



Leicester  
City Council

**MINUTE EXTRACT  
DRAFT**

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Held: THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2009 at 5.30pm

PRESENT

Councillor Grant (Chair)  
Councillor Bhatti (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Glover  
Councillor Joshi  
Councillor Potter

Councillor Hall  
Councillor Newcombe  
Councillor Senior

Also In Attendance

Councillor Osman

Councillor Westley  
Jaskaran Bhimber  
Dilone Arilal  
Councillor Naylor

Cabinet Lead for Frontline  
Services, Improvement and  
Neighbourhoods  
Cabinet Lead for Housing  
Rushey Mead School  
City of Leicester School

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**94. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Suleman.

**95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or declare if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Potter declared personal interests in Item 7, "Joint Regeneration and Transport and Culture and Leisure task Groups – Final report- the Future of

Leicester Market,” as she was Chair of the Markets Forum; Item 9, “Affordable Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2008-2013,” as she and family members were Council tenants; Item 10, “Disabled Facilities Grants: Introduction of Legal Charges,” as a relative had been in receipt of such a grant. For the avoidance of doubt she also stated, in respect of Item 14, “Disposal of Residential Land to Housing associations,” that, although she lived in one of the wards mentioned, she had an open mind on the matter.

Councillor Joshi declared a personal interest in Item 9, “Affordable Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2008-2013,” as a family member was a Council tenant. For the avoidance of doubt he also stated, in respect of Item 14, “Disposal of Residential Land to Housing associations,” that, although he lived in one of the wards mentioned, he had an open mind on the matter.

Councillor Glover declared a personal interest in Item 9, “Affordable Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2008-2013,” as family members were Council tenants. Following advice from the Legal Advisor, she also declared a predetermined view on item 14, “Disposal of Residential Land to Housing associations,” and undertook to leave the room during its discussion.

Councillor Senior declared a predetermined view on item 14, “Disposal of Residential Land to Housing associations,” as she had previously stated that she welcomed regeneration of one of the sites and undertook to leave the room during its discussion.

## **102. AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN 2008-2013**

The Director, Housing Strategy and Options, submitted a report that sought approval of the adoption of the Affordable Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2008-2013. The Cabinet Lead for Housing, Councillor Westley, was also present to answer Members’ questions.

The Chair thanked Councillor Westley for his regular attendance in support of reports relating to his portfolio. Councillor Westley stated that he felt it was important to work with Scrutiny for the benefit of the city. He stressed that the targets in the report were challenging, but that this reflected the great need for affordable housing. The focus would be on family homes, adapted and supported housing, and sites for travellers and gypsies. It was recognised that subsidy was required to make the homes affordable.

Members welcomed the report, stating that initiatives to increase affordable housing were to be encouraged.

Concern was raised regarding Right to Buy, in that in ten years’ time, the homes may be purchased and would result in a loss of affordable housing. Councillor Westley stated that some of the rules on buying these houses would differ from Right to Buy. There had been little activity in Right to Buy recently. He agreed to the Chair’s request for a briefing sheet on the issue for Members. It was also suggested that money raised through Right to Buy should be put

back into affordable housing to maintain a level of stock, although the whole scheme was restricted by legislation.

Discussion took place regarding the definition of “affordable,” and it was noted that this included social rented housing and shared ownership, which would cost less than the open market. A suggestion was made that the Council could re-convert large houses into family homes, but it was noted that the Homes and Community Agency only funded new builds. Councillor Westley stated that he would like to investigate the issue and would report back to the Committee. He also reported that three further bids had been submitted for funding for new builds.

With regard to provision for Gypsies and Travellers, he stressed that this was a Government requirement and no sites had been identified as yet. He recognised that the issue was sensitive for residents. Any proposals would be submitted to Members and the public for consultation. Once pitches were provided, illegal camps could be dispersed within 24 hours. Users of the pitches would be paying taxes and utilities. An agency had been set up, based in Beaumont Leys, which would oversee evictions and referrals to the sites. Concern was raised regarding the timescale, since no sites had yet been identified. Councillor Westley reported that work was ongoing.

**RESOLVED:**

that the report be noted and the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be forwarded to Cabinet.