

# TAKE FIVE

## **Add £100 billion and then divide by = !**

The Treasury plans to invest £100 billion in infrastructure over the next five years. A tiny proportion of this investment could help transform millions of UK homes and drive down energy bills in the most cost effective way.

No other infrastructure investment could achieve so much. Central government needs to make home energy efficiency an infrastructure priority, local government needs to rethink the way it approaches building design.

Even if central Government legislated for 0% interest loans to enable homes to become energy-efficient, Norwich's local government officers will oppose, complicate and delay any attempts to initiate a new age of municipal design.

It would clearly be hugely popular to distribute £10,000 to every household in the UK rather than continue subsidising nuclear power. Yet, even if enlightenment struck, and 'our' planning system bureaucrats genuinely embraced the need for decentralised energy, the buildings that used renewable energy supplies would require a radical (physical) overhaul.

We have as yet no real (conceptual) desire to abandon the 'aesthetics' of the fossil fuel age and the conundrum for us all is that 82% of people live in cities in the UK and the design or delivery of the low carbon economy of the 21st Century will be continuously opposed and delayed by central and local government.

Non-domestic buildings account for 25% of the country's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Non-domestic buildings emit over 100 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. The heating, cooling and powering of non-domestic buildings accounts for 17% of UK greenhouse gas emissions.

Through careful selection of (low embodied energy) building materials, the refurbishment of non-domestic building stock could be used to lock away CO<sub>2</sub>. The significance of requiring business to tackle CO<sub>2</sub> should be framed, not just in the context of fuel saving, but in becoming a zero-emissions City.

Norwich City Council was once a Nuclear Free Zone. The NFZ still operates from Manchester Town Hall. It's remit has developed far beyond the threat of nuclear annihilation (although that threat remains) to encompass climate change. One of the benefits of being part of this international network of local authorities is that civil servants receive regular information and training on everything from emergency planning to progressive policy briefings.

Given how far Norwich is behind other European cities, isn't it about time NCC engaged its staff?