

John Fullbrook

From: John Fullbrook
Sent: 10 August 2023 14:59
To: Paul Campbell
Cc: spc-full
Subject: RE: SPC Energy Costs an FOI request

Dear Paul

In response to your email below.

I'm afraid it is possible to secure a reduced tariff in comparison to previous deals with suppliers and yet for the bills to rise anyway – and this we have seen with energy suppliers across the board.

So we made a comparative saving rather than sticking with the original deal and yet had to pay more in the next year because the pricing structure was being inflated dramatically – I am not responsible for the recent cost of living crisis and the extreme market forces at work in this area, nor do I believe the office should be held accountable for rising expenditure when we continue to make every effort in the limited time available to us to attempt to minimise them.

Besides this, the matter was discussed and a decision made at Committee and the office and Chair complied by that Committee's agreement by signing a new agreement.

I will not be spending my time therefore complying with your request (made as a councillor) and the no-doubt many follow-up emails requesting more information, if I had done, as I have many more pressing matters. As I have stated very many times previously Paul, I work for the council, not for any one individual councillor. Having said that, if F&GP want me to spend time on this, rather than other matters, then I will do so.

I see also that you have added 'an FOI request' into your subject line, and that by not complying to your request as a councillor you then state I should take this email to be an FOI request.

- I will therefore now assume you are making a formal FOI, and will therefore formally both confirm receipt of it and at the same time refuse to comply with it due to it being the latest in a very long line of Freedom of Information requests over many years which the council have determined to be vexatious (under section 14 of the Freedom of Information Act) and due to the unnecessary burden it would be placing upon the office.

If you are unhappy with this response, you have the right to ask the council to review any refusals. If indeed you want to follow a review procedure then I will ask the FOI panel to convene and if you want to them to consider any further information relating to your review then please send it in writing to me (including by email) and give reasons and I will be sure to pass on all communications to them, for their consideration.

If you are unhappy at any point with how this request has been dealt with then you can also apply to the Information Commissioner at the ICO – The link being <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-informationconcern/>

Yours Sincerely
John

John Fullbrook
Clerk to the Council
01903 812042

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From: Paul Campbell <Paul.Campbell@spc.gov.uk>
Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2023 1:49 PM
To: John Fullbrook <john.fullbrook@spc.gov.uk>
Cc: spc-full <spc-full@spc.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: SPC Energy Costs an FoI request

Dear John

Overview

I seek, please, all the documentation which relates to the apparent inconsistency between you telling us first that our gas bill would go down by 30% and then that for the same period it had doubled. I queried at the time that it seemed impossible that our bill could go down when everyone else's was substantially increasing. I was ignored.

The Detail

I am afraid this response is deeply unsatisfactory as I am sure you must know. We seem to be in Schrödinger's cat territory here. However, we are supposed to be dealing with SPC's finances, not quantum theory.

In the quantum world a cat can be both dead and alive at the same time. In Steyning I do not see how something can be both 30% cheaper and twice as expensive at the same time.

On 23 June 2022 you wrote *"After completing the new 3 year deal today (with Joanna in attendance as Chair and SPC signatory for verification), the annual bill for the forthcoming year is likely to be nearer £6,350.00 **An annual saving of approx. £3,530.00**".*

You ignored my query at the time (which I have added into the string) that this seemed to be impossible.

In complete contrast you wrote on 12 June 2023 that for the same period *"... our gas and electric bills doubled last year for example..."*

Both of these statements seemingly cannot be correct, and your message conspicuously fails to provide an explanation which I can understand.

As a member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and, of course, as a member of Full Council I would like to see the relevant documentation, please.

As Hoey pointed out, I have a common law right to this information, but if once again you are not willing to comply with this then please take this as yet another FoI request I am forced into against my wishes and contrary to all Hoey was trying to achieve. Time runs from today, though I hope you will not choose as has been the case so often, to run down the clock to the last moment before responding - no doubt with another refusal.

In order that I can understand how it has come about that after being told by you that the gas charges would come down by 30%, that for the same period they apparently doubled instead, I ask for copies of the following, please: -

- 1 The previous gas agreement (pre-23 June 2022)
- 2 The current gas agreement (23 June 2022 onwards)
- 3 All correspondence with and file notes concerning the broker/agent/sales person involved in the decision to enter into the current agreement, including any internal and external office emails involving Tessa and yourself
- 4 All emails exchanged between you and Cllr Joanna Norcross which resulted in her attending your office to sign the new agreement.
- 5 Gas bills and any other documentation showing the gas consumption and the rates charged for
 - a) the 12 months prior to the new agreement; and
 - b) the 12 months after.

Thank you very much

Paul Campbell

From: John Fullbrook <john.fullbrook@spc-full.co.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 10:29 AM
To: spc-full <[spc-fi](mailto:spc-full@spc-full.co.uk)>
Subject: SPC Energy Costs

Dear All

For your information.

In 2022, Council agreed to a reduced tariff contract for Gas payments – This was to give us a roughly 30% reduction in comparative expenditure. The gas supply costs continued to dramatically increase in general, but we have continued to benefit in comparative terms, from this agreement.

I look forward to finding the time with Tessa to look at opportunities to see if we can reduce our electric charges also, and present the findings ,options and recommendations to Council.

Kind regards

John

From: Paul Campbell <Paul.Campbell@>

Sent: Monday, July 24, 2023 12:35 PM

To: John Fullbrook <john.fullbrooc>

Cc: Full Council <spc>

Subject: SPC Energy Costs - Trade groups demand Ofgem tackle energy brokers 'ripping off' small firms

Dear John

Overview

Please may we have your comment on the inconsistency between your report in 2022 that SPC had signed a three-year contract under which the cost of SPC's gas would be going down by 30% for the next three years and your report a year later that the cost had doubled?

Detail

I wonder whether SPC's energy costs may be affected by the scam reported at the link given below?

I ask because on 12 June 2023 you wrote "... our gas and electric bills doubled last year for example..."

Which is completely inconsistent with what you told us a year earlier on 23 June 2022 when you said we had cleverly signed a three-year deal which was anticipated to be around 30% lower than we had been paying. Copied below for ease.

I queried at the time of the 2022 message how it was that we were going to be paying 30% less over the next three years when everyone else in the country was facing increases of around 250%. I never had a response.

I also pointed out recently the apparent inconsistency between what you were saying in 2023 and what you said in 2022 and had no substantive response to that either.

https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/jul/23/trade-groups-demand-ofgem-tackle-energy-brokers-ripping-off-small-firms?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other

"... It follows warnings from the Federation of Small Businesses and the British Chambers of Commerce that about a quarter of the UK's small businesses are now locked into poor value energy deals that were struck when gas and electricity prices were at their peak at the end of last summer.

Almost a third of companies with a business energy supply contract use a broker to secure it, but unlike the intermediaries who market mortgages or insurance deals these energy middlemen are largely unregulated. ..."

Please may we have your comment on the inconsistency between your report in 2022 that the cost of SPC's gas would be going down by 30% for the next three years and the report a

year later that the cost had doubled? And please could we have your comment on whether we are affected by the commission scam referred to in the article?

Thank you very much.

Kind regards

Paul Campbell

From: Paul Campbell

Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2023 9:23 AM

To: Andrew Sharp <andrew.sharp@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Ian Alexander <ian.alexander@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Joanna Norcross <joanna.norcrc@steyningpc.gov.uk>; John Fullbrook <john.fullbrook@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Karon Foxwell <karon.foxw@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Liz Trundle <liz.trundle@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Paul Campbell <Paul.Campbell@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Richard Bell <richard.bell@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Robin Ballance <robin.t@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Simon Alexander <simon.alexander@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Charlotte Lloyd <charlotte.ll@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Chris Young <Chris.Young@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Deborah Hanson <deborah.h@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Hazel Roxby <hazel.roxby@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Karon Foxwell <karon.foxwel@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Mariella Alexander <mariella.alexander@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Richard Bell <richard.bell@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Robin Ballance <robin.ballanc@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Sarah Linfield <sarah.linfield@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Simon Alexander <simon.alexander@steyningpc.gov.uk>; Vicci Johnson <vicci.johns@steyningpc.gov.uk>

Subject: Item 7.5 F and GP Agenda 13 June 2023

Dear John

Redacted as not relevant to current issue

It is good that we now have been given some reasoning - the world is a volatile and unpredictable place. But then it always has been. Which is why General Reserves have always been required. It is noteworthy that the JPAG advice has not changed concerning the appropriate level. They still think 3 months is right, not 4 to 5.

It is also noteworthy that we were told by you on 23 June 2022 that our gas costs were going DOWN substantially (by about one third) due to the hard work in the Office having negotiated a new three-year deal - just when everyone else's had gone up very substantially. I expressed surprise at the time that our charges should apparently be going down by so much just when everyone else was facing increases of around 250% and was ignored. I have copied the exchange below. Now we are told that the gas bill doubled last year. So I ask, please, which statement is true? The one then or the one now? It cannot, surely, be both?

Redacted

From: John Fullbrook <john.fullbrook@steyningpc.gov.uk>

Sent: Monday, June 12, 2023 2:00:36 PM

To: Paul Campbell <Paul.Campbell@...>; Simon Alexander <simon.alexand...>; Richard Bell <richard.bell...>; Joanna Norcross <joanna.norcros...>; Ian Alexander <ian.alexander...>; Robin Ballance <robin.ballar...>; Karon Foxwell <karon.foxw...>; Liz Trundle <liz.trundle...>; Andrew Sharp <andrew.sharp...>
Cc: Hazel Roxby <hazel.roxb...>; Charlotte Lloyd <charlotte.lloy...>; Chris Young <Chris.Youn...>; Deborah Hanson <deborah.hansor...>; Mariella Alexander <mariella.a...>; Sarah Linfield <sarah.linfiel...>; Vicci Johnson <vicci.johnsc...>
Subject: RE: item 7.5 Fand GP Agenda 13 June 2023

Dear All

Redacted

1.redacted Though we might not be faced with regular pandemics I might suggest the world we live in is a potentially volatile and very much more unpredictable place than it was only a few years ago. The War in the Ukraine , the cost of living crisis and the climate emergency are 'financial risk events' happening right now, and can within the space of a year have a profound impact on even a small parish council – our gas and electric bills doubled last year for example.

Redacted

It is also noteworthy that we were told by you on 23 June 2022 that our gas costs were going DOWN substantially (by about one third) due to the hard work in the Office having negotiated a new three-year deal - just when everyone else's had gone up very substantially. I expressed surprise at the time that our charges should apparently be going down by so much just when everyone else was facing increases of around 250% and was ignored. I have copied the exchange below. Now we are told that the gas bill doubled last year. So I ask, please, which statement is true? The one then or the one now? It cannot, surely, be both?

Redacted

Kind regards

John

From: Paul Campbell <Paul.Campbell@...>
Sent: Wednesday, June 29, 2022 7:42 AM
To: John Fullbrook <john.fullbrook...>; spc-full <spc-f...>
Subject: Re: New Gas supply savings

Sorry. Stubby finger meant it was sent before complete...

I was saying that while others face huge increases, SPC has reportedly achieved a substantial saving.

This suggests either an error in the calculation or that previously we had been signed up to a grossly over-expensive plan.

<https://inews.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/money/bills/uk-small-medium-businesses-gas-bill-increase-energy-price-cap-sme-1550391>

Cllr Campbell

Sent from the phone of Paul Campbell

From: Paul Campbell <Paul.Campbe

Sent: Wednesday, June 29, 2022 7:36:42 AM

To: John Fullbrook <john.fullbro

-full <spc-fu

Subject: Re: New Gas supply savings

Far from being congratulatory, I suggest that what councillors should be asking themselves and the Clerk is how when every other commercial customer is facing gas price increases of around an average of 250%

Sent from the phone of Paul Campbell

From: John Fullbrook <john.fullbrook

Sent: Thursday, June 23, 2022 9:14:30 AM

To: spc-full <spc-fu

Subject: FW: New Gas supply savings

Dear All

I should have mentioned that these savings are almost entirely thanks to Tessa's hard work over a number of days and goodness knows how many phone calls and somewhat annoyingly convoluted conversations with many a salesmen
Thanks to her

Dear All

Thank you for giving me delegated authority from the meeting on Monday night, to change gas supplier contract details.

Based upon last years supply figures, and the kwh costs and daily costs as per yesterday we were looking at an annual bill in the region of £9,880.00.

After completing the new 3 year deal today (with Joanna in attendance as Chair and SPC signatory for verification), the annual bill for the forthcoming year is likely to be nearer £6,350.00

An annual saving of approx. £3,530.00

Kind regards

John