

COUNCIL**28 November 2013****7.00 pm – 9.55 pm****Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud****3****Minutes****Membership:**

Dennis Andrewartha**	P	Chas Fellows	P	Andy Read	P
Liz Ashton	P	Paul Hemming	P	Mark Rees*	P
Dorcas Binns	P	Nick Hurst	P	Frances Roden	P
Rowland Blackwell	P	Haydn Jones	P	Mattie Ross	P
Philip Booth	P	John Jones	P	Roger Sanders	P
Tim Boxall	A	Daniel Le Fleming	A	Emma Sims	P
Chris Brine	P	Graham Littleton	A	Paul Smith	P
Paul Carter	P	Stephen Lydon	P	Ken Stephens	P
Molly Cato	P	John Marjoram	P	Nigel Studdert-Kennedy	P
Miranda Clifton	P	Brian Marsh	P	Brian Tipper	P
Nigel Cooper	P	Russell Miles	A	Geoff Wheeler	P
June Cordwell	P	Stephen Moore	A	Martin Whiteside	P
Doina Cornell	P	Keith Pearson	P	Rhiannon Wigzell	P
Gordon Craig	P	Elizabeth Peters	P	Tom Williams	P
Karon Cross	A	Simon Pickering	P	Penny Wride	P
Paul Denney	P	Gary Powell	P	Debbie Young	P
David Drew	P	Nigel Prenter	P	vacancy	

** = Chair of Council

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

Officers Present

Democracy Development Manager
 Locum Solicitor
 Head of Finance
 Strategic Head (Customer Services)
 Benefit Manager

Head of Corporate Resources
 Head of Community Safety
 Legal Services Manager & Monitoring Officer
 Principal Marketing Officer
 Democratic Services and Elections Officer

Also Present

Kieran Chadwick, Stroud District Youth Council
 Mr Chris Moore

CL.031 PRESENTATION

A presentation was made to Kieran Chadwick, representing Archway School, the longest serving member in the Youth Council's 13 year history since becoming a member in October 2008. The Chair informed the Council of the many elected roles that Kieran had undertaken during this time, reflecting on his personal and social development, together with his involvement in a wide range of Youth Council led projects.

CL.032 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Boxall, Karon Cross, Daniel Le Fleming, Graham Littleton, Russell Miles and Stephen Moore.

The Council joined the Chair in sending their best wishes to Councillor Moore, who was currently in hospital awaiting surgery following a heart attack.

CL.033 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

CL.034 MINUTES

It was agreed to amend the first line of the second paragraph on page 6 of the Minutes to reflect that one of the Ward Members had agreed that schools should be challenged.....

RESOLVED Subject to the above amendment, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2013 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

CL.035 ANNOUNCEMENTS**(i) Chair of Council****Peer Review of Health and Well Being Arrangements: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly**

The Chief Executive sent his apologies for absence, following acceptance of the invitation from the Local Government Association to undertake a peer review of the health and well being arrangements in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, which required his attendance all week.

Alan O'Connor

The Chair read the following statement on behalf of the Chief Executive:

“As Chief Executive, I have been advised that Alan O'Connor has not attended a meeting of the Council for a period of six consecutive months. Under the provisions of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, he therefore ceased to be a Councillor on 26 October 2013. I am reporting this to Council and declaring that a vacancy therefore exists in the office of Councillor. As the seat would normally be up for election in May of next year, the vacancy does not require a by election and is held over to the polls on 22 May when it will be filled in the normal way”.

Peter Woodcock, Solicitor

The Chair referred to the imminent retirement of Peter Woodcock, with this being his last attendance at Council. The Council joined the Chair in acknowledging Peter's service to the Council and wished him well for the future.

(ii) Leader of the Council**Heat Pumps**

At the Leader's request, the Chair of the Environment Committee briefed the Council on the position concerning the installation of heat pumps, photovoltaic installations and insulations to properties, the first phase of which would be completed by March 2014.

CL.036 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following questions received from **Paul McDonnell**, were presented to and answered by Councillor Geoff Wheeler, Leader of Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Question 1

"Please provide what revenue will be achieved annually from the under occupancy rule/bedroom tax -v- the cost to implement this tax, cost of rehousing, readapting properties, additional cost on housing benefit from tenants moving into the private sector and any other cost implications?"

Answer

The under occupancy charge will transfer approximately £280,000 per annum from housing benefit income over to payments from tenants.

The under occupancy charge presents challenge in terms of increased levels of rent arrears, with the potential for a negative impact on housing budgets, affecting our ability to deliver on promises to tenants in terms of improving the condition of our housing stock and delivering high quality services.

In order to meet this challenge effectively, the Council has already taken a number of important and innovative steps as part of our commitment to support tenants. These have been developed in order to support all of our tenants, as we recognise that many others also face financial challenges and difficulty. These steps include:

- Recruitment of a welfare and benefit advice officer to help tenants ensure they are receiving the benefit they are entitled to.
- A financial inclusion officer liaising with other agencies in co-ordinating support to tenants.
- The awarding of 'gold band' priority to those seeking to downsize by one bedroom, and 'emergency band' to those seeking to downsize by two or more rooms.
- The promotion and support of mutual exchanges within our own stock and; by joint working with neighbouring landlords, to homes in neighbouring districts.
- The development of a multi agency financial inclusion strategy to better coordinate support to those who need it.
- Work to insulate homes and provide modern efficient heating systems to tackle fuel poverty.

- The administration of government funding for the Discretionary Housing Payment, which enables us to cover the cost of the Under Occupancy Charge in cases where a tenant has taken steps to pay their rent and; for example, is actively seeking smaller accommodation as a longer term solution.
- The payment of removal costs up to £500 to facilitate those seeking to move.
- Removing the charge to downsizing tenants of payments covering gas and electrical checks

In terms of the costs referred to in the question, we have offered £500 to help each household wishing to downsize, this is to fund removal costs, etc. To date there have been 24 such moves.

The Council has undertaken no adaptations of its stock and at present sees no reason to do so. Larger accommodation is in demand for larger families, and our new build programme has been reviewed to increase the numbers of 1 and 2 bedroom homes (at no extra budgeted cost).

We foresee little or no additional housing benefit costs for tenants moving into the private sector, as all tenants wishing to down size so far, have done so within the social rented sector and we are working hard to maintain this outcome.

Supplementary Question

Mr McDonnell requested a breakdown in writing to support the answers given, to include the costs of employing the Welfare Advice Officer, together with details of any other grants provided to any other agencies to help support tenants.

Answer

The Leader drew attention to the Financial Inclusion Strategy considered by the Housing Committee, which was publicly accessible, and undertook to provide a written response.

Question 2

“Please explain in law what Stroud District Council define as a Bedroom and how they are using the advice from the DWP to define what constitutes a Bedroom as the DWP will not state exactly what a Bedroom is?”

Answer

The Government have left it to individual Landlords to define a bedroom within their own stock.

Stroud’s Tenant Services state that a bedroom is one where a single bed can be accommodated along the length of the shortest wall, with sufficient room for a door to open/close, sufficient ceiling height, a window and adequate ventilation. This is more generous than the 50 square foot starting point as defined by the Housing Act 1985 Part X Section 326. We have, and remain willing, to assess specific examples on a case by case basis.

We do not apply a specific floor size as a square foot measure, as a room may, potentially, fit this, but not fit the definition above. This is a suitable, proportionate and sensible approach.

We have a legal obligation to administer all aspects of the Housing Benefit legislation. We carry out this administration on behalf of the Department for Work

and Pensions (DWP). The legislation is prescriptive and the Authority has no discretion over these matters.

Supplementary Question

Mr McDonnell referred to the above response which demonstrated that the Council was able to define a bedroom/room. He enquired as to whether the Council would determine that a bedroom was a study?

Answer

The Leader explained that the Council had considered this previously when determining individual cases.

Question 3

“On the evidence provided are Stroud District Council willing to accept numerous legal challenges and the potential cost implications or as democratically elected members make a stance and refuse to implement any further the under occupancy rule (also known as the bedroom tax); please give your reasons on the decision you reach?”

Answer

As I have stated in my answer to your first question, we have taken a number important steps to help those affected; not only by the under occupancy charge or ‘bedroom tax’, but also those other tenants in financial difficulty, whom we recognise also include:

- Pensioners
- Those on benefits generally
- Employed persons and families on low incomes
- Those in debt, bankruptcy and other difficulties

Any decision to ‘write off’ or not collect under occupancy charge arrears, would represent an unbalanced approach towards dealing with our tenants, creating two separate policies for arrears recovery. This would place one group in greater advantage than the other, resulting in our delivering an unequal service.

I am afraid that we cannot treat people differently in this way.

We must also have regard for the long term future of the service, and consider the impact any decision not to collect from one group would have on the wider group of tenants.

Our commitment to support and sustain tenants experiencing genuine difficulty can also be demonstrated by our being rated by Shelter, in 2010/11, as having one of the 10% lowest eviction rates amongst social landlords nationally. Since this assessment, our eviction rate has reduced further, whilst rent collection levels have remained stable, this demonstrates our success at sustaining tenancies over a number of years, and not just one year.

I should like to conclude by saying that since the under occupancy charge was introduced in April 2013, we have evicted, NO tenants as a result. We have however, helped 24 to downsize, arranged, where appropriate, for others to receive Discretionary Housing Payment, and provided the support and help I have already

mentioned earlier in this reply. Nearly 300 others have said that they intend to remain in their home and pay the under occupancy charge.

Supplementary Question

Mr McDonnell asked the Council to support the bedroom tax Motion later in the meeting.

CL.037 PETITION OPPOSING THE BEDROOM TAX

Mr Chris Moore, petition organiser, presented the following petition to the Council:

“Stroud District Council must actively oppose the Bedroom Tax with no evictions. Reductions to Housing Benefit Entitlement, introduced in April 2013, more commonly known as the Bedroom Tax, mean social housing tenants in receipt of housing benefit payments, excluding those in receipt of a state pension, will face reductions of 14% if deemed to have one spare bedroom and 25% if deemed to have two spare bedrooms. Some of the poorest and most vulnerable in our society will face the prospect of being forced from their homes, for the ‘crime’ of having a spare room. Two thirds of those affected are disabled. People simply cannot afford to pay it and there are simply not enough one and two bedroom properties available for anyone forced to downsize, even SDC have admitted this.

We call on Stroud District Council to:

- Commit to no evictions due to rent arrears from the Bedroom Tax for any council tenants and will pursue all measures to persuade other providers of social housing to adopt the same policy.
- According to the 1985 Housing Act a bedroom should be more than 70 square feet. So any social housing room smaller than this and deemed a bedroom, is unsuitable and should be re-designated.
- Increase the building programme of social housing to a level that reflects the needs of Stroud District.
- Call on Housing Associations not to use ‘Ground 8’ against ‘assured tenants’ as this takes away a judge’s discretion about the granting of a possession order.
- Call a meeting with Housing Associations to plan how to protect tenants from the Bedroom Tax.
- Meet its responsibility and use its legal powers to bring empty homes into use.
- Write off rent arrears for Bedroom Tax and top up the Government’s discretionary housing payment fund.

SDC could use reserves and prudential borrowing powers to at least temporarily cover the loss. Then build pressure on the Government to repeal the Bedroom Tax and reimburse SDC for any losses. SDC could stand alongside local tenants associations, unions and other groups campaigning against the Bedroom Tax and work with other Councils and/or Councillors in fighting this tax.”

The petition organiser drew attention to the implications of the bedroom tax and to reductions in benefits, particularly affecting the poor and those with disabilities. He

referred to numerous instances where people had been forced to move out of their homes, had their benefits cut and their arrears had increased. He was of the view that peoples' rights to have a family member to stay were being denied and he wanted the Council to adopt a policy of 'no evictions'. He wanted Councillors to agree to make temporary use of reserves and borrowing to help tenants. He quoted a number of local authorities operating a 'no evictions' policy. He urged the Council to put the poor and vulnerable first, to vote against evicting tenants and to take action to eliminate their arrears.

The Chair of Council announced that the Motion (item 11(iii)) concerning the Bedroom Tax, would be brought forward for discussion at this point.

Councillor Molly Cato, proposer of the Motion, explained her desire to avoid conflict and for the Council to proceed with consensus in its deliberations, to enable clear views to be given. She referred to spending cuts and the imposition of government policies, with the Motion providing an opportunity to communicate condemnation of the bedroom tax to the Secretary of State and to allow communities to be aware of the Council's stance on the matter.

The proposer referred to the impact that this tax would have on university students, those on low incomes and the disabled, who would be displaced from their homes. She felt that the bedroom tax had been 'rushed in', making it difficult for local councils to respond in a preventative manner. In particular, the Council did not have a sufficient number of smaller bedroom properties for downsizing tenants. The proposer congratulated the Council's officers on the excellent work undertaken to advise and support tenants, which had been recognised by Shelter. She concluded by emphasising the importance of supporting communities and asking Council to endorse the Motion.

The ensuing questions and debate highlighted that whilst Members opposed the bedroom tax, there was little consensus to support the Motion on the basis of the points summarised below:

- Members highlighted numerous factors that could contribute to the financial hardship of tenants and the district wide discrepancy that supporting such a Motion would cause amongst residents. A 'no eviction' policy would also send out the wrong message to tenants who paid rent on time.
- A Member felt that the Motion undermined the decision taken by the Housing Committee in September, in response to the work undertaken by the task and finish group established to look at supporting tenants through welfare reform.
- The Council had developed a good system to mitigate the effects of the bedroom tax on its tenants, as indicated in the earlier responses to public questions. It was considered unfair to provide assistance purely to those faced with under occupancy, potentially leading to the operation of separate policies, for different categories of people, which could leave the Council open to legal challenge.
- It was noted that no one had yet been evicted by this Council as a direct consequence of the bedroom tax and officers were commended for their ongoing efforts to support tenants.

Whilst acknowledging the measures already in place, those Members supporting the Motion did so on the basis of needing to assist those who were vulnerable and in particular financial hardship. It was considered unjust to penalise those in the community at the lower end of the housing market and who had either little or no control over what could be done.

An amendment to support part 3 of the Motion was proposed but was lost due to the absence of a seconder.

Councillor Martin Whiteside, seconder of the original Motion, acknowledged the difficulties associated with the tax which penalised the poor and vulnerable whilst others resided in more lavish circumstances. It was a fundamental right for people to have a home and forcing tenants to downsize when smaller properties were at a premium was wrong. He congratulated the efforts of officers and the Task and Finish Group, drawing attention to the Council's ability to build new council homes and the need to protect tenants from eviction. The Member accepted that the Council already had a good policy in place but the Motion would make it transparent to residents that the Council operated a 'no evictions' policy and he urged the Council to support it.

The following Motion was put to the vote:

This Council:

1. States publicly its opposition to the Bedroom Tax as unfair and contrary to the wellbeing of the children and adults of our District;
2. Will introduce a policy that states that, for a transitional period until 1st June 2015, where:
 - (i) all other avenues have been explored;
 - (ii) transfer is requested but there are no suitable properties to transfer to;
 - (iii) it can be clearly identified that arrears are solely due to the bedroom tax penalty;

Officers will not use evictions or bailiffs to recover rent due. Furthermore, in cases that meet these three criteria, arrears will not hinder a tenant from moving to another Council property.

3. Will write to the Secretary of State asking him to amend the Welfare Reform Act 2012 in order to repeal changes to Housing Benefit, commonly known as Bedroom Tax.

The Council voted overwhelmingly against the Motion which was declared LOST.

CL.038 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

Strategy and Resources Committee – 14 November 2013

(a) Local Council Tax Support Scheme

The Leader of the Council presented the report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 14 November 2013, which sought adoption of a Council

Tax Support Scheme for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. He moved the proposal set out on the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Chris Brine.

RESOLVED To adopt the current Local Scheme as the Scheme for Stroud District Council for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

(b) War Widows, War Widows Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Payment Disregards

In presenting the above report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 14 November 2013, the Leader drew attention to the additional part of the proposal for the resolution to only be reviewed if required by a change in legislation. This would prohibit the need for the Council to make a decision on an annual basis.

The Leader moved the proposal set out on the agenda paper, which was seconded by Councillor Simon Pickering.

RESOLVED (a) That the authority disregards in full the following incomes for the purposes of assessing entitlement to Localised Council Tax Support:

1. War Widows/Widowers Pension;
2. War Disablement Pension;
3. Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments.

(b) That this resolution should only be reviewed if required by a change in legislation.

CL.039 APPOINTMENTS TO THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

The Council was asked to make appointments to the Licensing Committee to replace the seats vacated by Councillors Karon Cross and Daniel Le Fleming. Nominations were put forward by the respective Group Leaders.

RESOLVED That Councillors Liz Ashton and Rowland Blackwell be appointed to the Licensing Committee for the remainder of this Civic Year.

CL.040 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

The Council noted the meetings that had taken place since the last Meeting held on 10 October 2013.

CL.041 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The following questions received from **Councillor Nigel Cooper**, were presented to and answered by Councillor Gary Powell, Chair of the Licensing Committee.

Question 1

“How may the workings of the Licensing service of SDC be effectively scrutinised?”

Answer

Representatives of the Environment Committee have been appointed to undertake a performance monitoring role in relation to services within the remit of the committee and this would include the licensing service.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Cooper referred to the inability of Members and the public to ask questions at the Licensing Committee. He considered this undemocratic and asked if the Constitution could be amended as soon as possible so that questions could be asked of the Chair.

Answer

The Locum Solicitor explained that this could be considered as part of the forthcoming review of the Constitution.

Question 2

“When will the next review take place regarding the conditions for the granting of temporary event notices?”

Answer

Temporary Event Notices are a notification process by the event organiser. The Council cannot refuse to accept a notification if the criteria set out in the legislation are met. The Environmental Protection team within Environmental Health and the Police can object to a Temporary Event Notice if it does not meet the licensing objectives set out in the Council’s licensing policy. If an objection is made then a hearing must take place and a decision is made by the licensing panel. Each case would be judged on its own merits.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Cooper referred to the ban on the use of sky lanterns in some other countries. He enquired if it would be possible for the Council to amend the conditions of its Temporary Event Notices to prohibit the use of such lanterns in the interests of public safety, public property and animal welfare.

Answer

The Locum Solicitor explained that this would need to be addressed in detail by the Licensing Committee. He was unsure if this would be possible in line with the Council’s licensing objectives.

Question 3

“When will the next review take place of the regulations surrounding the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles in Stroud District, and their enforcement?”

Answer

The current taxi and private hire policy was adopted by Council on 24 February 2011 following a 12 week consultation period in which the trade were fully engaged as well as the wider community. The next review would be scheduled to take place in 2015.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Cooper referred to the regulatory requirement for taxi and private hire drivers to wear an identity badge. He considered it vital that the public could be

confident that the driver was properly licensed. He sought an assurance that this requirement would be enforced within the District.

Answer

The Chair of the Licensing Committee was certain that the Licensing Team was already taking the necessary steps to enforce the requirement.

CL.042 NOTICES OF MOTION

(i) National Planning Policy Framework – 06/13

The following Motion was proposed by Councillor Stephen Lydon and seconded by Councillor John Marjoram.

“Many areas of our towns, our villages, and the adjoining countryside are not places of national importance in the strict legal sense, but they are cherished by local people for their beauty and their recreational value. The incursion of aggressive and insensitive development is very much resented by many in our communities but local voices do not appear to carry much weight in this situation. We are particularly concerned by recent comments from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government which seems to imply that planning regulations may now be relaxed even further in the countryside and the green belt.

This Council believes that the true impact of the NPPF has not been understood by the people responsible for this legislation and that it is important to persuade the Government to amend it before the damage has gone too far.

Therefore, it is proposed a) we write to Local Town and Parish Councils the LGA, Local MPs and the Secretary of State for Communities asking them to support our view and b) we support the petition set out in **Appendix 1** and encourage those listed in a) to also support it.

Appendix 1

Amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and uphold local democratic decision making

Responsible department: Department for Communities and Local Government

We the undersigned believe that the NPPF is inherently unsound leading to irreversible loss of open countryside and irreparable damage to valuable landscape and heritage assets which are highly valued by local communities. Prioritisation of economic factors and presumption to develop, together with risible sustainability criteria, is leading to decisions from the Planning Inspectorate that damage local communities and create expensive problems.

We believe that the NPPF flouts local opinion and damages democracy. The NPPF is unjustly prejudiced in the interest of the construction industry and developers to the detriment of the local electorate, community, countryside, farming and tourism.

We therefore call upon the Government to amend the NPPF by removing the over-riding presumption in favour of alleged sustainable development, by giving Local Plans over-riding priority.”

The proposer of the Motion referred to the controversy surrounding the development of land and properties nationally. He explained that the NPPF meant that planning decisions were no longer in the hands of local authorities, with decisions ultimately made by lawyers working for profiteering companies and developers. He felt that the majority of future housing development within the District would be to accommodate out commuters rather than support local communities. The Motion was asking the Government to look at the implications of the NPPF. He urged the Council to support the Motion to enable local planning and development decisions to be made locally. It was evident that developers were taking advantage of the ‘gap’ whilst Local Plans awaited approval and made considerable profit from developing in green spaces.

The ensuing debate indicated significant support for the Motion. Members made reference to the destructive impact and consequences of the NPPF on planning law and local authority decision making and the perceived NPPF bias to support developers. Discussion took place on the progress of the Council’s Local Plan and the need for it to have over-riding priority in planning considerations, backed up with local knowledge. Whilst it was felt that the Council should do its best to protect the District, some reservations were expressed on the timing of the Motion in the absence of a Local Plan.

The seconder of the Motion informed the Council that the emphasis of the NPPF appeared to focus on developers rather than the planning authority. He referred to the diminishing amount of control over planning matters, as a consequence of many aspects of new legislation which prevented local Councils from making decisions.

In summing up, the proposer referred to the seriousness of the issue and Members’ democratic right to make decisions and pass judgements on the basis of policy. He urged Members to support the Motion in the belief that the NPPF would prevent local communities having a say and being unable to influence the location of future development.

Having been seconded, the Motion was put to the vote and was overwhelmingly CARRIED.

- RESOLVED**
- (a) The Council writes to Local Town and Parish Councils, the LGA, Local MPs and the Secretary of State for Communities asking them to support its view;**
 - (b) The Council supports the petition set out in Appendix 1 and encourage those listed in (a) above to also support it.**

(ii) Bringing the Cotswold Way into Stroud – 07/13

The following Motion was proposed by Councillor Andy Read and seconded by Councillors Martin Whiteside and John Marjoram.

"That this Council recognises the potential economic, cultural, social and transport benefits of diverting the official route of the Cotswold Way National Trail through Stroud Town Centre. Such a diversion should seek to include a significant stretch of the restored canal, improved links with public transport and accommodation, access to town centre shops, eateries and facilities as well as the Museum in the Park.

Council resolves to work with the Cotswold Conservation Board and relevant bodies to identify a preferred new route and to carry out the consultation necessary for the submission of a Varying Report to DEFRA, if a diversion is deemed appropriate."

In presenting the Motion, the proposer described the current route of the Cotswold Way and its appropriateness within the topography of the Stroud District, highlighting key attractions and local and national changes to the high street. He referred to the emphasis on walking and the need to develop the Stroud Town centre accordingly. The Cotswold Way Board was enthused at the prospect of including Stroud within the route which would potentially boost local trade, culture and heritage, maximising opportunities to visit Stroud Town. If supported, the process would comprise establishing a map route, undertaking a consultation process and submitting a varying report to the Government for approval.

Members sought and received clarification from the proposer on the practicalities of the scheme, including costs, which it was confirmed would be in terms of staff time for leading the consultation and possibly up to £1,000 for way marking. Reference was also made to the possibility of including other market towns, however the proposer felt that diversion of the route off the escarpment would prevent this. A suggested alternative was way marking along the route to enable walkers to deviate to different towns.

Other Members joined the seconder in supporting the Motion, considered to be of district-wide benefit.

On being put to the vote the Motion was overwhelmingly CARRIED.

RESOLVED That Council works with the Cotswold Conservation Board and relevant bodies to identify a preferred new route and to carry out the consultation necessary for the submission of a Varying Report to DEFRA, if a diversion is deemed appropriate.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Chair of Council