COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES
DATE: Wednesday, 20 November 2013
VENUE: Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Gloucester

Present

Cllr Phil Awford (Vice-chairman)  Cllr Colin Hay  Cllr Shaun Parsons
Cllr Dorcas Binns  Cllr Tony Hicks (Chairman)  Cllr Alan Preest
Cllr Robert Bird  Cllr Jeremy Hilton  Cllr Vernon Smith
Cllr Tony Blackburn  Cllr Paul Hodgkinson  Cllr Norman Stephens
Cllr David Brown  Cllr Barry Kirby  Cllr Lynden Stowe
Cllr Jason Bullingham  Cllr Richard Leppington  Cllr Mike Sztymiak
Cllr Chris Coleman  Cllr Sarah Lunnan  Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Cllr Dr John Cordwell  Cllr Stephen Lydon  Cllr Brian Tipper
Cllr Iain Dobie  Cllr Steve McHale  Cllr Pam Tracey
Cllr Bernard Fisher  Cllr Paul McLain  Cllr Robert Vines
Cllr Jasminder Gill  Cllr Paul McMahon  Cllr Stan Waddington
Cllr Andrew Gravells  Cllr Tracy Millard  Cllr Simon Wheeler
Cllr Colin Guyton  Cllr Patrick Molyneux  Cllr Kathy Williams
Cllr Tim Harman  Cllr Nigel Moor  Cllr Lesley Williams
Cllr Joe Harris  Cllr Graham Morgan  Cllr Roger Wilson
Cllr Mark Hawthorne  Cllr Brian Oosthuysen  Cllr Will Windsor-Clive

Honorary Aldermen
Barry Dare  Mavis Lady Dunrossil  Bill Hobman

Apologies:  Cllrs David Prince, Nigel Robbins, Klara Sudbury, Bill Whelan and Suzanne Williams.

Honorary Aldermen Ron Allen, Liz Boait, Bill Crowther, Paul Drake, Chas Fellows, Rob Garnham, Jackie Hall, Deryck Nash, Terry Parker, Jack Pritchard, John Sewell, Charmian Sheppard, Gordon Shurmer and Mike Williams.
80. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2013 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

81. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A copy of the declarations of interest is attached to the signed copy of the minutes.

Cllr Andrew Gravells announced during the meeting that he had a personal interest in motion 692 (minute 86) as a member of the Council of Governors of the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

82. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) **Jon Hall**

The Chairman advised that Jon Hall, Chief Fire Officer, would be retiring from Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) on 31 January 2014. Jon had been in the Fire Service for over 30 years and joined GFRS as Deputy Chief Fire Officer on 1 April 2010. He became Chief Fire Officer on 1 February 2011.

Cllr Will Windsor Clive, the Cabinet Member for Fire, Planning and Infrastructure, paid tribute to Jon for the work he had undertaken on behalf of GFRS. He said that he was glad that Jon would continue to be working in the county at the Fire Service College.

Other members commended Jon for his enthusiasm and commitment in leading GFRS which was recognised as one of the best performing in the country with amongst the lowest costs. Four new fire stations had recently been built in the county allowing improved response times to incidents. The integration of the Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA) with the fire service had greatly improved the response to flooding incidents.

Jon thanked members for the cross-party support they had provided for the service. He believed that the member governance arrangements were strong and had contributed in no small part to the success of the service. He said that the years he had spent in Gloucestershire had been the most enjoyable of his career and he hoped that members would continue to support the service.

b) **University place success**

The Chairman reported that 16 looked after children and children in care have recently gained University places.
c) BBC Children in Need
   The Chairman congratulated staff on their efforts in raising more than £1,000 on 15 November 2013. He thanked Cllr Andrew Gravells who had been involved in arranging a charity football event with Council staff at Abbeydale Sports and Community Centre.

d) Telecare monitoring
   A demonstration of some of the latest equipment would be provided on the Council Chamber landing after the meeting.

e) Members’ ICT
   Capita staff would be on hand outside the Council Chamber after the meeting to resolve any outstanding member ICT issues.

83. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

One public question had been received. A copy of the question and answer was circulated and is attached to the signed copy of the minutes.

Mrs Hilliker indicated that as an introduction to her question she was submitting original documents from residents. She then asked the following supplementary question:

“We are pleased that the County, unlike the District Council, have decided to enforce the controlled zones, and have looked at the financial position as it affects the 100% increase in our parking permit. We understand that obtaining a financial statement in a period of transition is not easy. However, from figures obtained we gather that the costs of enforcement in 2012/13 fell by £88,500 being 26%, and whilst figures are not available for the current financial year the County Council have stated, through a press release, there are substantial savings from moving to a single contractor and thereby the cessation of a S101 agreement.

If one assumes a further drop in costs the point is why was the resident permit increased by 100%, (73% of residents do not think that current fee is justified) and also state there will be only three patrols per week, that is not enforcement, it is cherry picking enforcement. The 100% increase that we had to pay for one car and 20% increase for a second car is a back door tax. In all cases the second car is not a luxury but essential to get to and from a place of employment in rural areas, due to the lack of bus services, being commercially non-viable.

We believe we are entitled to know why we had such a high increase without an increase in service, when we presumed we were having daily enforcement and
when your costs at the County are going down. Please justify the increase. You have moved to virtual permits and saved cost, yet the Civil Enforcement Officers state that parts of the zone cannot be enforced as it is not possible for their equipment to receive a reception. Why did you not check in advance? And what are you going to do?"

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that he would be happy to meet with Mrs Hilliker when visiting Cirencester and that he would look to consider the best way forward. He was always working with officers to consider any new schemes being brought forward.

84. MEMBERS’ QUESTIONS

Sixty member questions were received. A copy of the questions and answers was circulated and is attached to the signed copy of the minutes. The period for public questions was extended from 30 to 40 minutes.

The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 1 – Cllr Paul Hodgkinson noted the £150m in capital expenditure to improve mobile coverage and asked how much would be spent in Gloucestershire and how residents would be updated as to where the coverage would be enhanced.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne responded that the mobile coverage was a crucial issue and the £150m capital expenditure nationally was good news. The Council was in discussions with BDUK who were running the Mobile Infrastructure Project to ensure that the County got its fair share. He would endeavour to keep members informed and work together to ensure the County got the investment it needed.

Question 2 – Cllr Paul Hodgkinson noted that targets were not set for Penalty Charge Notices but asked what targets were set for enforcement officers.

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that the Traffic Management Act stated that targets were not allowed to be set in this area.

Question 3 & 4 – Cllr Simon Wheeler asked how the Council could be assured that the cleaning products used by contractors did not include ingredients that had been tested on animals. He understood that the information might be commercially sensitive but asked if it could be shared with members.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied that he would talk to officers and endeavour to provide additional information for members if possible.
Question 5 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton stated that it was his understanding that a consultant had been used to help draw up the transformation challenge bid for the Fire and Rescue Service and that there was transparency issues regarding the company involved including no landline, visible address and no VAT registration.

Cllr Will Windsor Clive explained that this was not something that he was aware of. He said that he would look into it and provide a written response.

Question 6 – Cllr Jeremy Hilton, referring to Sir Ken Knight’s proposal in his report ‘Facing the Future’ asked whether the Leader of Council would support Police and Crime Commissioners taking on the role of the fire and rescue service.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne said that he was yet to be convinced that the recommendation in the report would enhance the service and that it was right to await a response from Government.

Question 7 – Cllr David Brown referred to the answer to his original question and the phrase ‘two (rough sleepers) were supported to return as they did not have any attachments with Gloucestershire’. He questioned whether this was discriminatory.

Cllr Kathy Williams stated that there was a scheme to accommodate those homeless in their own town to help encourage them to build up networks and this was not discriminatory practice. It was not feasible to accommodate all of the ‘rough sleepers’ in Gloucestershire and there was not a duty to house them all. There was a protocol to be followed and the contractors were able to take on more complex people and assist those on the streets. There was a help line and pathway that members could follow and this would be circulated.

Question 10 – Cllr Paul McMahon asked whether the Cabinet Member could state the two top benefits and risks discussed by Cabinet in relation to the signing of the contract with UBB before planning permission had been granted.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou replied that the two main risks were getting a satisfactory outcome from the procurement process and securing the required finance. The benefits included the savings that could be achieved through the project.

Question 11 – Cllr Paul McMahon reiterated his question on why no S.106 provision was attached.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou informed him that this was a planning issue.
Question 13 – Cllr Paul McMahon asked whether a copy of the results of the process which had led to the decision on the technology solution to deal with waste needs at Javelin Park could be made public.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou stated that this was a fair and transparent process with most of it in the public eye, except commercially sensitive material.

Question 14 – Cllr Paul McMahon stated that he was looking for a resolution with regards to the Wilderness Centre. He noted that it had been put forward for community groups to bid for, but asked whether the Council would now look at alternatives. He expressed concern that the building was deteriorating.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou replied that he would like this issue to be resolved. The way forward had been set out as part of the community right to buy scheme and any community organisation could make a bid for it.

Question 15 – Cllr Tracy Millard stated that there were clear benefits to breakfast clubs and asked what the costs involved were to include all children.

Cllr Paul McLain explained that he supported the principle and that this should be part of the budget debate. The costs were estimated at around £3m and would require continued revenue support. This money would have to be found from making savings elsewhere, and there were many competing priorities.

Question 16 – Cllr Tracy Millard asked, with regards to breakfast clubs, whether the cabinet member felt that all children should start the day on an equal footing.

Cllr Paul McLain reiterated that there was a financial implication here and that the take up of breakfast clubs was between 10-30% of pupils depending on the area where such a service was offered. Those who did not use the breakfast clubs would be supporting those who did. He suggested that the more that could be done to encourage schools to resource this, the better.

Question 17 – Cllr Tracy Millard asked whether the cabinet member would write to the Secretary of State for Education to promote the funding of breakfast clubs.

Cllr Paul McLain replied that he was happy to write a letter, but that the government was in the same position as local government in having to find savings.

Question 18 – Cllr Barry Kirby asked what the Council could do further to support local business start ups.
Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied that he continually put pressure on GFirst to ensure that initiatives, such as the recent one at Quedgeley, was included within the strategic economic programme. Gloucestershire had a proud tradition of small businesses and a diverse local economy. He was happy to continue the conversation and take away any suggestions from members to help small local businesses.

Question 19 – Cllr Barry Kirby referred to the Council’s work in supporting Small Business Saturday and asked what ongoing things Small Business Saturday would start.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that the Council was waiving street and park and ride charges on the day. He would encourage district colleagues to follow the County’s lead and maximise opportunities for businesses in this important trading period. It was important the Council did everything it could to encourage business in the county, and this would hopefully be just one of many initiatives the Council would support in the future.

Question 20 – Cllr Barry Kirby asked whether the Leader could expand on the answer to his initial question where it stated that the Council were encouraging work experience places and drawing people to the website.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne replied that the Council talked with schools and used business contacts to help support and provide opportunities. There was a communications campaign to drive this which included the Yes2jobs website that advertised any opportunities.

Question 21 – Cllr Jasminder Gill stated that people had approached her struggling to pay their heating bills. She asked whether the cabinet member would support a price freeze on energy bills and write to the minister.

Cllr Gravells responded that it was important to ensure that the County Council did the best for the people of Gloucestershire and provided advice to people to lower their energy bills. He referenced the Warm and Well helpline and urged all elected members to be the eyes and ears for those vulnerable people that needed support.

Question 22 – Cllr Lesley Williams asked if there were any plans to increase awareness of the credit unions as she felt there was a stigma attached to them even though they could really help people.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou replied that there were no plans in place at the moment but there were to be discussions shortly and such a proposal might be considered.
Question 23 – Cllr Lesley Williams asked whether minimum alcohol pricing might be used to help reduce the harm of alcohol.

Cllr Dorcas Binns stated that this was a national issue and that research was needed to be carried out which would take substantial resources.

Question 24 – Cllr Lesley Williams stated that current cigarette packaging was still easy to fake and that there were signs that plain packaging could help reduce smoking rates. In the 3 year wait for research from Australia it was suggested that up to 500,000 under 16 years old would take up smoking.

Cllr Dorcas Binns replied that it was right to wait until research had been completed and for the effects of taking any action in this area to be known. She stated that she was not convinced of the effects.

Question 25 – Cllr Lesley Williams asked how confident the member was that the figures in the answer of only 6% of looked after children identifying themselves as smokers on the Online Pupil Survey was a correct representation.

Cllr Dorcas Binns stated that this was the result of the survey and that the only course of action to encourage children to stop smoking was to provide them with all the information available to help them to stop. The figures showed Gloucestershire in a better position compared to the national average.

Question 26 – Cllr Steve Lydon stated that a number of districts were planning to withdraw funding and asked whether the County Council grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau would be spread equally across the County.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that funding was provided to support a countywide service. It would be wrong for the County Council to subsidise District Council cuts.

Question 27 – Cllr Steve Lydon asked, in relation to rural areas, that bearing in mind the extra financial pressure on Post Offices, would the leader consider financial and practical support for those key rural services.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that he was happy to consider any proposals brought forward as part of the budget process by each political group. He explained that any additional funding provided to services that the Council did not currently provide would have to come from savings elsewhere. Members were aware of the difficult decisions around priorities that would have to be made.

Question 28 – Cllr Steve Lydon asked whether the Local Enterprise Partnership consulted with the County Council before commenting on planning issues.
Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that he was not sure with what remit GFirst was commenting on planning issues, but that they were an independent body that could comment as they wished. He stated that there was a need for robust scrutiny of the partnership as they played an increasingly important role.

Question 42 – Cllr Tony Blackburn asked that the all party group looking at alternative waste solutions report to all members as soon as there were comments or recommendations.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou stated that the process had started and that there would be a report once the group was ready.

Question 43 – Cllr John Cordwell asked whether he would be attending the next meeting of the Commons and Rights of Way Committee.

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that he would be looking at the agenda and he would probably be in attendance.

Question 46 – Cllr Joe Harris asked whether, given the recent fatal accidents in Gloucestershire, there should be greater investment in road safety?

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that road safety was an important issue and he would work with officers and members to make improvements where possible.

Question 47 – Cllr Joe Harris asked whether APCOA were meeting their targets.

Cllr Vernon Smith stated that this was a new contract with a new company and that they were working hard for a better system. Performance would improve and he was happy to meet with members to discuss any questions raised.

Additional question:
The Chairman informed Council that Cllr Sarah Lunnon had submitted the following question after the deadline and this had been forwarded to the relevant Commissioning Director for a response:

“At the Appeal hearing into the energy from waste plant at Javelin Park the parties have agreed statements of common ground. This has resulted in Gloucestershire County Council as the Planning Authority accepting the principle of mass burn incineration at Javelin Park, and accepting the predictions of future waste increases even though they have been proved inaccurate.”
Given the above, how is the Planning Authority carrying out this Council’s will to robustly defend the decision of the Development Control Committee to refuse permission for a 190,000 tonne energy from waste plant at Javelin Park?”

The Leader of the Council advised that supplementary questions on those questions that were not considered during the 30 minutes could be submitted by email following the meeting and answered in writing.

85. PETITIONS

a) Cllr Dorcas Binns presented a petition to Cllr Vernon Smith, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood, in support of a pelican crossing on the A46 at Dunkirk and improvements to traffic calming for vehicles entering Nailsworth from the Bath direction.

b) Cllr Steve Lydon presented a petition to Cllr Paul McLain, the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People and Strategic Commissioning, to support a campaign to retain King Stanley Church of England as a local authority controlled school.

c) Cllr Brian Oosthuysen presented a petition to Cllr Vernon Smith, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood, relating to speeding traffic at Cashes Green, Stroud.

d) Cllr Colin Hay stated that he would be presenting a petition to Cllr Vernon Smith, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood, following the meeting relating to consultation on a residents’ parking scheme at Sherborne Street, Cheltenham.

86. MOTIONS

The Chairman advised that at the Council briefing the time to be spent on each motion had been agreed by Group Leaders. He said that this approach reflected the spirit of the amendment to the constitution proposed under agenda item 12 (minute 90).

MOTION 689 (30 minutes)

Cllr Lesley Williams moved and Cllr Tracy Millard seconded the following motion:

The rising cost of living and falling income is causing genuine problems for people with their finances. Among those who borrow from high cost credit companies on
average borrow around £326 per month, to cover essential goods and services such as food, rent and heating.

The interest paid on this money is punishing; many are unable to make the repayments.

This Council resolves to block access to payday loan websites through the public computers in libraries and other Council buildings across Gloucestershire and from its employees’ computers unless and until the industry, including its advertising practices, is effectively controlled.

In moving the motion, Cllr Williams stated that Gloucestershire County Council had an important role in safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people. She said that other local authorities had blocked payday loan sites and she believed that the Council should follow their lead. She noted that 5 million families were planning to borrow money from payday loan companies in the next six months. Many people would be looking for funds to pay for necessities such as food, rent, gas and electricity. Desperate people were tempted by payday loan companies who charged interest rates of as much as 5,853%.

In seconding the motion, Cllr Millard referred to Conservative Party supporters who were associated with the £2 billion market for payday loans. She said that blocking payday loan websites was not about censorship but about helping people to make the right choices. She hoped that the Council would follow the lead taken by other local authorities throughout the country.

Speaking against the motion, some members expressed serious concern at the interest rates being charged by payday loan companies but believed that blocking access to websites on Council computers was the wrong approach. They stated that people would have little difficulty in finding other ways of borrowing money which were likely to attract equally high interest rates. Banning access to the websites was censorship and the Council should not be making decisions about what people could and could not access on Council computers. A member believed that it was the ‘thin end of the wedge’ and questioned what websites the Council would ban next. Instead, the Council should be promoting sensible alternatives such as credit unions.

Speaking in support of the motion, a member felt that it was morally right for the Council to block payday loan websites from its computers. Another member suggested that the Council work with the Local Government Association and local authorities, particularly the district councils who were responsible for providing housing advice. He believed that steps should be taken to regulate the payday loan market. Members hoped that opportunities would be taken to promote better alternatives such as credit unions.
Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

On being put to a recorded vote, the motion was lost on the Chairman’s casting vote.

The voting was as follows:


Against (22) – Phil Awford, Dorcas Binns, Rob Bird, Jason Bullingham, Andrew Gravells, Tim Harman, Mark Hawthorne, Tony Hicks, Paul McLain, Patrick Molyneux, Nigel Moor, Shaun Parsons, Vernon Smith, Lynden Stowe, Ray Theodoulou, Brian Tipper, Pam Tracey, Robert Vines, Stan Waddington, Kathy Williams, Roger Wilson and Will Windsor Clive.

Abstentions (4) – Tony Blackburn, Joe Harris, Sarah Lunnon and Alan Preest.

MOTION 690 (15 minutes)

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson moved and Cllr Iain Dobie seconded the following motion:

This Council calls on the Department of Transport and the Highways Agency to take urgent action over the increasing traffic gridlock and pollution around the Air Balloon roundabout (A417).

The lack of a long term solution is harming the economy of the region and Gloucestershire and is blighting the lives of nearby residents.

This Council should take a lead on this long running issue by bringing together other local authorities and agencies to reach a rapid solution. This is particularly pressing following the dreadful loss of life at this location recently.

In moving the motion, Cllr Hodgkinson said that after he had submitted the motion there had been three fatalities in the area. He stated that since the 1990s, the volume of traffic on the A417 had risen from 12,000 vehicles each day to 52,000, an increase of more than 400 per cent. The area was subject to an air pollution action plan and traffic queues were increasing all the time. The area was plagued by accidents and breakdowns and he believed that it was time for a properly engineered solution. He said that the traffic congestion was not only having a serious effect on local residents but also having a significant impact on the
Gloucestershire economy. The County Council was in the unique position of being able to bring all the interested parties together to reach a long term solution to the problem. He felt that it was important that all the political groups were involved in the process so that the Council could speak with ‘one voice’.

In seconding the motion, Cllr Dobie supported the comments made by Cllr Hodgkinson and noted that Somerset County Council had taken the lead in resolving longstanding problems on the A303. He believed that Gloucestershire County Council could do the same in bringing everyone together in reaching a solution for the problems around the Air Balloon roundabout.

Cllr Robert Vines stated that in his position as Leader of Tewkesbury Borough Council he had previously raised the issue with the Roads Minister. He paid tribute to the steps taken by Cllr Hawthorne, the Leader of the Council, to resolve the problems. He hoped that action would be taken in the wider area and not just at the Air Balloon roundabout.

Another member stated that a number of different solutions to the problem had been suggested over the years. For the Highway Agency to engineer a solution it was essential that agreement was reached locally.

**RESOLVED** that

*This Council calls on the Department of Transport and the Highways Agency to take urgent action over the increasing traffic gridlock and pollution around the Air Balloon Roundabout (A417).*

*The lack of a long term solution is harming the economy of the region and Gloucestershire and is blighting the lives of nearby residents.*

*This Council should take a lead on this long running issue by bringing together other local authorities and agencies to reach a rapid solution. This is particularly pressing following the dreadful loss of life at this location recently.*

**MOTION 691** (15 minutes)

Cllr Paul McLain moved and Cllr Tim Harman seconded the following motion:

*This Council welcomes the Government's intention to introduce a national funding formula for schools from 2015-16.*
Gloucestershire’s funding is £380 per pupil below the national average despite the additional costs we face in maintaining a network of small schools to support our rural communities.

We are anxious to see greater fairness and consistency in the way schools and academies are funded and believe that a national funding formula is the way to achieve this.

We believe that the funding formula should:

- Have at its core a basic unit of funding per pupil that is based on a clear expectation of what schools are expected to deliver.
- Allow a degree of local discretion to cover those local circumstances that a formula covering more 24,000 schools cannot be expected to embrace.
- Include support for rural primary schools through a lump sum and an allowance for ‘sparsity’.

We urge the government to work closely with local authorities, and the f40 group in particular, in developing an appropriate funding model for schools.

We acknowledge that a redistribution of the budget for schools will need to be implemented over time in order for the change to be manageable for those areas where funding is currently more generous.

Cllr McLain stated that some areas were receiving as much as £1,000 more per pupil compared to Gloucestershire. He recognised that there were areas of greater need, particularly some inner city councils, but he questioned how the difference in funding could be so large. He was pleased that the Department for Education recognised the need for change and was taking steps to address the situation. He thanked Gillian Hayward, Chair of the Schools’ Forum, and Stewart King, Lead Commissioner Education and Skills, for the work they had undertaken as part of the f40 group that represented areas with the worst school funding.

Other members spoke in support of the motion. They believed that an updated system for funding schools was long overdue.

**RESOLVED**

This Council welcomes the Government’s intention to introduce a national funding formula for schools from 2015-16.

Gloucestershire’s funding is £380 per pupil below the national average despite the additional costs we face in maintaining a network of small schools to support our rural communities.
We are anxious to see greater fairness and consistency in the way schools and academies are funded and believe that a national funding formula is the way to achieve this.

We believe that the funding formula should:

- Have at its core a basic unit of funding per pupil that is based on a clear expectation of what schools are expected to deliver.

- Allow a degree of local discretion to cover those local circumstances that a formula covering more 24,000 schools cannot be expected to embrace.

- Include support for rural primary schools through a lump sum and an allowance for ‘sparsity’.

We urge the government to work closely with local authorities, and the f40 group in particular, in developing an appropriate funding model for schools.

We acknowledge that a redistribution of the budget for schools will need to be implemented over time in order for the change to be manageable for those areas where funding is currently more generous.

**MOTION 692 (30 minutes)**

Cllr Jeremy Hilton moved and Cllr Iain Dobie seconded the following motion:

This Council recognises that at the time the pioneering TriService Emergency Centre was opened in 2003, Gloucestershire had its own stand alone ambulance service that made the TriService Centre its operational HQ.

This Council expresses its concern about the current poor performance of the service particularly in rural areas of Gloucestershire, since the county’s service has become part of South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust (SWAST).

This Council raises its concern about press speculation that South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust is considering moving its Gloucestershire based service out of the TriService Centre at Quedgeley, Gloucester.

This Council agrees to work together on a cross party basis to put forward proposals to keep Gloucestershire’s ambulance service running from the TriService Centre, possibly under the management of the County Council.

In moving the motion, Cllr Hilton believed that co-operation between the bluelight services had been undermined through the reorganisation of the ambulance service. The Gloucestershire Ambulance Service had been merged into the Great...
Western Ambulance Service covering areas in the north of the SW region, and more recently, the Great Western Ambulance Service had become part of the South Western Ambulance Service covering the whole of the SW region. The response times in rural areas of the county were well below target. He said that a local ambulance service was needed to improve performance and provide a better service for the people of Gloucestershire. Government Minister, Brandon Lewis MP, had announced that funds were available for transformational change and he hoped that the Council would take advantage of the opportunity available. He was anxious, however, that co-operation between the blue light services did not result in the Council losing control of the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

In seconding the motion, Cllr Dobie referred to the information provided by the Chief Executive of the South Western Ambulance Service at a recent meeting of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Ambulances were being repeatedly diverted from Gloucestershire to larger urban areas such as Bristol and Swindon.

Cllr Will Windsor-Clive moved and Cllr Mark Hawthorne seconded the following amendment (see additional words in shaded text and deleted words scored through).

This Council recognises that at the time the pioneering TriService Emergency Centre was opened in 2003, Gloucestershire had its own stand alone ambulance service that made the TriService Centre its operational HQ.
This Council expresses its concern about the current poor performance of the service particularly in rural areas of Gloucestershire, since the county’s service has become part of South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust (SWAST).

This Council raises its concern about press speculation that South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust is considering moving its Gloucestershire based service out of the TriService Centre at Quedgeley, Gloucester.

This Council notes with disappointment the Trust’s plans to centralise the answering of telephone calls away from the Tri-service Centre, but welcomes the commitment by SWAST Chief Executive Ken Wenman to maintain command and control of incidents there along with other headquarters facilities.

This Council notes the good work of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agrees to work together on a cross party basis through that committee to continue to push for improvements to Gloucestershire’s ambulance service to put forward proposals to keep Gloucestershire’s ambulance service running from the TriService Centre, possibly under the management of the County Council.
Cllr Windsor-Clive and Cllr Hawthorne believed that it was important to focus on the specific issue of concern: poor response times in rural areas. They noted that excellent cross-party work was already being undertaken through the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A member stated that the performance of the South Western Ambulance Service in rural parts of the county, particularly the Cotswold area, was shocking and he believed that the service was not fit for purpose. He recognised the good work that had been undertaken by health scrutiny in the past and he hoped that serious steps would be taken to hold the ambulance service to account.

After a short adjournment, the amendment was accepted with the addition of the following sentence at the end:

*If the Government makes funds available to explore bluelight co-operation, this Council in consultation with Group Leaders will consider a bid.*

**RESOLVED** that

*This Council recognises that at the time the pioneering TriService Emergency Centre was opened in 2003, Gloucestershire had its own stand alone ambulance service that made the TriService Centre its operational HQ.*

*This Council expresses its concern about the current poor performance of the service particularly in rural areas of Gloucestershire, since the county’s service has become part of South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust (SWAST).*

*This Council notes with disappointment the Trust’s plans to centralise the answering of telephone calls away from the Tri-service Centre, but welcomes the commitment by SWAST Chief Executive Ken Wenman to maintain command and control of incidents there along with other headquarters facilities.*

*This Council notes the good work of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agrees to work together on a cross party basis through that committee to continue to push for improvements to Gloucestershire’s ambulance service.*

*If the Government makes funds available to explore bluelight co-operation, this Council in consultation with Group Leaders will consider a bid.*
MOTION 693 (30 minutes)

Cllr Sarah Lunnon moved and Cllr Mike Sztymiak seconded the following motion:

_This Council recognises the internationally accepted need to restrict the average rise in global temperature to 2 degrees centigrade this century, which can only be achieved by limiting the increase in CO2 and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere and that requires between 60 and 80% of fossil fuels to be left in the ground._

_In response to the predicted climate change consequences of even higher levels of GHGs, this Council will seek to ensure that its Mineral Local Plan will require any application for the extraction of hydro-carbons to demonstrate the climate change impact of the extraction and end use of the hydro-carbons. The extraction will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the extraction and end use of the hydro-carbons will not lead to higher levels of GHGs present in the atmosphere and so can be defined as ‘sustainable development’ as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)._  

_NB. In preparing this motion the definition of ‘sustainable development’ is that used in the report of the Brundtland Commission, ‘Our Common Future’. _

In moving the motion, Cllr Lunnon stated that hydro-carbons should only be extracted if it could be demonstrated that there would not be an increase in the emission greenhouse gases. She regretted that carbon capture technology was not being taken forward in the UK. She referred to the effects of climate change such as those seen recently in the Philippines. She noted that the Council’s Minerals Plan was up for review and she believed that now was the time to take action.

In seconding the motion, Cllr Sztymiak believed that environmental concerns were slipping down the agenda. He said that climate change was threatening economic development and social cohesion. He noted that shale gas extraction (commonly referred to as ‘fracking’) would lead to greater emission of greenhouse gases.

A member expressed concern that the approach suggested might affect small scale mining operations such as those run by freeminers in the Forest of Dean.

Another member questioned how a new planning policy could be introduced without going through the usual rigour involving public consultation, professional advice and risk assessment. He noted that shale gas extraction had resulted in a significant fall in energy prices in the US along with a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases. Cheaper energy prices would be of benefit to consumers, particularly vulnerable people who were struggling with their current energy bills.

Some members expressed support for the sentiment of the motion but recognised that the Council needed to go through a proper process in agreeing its planning policies.
Other members spoke in support of shale gas extraction believing that it provided a sensible means of meeting the country’s energy needs.

In summing up, Cllr Lunnon explained that the policy would only apply to new operations and existing small scale mining operations such as those in the Forest of Dean would be unaffected. She said that the policy would not stop the extraction of hydro-carbons but would seek to control their impact on the environment.

Cllr Colin Hay moved and Cllr Iain Dobie seconded a motion without notice that Cllr Lunnon’s motion be referred to the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The motion was not supported.

*On being put to the vote, the original motion was lost.*

87. CORPORATE PARENTING

Cllr Paul McLain, the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People and Strategic Commissioning provided an update on the latest position. He said that there were 518 looked after children in the county. Of the 81 children who had entered care in the current year, 36 were under school age. As reported by the Chairman, 16 looked after children had gained University places which was thought to be the highest number ever achieved. Seventy five per cent of care leavers were in education, employment or training. There was some concern, however, that only 15 per cent of the KS4 year group had achieved GCSE grades A to C.

Cllr Mclain advised that he had attended a recent meeting of the Children in Care Council and there was strong feedback that looked after children preferred ‘old fashioned’ written communication rather more modern on-line methods. He said that the number one priority for looked after children was matching children to carers so that they could find a family. He urged members to sign the Corporate Parenting Pledge.

A short DVD (6 minutes) entitled *Isolation* made by young people in care in Gloucestershire about the impact of bullying was shown.

Members paid tribute to Cllr McLain for his efforts on behalf of looked after children in the county. Referring to the Corporate Parenting Pledge, a member believed that it would be useful to run a session to help members to understand what their responsibilities were as corporate parents. Other members stated that members should be proactive in finding out what was going on in their area and take the opportunity to attend events such as those run by the Virtual School and carers’ groups.

Cllr McLain said that signing up to the pledge meant that members signalled that they were accessible to carers and looked after children in their division. He
believed that it was important that members visited the schools in their division that were attended by looked after children. He hoped that members would sign up to undertake ‘Regulation 33’ inspection visits to one of the three children’s homes in the county. If all members signed up, the commitment would not be onerous with each member carrying out an inspection with a professional officer every 18 months.

88. CABINET DECISION STATEMENT

RESOLVED to note the Cabinet Decision Statements for the decisions taken on 11 September and 23 October 2013.

89. INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION STATEMENT

RESOLVED to note the Individual Cabinet Member Decision Statement for the decisions taken over the period 12 August to 8 November 2013.

90. CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Chairman of the Constitution Committee, presented the report from the meeting held on 7 October 2013.

90.1 Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)
Cllr Hawthorne thanked the Panel Chairman, William Alexander, and his colleagues on the IRP for their work on behalf of the Council.

RESOLVED that

a) A Special Responsibility Allowance of £5,852 to be paid to each of the two members of the Adoption Panel. The allowances to be payable from the date of their appointment by the Council.

b) A Special Responsibility Allowance of £5,852 to be paid to the member appointed to the Fostering Panel (effective from the date of appointment on 15 May 2013).

c) The Council should not at present reduce the qualifying number of members for a political group leader’s allowance from four to three.

90.2 Health and Wellbeing Board

RESOLVED to
a) To amend the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board in Section 3.0 of Part 3 of the Constitution to allow the Leader of Gloucestershire County Council to appoint four county councillors.

b) To remove the reference to the Leader of the Council and two Cabinet Members as members of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

90.3 Film and audio recording of Council meetings
A member suggested that the words ‘if necessary’ be added to the change to the Constitution proposed.

RESOLVED that following the publication of Government Guidance, to amend procedure rule 22 in Part 4 of the Constitution as follows:

Filming, photographing and audio recordings of meetings is permitted. Please contact Democratic Services (tel 01452 425230) to make the necessary arrangements ahead of the meeting if necessary.

90.4 Joint Waste Committee
The committee chairman noted that the Cabinet at its meeting on 23 October 2013 had approved the terms of reference for the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee and these would be included in Part 3 of the Council’s Constitution.

90.5 Time limit to debate notices of motion
A member requested that the informal agreement at the Constitution Committee that ‘the Chairman could allow an extension beyond the two hours to enable the debate to be completed on a particular motion’ be formally recorded in the Constitution. Cllr Hawthorne suggested that this be addressed at the next meeting of the Constitution Committee.

A member believed that any time limit on debating motions was an attack on the democratic process. He said that there might be a time when several important issues needed to be considered at the same meeting. He hoped that the position regarding time limits could be reviewed.

Cllr Hawthorne stated that some members had jobs, businesses to run and childcare commitments and he believed that it was wrong to have meetings without time limits. He referred to the position at one of the district councils in the county where full council meetings were sometimes adjourned and reconvened on another day.

RESOLVED that the following amendments to the Council’s Constitution be approved:
1) **Under part 4 – Notices of Motion – Section 11.2.2 –**

Unless the Chairperson, in consultation with Group Leaders, decides otherwise, subject to Procedural Standing Order 11.8, **there will be no time restrictions on motions from each political group** (for the purposes of this Procedural Standing Order 11.2.2 only, all independent Councillors are considered as a political group) shall be considered by full council for up to a maximum of 30 minutes on the day of a meeting. Immediately after the end of the 30-minute period debate the proposer of the original motion then under debate may choose whether the motion be put or withdrawn (the consent of the seconder and full Council not being required in these circumstances) and if he or she decides that the motion be put, he or she shall first have the right of reply which shall be limited to 3 minutes.

**90.6 Annual election of Leader of Council**

The Constitution Committee had considered the matter and did not support the Leader of the Council being appointed each year at the Annual Meeting of the Council. Answering a question, Cllr Hawthorne recognised that the report should have reflected the following minor change to Article 6.03.01 of the Constitution:

> He or she is removed from office by a simple resolution of the full Council at an earlier date but normally only in the event of a change of political control of the Council.

He said that this would be addressed at the next meeting of the committee.

**90.7 Changes to the Constitution**

**RESOLVED** that Article 14.03 of the Council’s Constitution be amended to read:

> “14.03 Changes to the governance arrangements

Changes to the law introduced by the Localism Act mean that there is no longer an automatic requirement for a referendum before a change to the Council’s governance arrangements. Thus, the Council may change from executive arrangements to a committee system or change from a Leader and Cabinet executive to a Mayor and Cabinet executive by passing a resolution to that effect. This applies unless the Secretary of State has made an Order requiring the Council to hold a referendum on whether it should operate a Mayor and Cabinet executive. The resolution itself may provide that the proposed change be subject to approval in a referendum.”
91. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT**

*RESOLVED* to note the report.

92. **GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13**

Cllr Ray Theodoulou, the Chairman of the Pensions Committee, presented the 2012-13 annual report. He paid tribute to the former members of the committee who were no longer members of the Council. He welcomed those members who had joined the committee following the May 2013 election.

Answering questions, he confirmed that there was a staff representative on the committee and he provided information on the current deficit on the fund. He explained that the pension fund employed investment fund managers who were required to achieve the best possible returns for members of the scheme. He said that it was not a Council run scheme and it would be improper to make judgements on ethical investments. Some members still questioned whether it was right for the fund to invest in the tobacco industry.

The Strategic Director: Finance undertook to provide updated figures on the pension fund deficit. She said that she would also provide benchmarking data although this might take a little longer.

*RESOLVED* to note the *Glocestershire Local Government Pension Fund Annual Report 2012-13*.

The meeting ended at 2pm

CHAIRMAN