESOLVED: that Council:-**

1. **Ratifies the current scheme of planning delegation.**
2. **Subject to ratification of the scheme of planning delegation, public speaking is introduced at Development Control Committee to allow for the objector(s), supporter(s) and the Town or Parish Council to address the Committee.**
3. **Authority is delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair of Development Control Committee to agree the operational details of the scheme for public speaking prior to implementation.**
4. **Authority is delegated to the Head of Planning to set and subsequently adjust as necessary, the scale and scope of charges for planning submissions in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and the Environment, the Chair of the Development Control Committee and the Section 151 Officer.**
5. **The necessary amendments to the constitution to facilitate these changes are made by the Monitoring Officer.**

**(c) Longney and Epney Parish Design Statement**

In presenting the report seeking approval to the Longney and Epney Parish Design Statement covering the rural area of the parish, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment said that the Statement had been produced under the initiative originally

launched by the former Countryside Commission to encourage communities to identify local character and to set out design guidance at the local level. The Statement would provide a clear document of the character of the locality against which planning applications may be assessed. It was not about whether development should take place; that being one of the purposes of the District's Local Plan or its successor, but about how development should be undertaken so as to respect the local identity.

The Design Statement set out 32 recommendations for the design of all development in the Parish, based on its characteristics. It was an advisory document that would not stop change, but could influence how any new buildings fitted into the Parish. Full consultation was carried out in the preparation of the Design Statement which would be monitored and reviewed post adoption.

The Cabinet Member moved the recommendation set out in the agenda item which was duly seconded.

**RESOLVED that the Longney & Epney Design Statement is adopted as Supplementary Planning Advice and used as a material consideration in development control decision making.**

**CL.029            MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**

Council noted the meetings that had taken place since the Meeting held on 7 July 2011, as set out in the Agenda.

**CL.030            MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

The following question received from **Councillor John Marjoram** was submitted to and answered by the **Leader**, as set out below.

**Question**

“What measures does this Council take to ensure that second home owners living in this District are excluded from the Full Register of Electors, when they have another vote at another abode?”

**Response**

The Electoral Commission states that:

“A person's name may appear on the electoral register only if they reside at an address within the electoral area. Residence is not defined in law, but it has been held by the courts to entail a ‘considerable degree of permanence’. Based on this criteria, it is possible for a person to be registered to vote in two different electoral areas. A person with two homes who spends about the same amount of time in each can be lawfully registered at both addresses.

However, it is unlikely that ownership of a second home that is used only for recreational purposes would meet the residency qualification. Ownership of a second home that a voter pays council tax on but is not resident in does not qualify them for electoral registration in that area. It is for the local Electoral Registration Officer to decide in the light of an individual voter's circumstances whether they may be said to be resident at an

address, and therefore eligible for registration. Electoral Registration Officers are required to consider each case on its own merits.

If an elector is registered to vote in two different electoral areas, they are eligible to vote in local elections for the two different local councils. However, it is an offence to vote twice in any one election. Such an offence could result in a fine of up to £5,000. “

We perform a duplicate name check at the end of the Canvass before publishing the register, to ensure that all Electoral Commission requirements are met.

### **Supplementary Question**

What is the process to ensure that people do not vote twice?

### **Response provided by the Chief Executive as the Electoral Registration Officer**

The questioner and any other Councillors are welcome to observe the process. The Electoral Registration Officer also said that the Council were currently undertaking the annual canvass and he urged the completion of the forms.

The following question received from **Councillor John Marjoram** was submitted to **the Leader** but was answered by the **Chair of Council**, as set out below.

### **Question**

Can the Leader explain exactly why the Extraordinary meeting, called by 6 Councillors, appertaining to the transfer of NHS services in Gloucestershire to a Social Enterprise company, was not held on the same night as this Council meeting when this agenda is wafer thin, as usual!?”

### **Response**

Tonight’s agenda may be slim, but if you add all the Cabinet reports to it, which at one time if you remember would have been copied for full Council, it becomes quite a considerable document. It was decided some time ago that the Cabinet reports would only be printed once, saving valuable time and resources, something I am sure you would appreciate.

I have been Chairman of this Council for some time and a Councillor for even longer and can think of numerous occasions in this Chamber where the agenda papers were slim but this did not stop members from extending the meeting beyond the 11.00 pm limit due to questions and lively debate, sometimes confusing the two. Something I am sure you are quite familiar with.

The decision to call the meeting was mine and mine alone. After careful consideration, I decided that as we had a presentation to Rev Coker at the start of the meeting and the agenda had already been circulated when the motion was

presented, it was not possible to add the motion to this meeting. Therefore the options were to have an extraordinary meeting to consider the motion directly following this one or calling a separate meeting for the same purpose. I did not want those Members who have proposed this motion to think the Council would not consider it thoroughly, if for some reason tonight's meeting went on until late, so I decided to call a separate meeting on 28 September 2011.

Firstly, this date was chosen because of the time constraint. My understanding is that the Council have to make a decision on this motion before 1 October 2011 and secondly, the availability of the Council Chamber.

I hope this answers your question fully.

There was no Supplementary Question

The following question received from **Councillor Paul Denney** was submitted to and answered by the **Cabinet Member for Housing**, as set out below.

#### Question

"I would like to ask council why it is that a decision has been made to install gas boilers in the Sherbourne House and Dryleaze sheltered housing units rather than a renewable option such as heat pumps?"

I am aware of certain incentives being offered by gas companies which on the face of it make gas look like a cheap option. However with gas prices rising above inflation year on year I feel that such incentives are a false economy. On top of this there is also the cost of ongoing maintenance and replacement after only 10 years not to mention the disruption to tenants of installation. Would I also be correct in assuming that under this scheme tenants will have a separate bill for Communal heating costs to pay also?

Gas is a finite resource which is only going to get more expensive as it runs out. It is not carbon neutral and unlike heat pumps it will not be eligible for the new renewable heat incentive. The power from the photo voltaic cells which are soon to be installed on the roof of these units could have been

#### Response

Decisions were based on a number of factors. Firstly, financial cost to the Council; secondly, financial cost to the tenant and thirdly, efficiency of some of the renewables. I will deal with each in turn.

The tender returns received from all contractors were significantly higher than the pre-tender estimates, some being almost twice the pre-tender estimates. The pre-tender estimates were based upon quotations received for the schemes in August 2010. As a result, the schemes were well over budget and only one scheme could be considered this financial year.

As a comparison, it was decided to look at the possibility of providing new mains gas supplies to the schemes and providing traditional gas heating systems. Wales and West Utilities confirmed that it was possible to install gas supplies and quoted £60,787 and £86,287 for these. During this exercise, British Gas became involved and made a one-off offer to the Council of subsidising the cost of the new gas supplies under the 'Fuel Switch Scheme'. This was subject to British Gas or their

used to offset the energy requirements of heat pumps and this would have gone a long way to making the units carbon neutral. The use of gas will not benefit from such a symbiotic relationship and will do nothing to reduce the council's carbon footprint or help to address long term fuel poverty. The only thing to be said for it is that at present it's a quick fix, is this why it was chosen?"

approved sub-contractor carrying out the heating installation works. Their sub-contractor is P H Jones, which is also the Council's approved heating contractor. By doing this, the cost of the new heating installations to both schemes is £339,000 as opposed to £551,456 for renewable heating, a saving of £212,456.

As part of the evaluation process GASTEC was commissioned to undertake an analysis of the proposed renewable heating schemes and they found the following:

- **The running costs quoted in the renewable tender returns were too low**
- Once the outside temperature falls to a few degrees below zero, the output of the units will fall by about 25%. So instead of each bedsit receiving 4kW from the heat pump it will be 3kW. This does not present an immediate problem of cold for tenants because at this point the in built immersion system will kick in, making up any shortfall. A fairly serious oversight in the running costs quoted in the tenders is that there is no mention of electricity used by the immersion. In our experience these system will use at least another 15%, rising to an extra 50% if the householder is misusing or is completely ignorant of the system. This is not an uncommon occurrence.
- **RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive) very uncertain for Air Source Heat Pumps**
- Air source heat pumps have not been included in the Renewable Heat Incentive. This may change but DECC are concerned about the green credentials of these system, due to low COPs (Coefficient of Performance – a measure of performance). The tenders have not over played the RHI but we think it best to assume these will not qualify.
- Energy Savings Trust field trial demonstrated a significant

percentage of Air Source Heat Pump sites are producing COP's little better than 2 ie. they are actually environmentally negative compared to gas, and potentially more expensive to run than night storage heaters.

A separate report was commissioned by the **BRE** (Building Research Establishment) to evaluate the renewable heating systems that we have installed around the District. Both at the commissioning meeting, and in their report, the BRE stated that the recommended option for properties 'on gas' is gas central heating (renewable heating should be targeted to properties off gas where maximum savings can be made in terms of cost and CO2).

#### **Other Points**

The system will not need replacing after 10 years. Condensing boilers have a 10 to 15 year life expectancy and pipework 20+ years. The maintenance costs of renewable systems are unknown and the promises of manufacturers cannot be relied upon.

There will be no difference in the way the communal heating charges are made and tenants will not incur any additional costs.

Both reports are available if any Councillor wishes to see them.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Did British Gas offer any incentives or discounts to take up the offer of gas?

#### **Response**

To the best of my knowledge British Gas provided free of charge the gas main from the mains supply to the units.

The following question received from **Councillor Brian Tipper** was submitted to and answered by the **Cabinet Member for Finance**, as set out below.

#### **Question**

"Would it be possible to have a full statement from the Cabinet Member regarding Single Occupancy Homes involving Serving Personnel, active or otherwise?"

Could you please include how this is dealt with in respect of how the allowance is made?"

#### **Response**

I presume you are referring to Single Person Discount. A scheme basically available to people living on their own, they get 25% off Council Tax. We make no special allowance for service personnel. But there is a Government scheme of Council Tax Relief for individuals away from home on eligible operations overseas. This is administered by MOD and was 25% of average Council tax in England, and in July 2011 as part of the Governments improved "Armed Forces

Covenant" now just been raised to 50% , approx £296 for average 6 month tour. This is paid as a Tax free lump sum at end of tour based on days in qualifying operational location. It is confirm that scheme is run by MOD

**Response**

**Supplementary Question**

Is there an allowance for a soldier who is away with their family?

There is no allowance under our control, it is all arranged through the Ministry of Defence.

**CL.031      ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

It was moved by Councillor John Marjoram and duly seconded that the Council adjourn until the conclusion of the Extraordinary Meeting already arranged for Wednesday, 28 September 2011 at 7.00 pm. On being put to the meeting it was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn to the conclusion of the Extraordinary Meeting already arranged for Wednesday, 28 September 2011 at 7.00 pm.**

The meeting adjourned at 10.52 pm.

**Chair of Council**