



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: MONDAY, 16 AUGUST 2004 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor R. Blackmore - Chair
Councillor Johnson - Vice-Chair

Councillor Gill
Councillor Mugglestone
Councillor Suleman
Councillor Ramsdale
Councillor Scuplak

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38. COUNCILLOR BARRY COLES

The meeting stood for one minutes' silence in memory of Councillor Barry Coles who had died at the weekend. The meeting also recognised that the Leader of the Council had also suffered a recent bereavement.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Mugglestone declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Report A, 'Advice Services Review – Final Proposals' as his wife worked for an advice services provider. He left the meeting for discussion of this item.

40. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Summer Sundae

The Leader paid tribute to all those involved in making the recent Summer Sundae music festival a success. He felt this was a further demonstration of the City's reputation for running successful festivals and events. He asked that all the Officers involved be thanked.

41. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 12 July 2004,

having been circulated to Members, be taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

42. MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no matters referred from Scrutiny Committees.

43. ADVICE SERVICES REVIEW - FINAL PROPOSALS

Councillor Scuplak submitted a report providing proposals for a future configuration of selected advice services which aimed to best meet the corporate priorities of the Council. The review also delivered a level of savings as identified in the Council's budget strategy. The report sought to make the best use of remaining resources, taking into account the role of the Legal Service Commission in providing Advice Service in the City.

It was noted that the proposals sought to make advice services available both across the whole city and where there was the highest need and therefore it was planned to create a more flexible team of workers so that provision could be spread more widely.

It was also noted that the review had highlighted the need to link advice service across the City Council. For example there were currently welfare rights advice services in two separate departments of the Council.

Councillor Scuplak also stressed that the advice services that were the subject of this current review were only a very small proportion of the entire advice service provision in the Council and the Council itself was not the only or the largest advice provider in the city.

The relevant minutes extract from the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 4 August 2004 were circulated to the Cabinet. Councillor Scuplak noted the recommendations of the Committee and commented that the Cabinet was able to support most of their recommendations. However with regard to recommendation 4, regarding the alleged activities of one of the advice services providers during the recent Leicester South by-election he stated that this matter was irrelevant to the report which Cabinet were considering at this meeting, therefore the Cabinet wouldn't be commenting.

Councillor Scuplak also noted that there had been a delay to the report during the consultation phase, and the Council would not be able to make the full projected savings this year. He therefore would be moving a resolution to make the decision urgent and allow no call-in.

The Leader noted that one of the review's priorities was to deal with debt problems and he enquired what measures were being included to ensure that the poorest communities benefited from this advice. The Head of Advice Services explained that better use would be made of national services such as

Legal Services Commission phone service which would free up local resources for more face to face provision for those unable to use a phone. He also said that better targeting would need to be done through the setting of Service Level Agreements with the organisations the Council would be funding to provide services. He also noted other initiatives such as the development of social money lending services and additional resources from the Housing Revenue Account being used to seek to reduce rent arrears.

Members of the Cabinet also enquired whether the proposals would lead to the closure of the Leicester Law Centre. The Head of Advice Services stated that this wasn't raised as part of the initial consultation but it emerged at the Highfields Area Forum that this might be the case from April 2005. The Head of Advice Services stated that Officers would be looking at how this could be dealt with from April 2005 but that there was no threat to their viability in this financial year. Members of the Cabinet asked that this be addressed in a future report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the proposed savings measures as set out in the table at paragraph 1.4 of the supporting information, be approved;
- (2) that the proposed priorities for future advice service delivery as set out in paragraph 2.13 of the cover report and 3.4 of the supporting information report, be approved;
- (3) that the proposed future configuration of advice service provision as set out in the table at paragraph 2.1 of the supporting information, be approved;
- (4) that Officers conduct a review of directly delivered welfare benefits functions with a view to re-investing any savings that may arise in the service, including an evaluation of the feasibility of introducing a mobile advice service;
- (5) that Officers provide support to all organisations that do not meet the criteria for funding to help them to access other funding;
- (6) that funding be continued to the Leicester Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Centre until March 2005, to be funded from the transitional fund;
- (7) that a further report be submitted to Cabinet by the end of October 2004 which details all the Council and city wide advice services including details of the Supporting People Programme and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the potential use of these funds to fund advice services providers;
- (8) that the report be considered urgent because of the need

to make budget savings and any further delay would lead to cuts to services in other areas, therefore no call-in be allowed in accordance with Cabinet procedure rule 12d of the Constitution.

44. CHILDRENS CENTRE STRATEGY

Councillor Suleman submitted a report which set out the background to the Government's children's centres development and Leicester's strategic response. The report also provided a framework for Members for the future governance of local Sure Start programmes in Leicester as they evolved into children's centres. The report also sought approval for the transfer of New Parks Sure Start to the governance of Leicester City Council and for the transfer of the lead agency role for the Beaumont Leys and Stocking Farm Sure Start Programme to Leicester City Council.

The Children's Centre Strategy Manager noted that there were difficulties with such a large building programme because it would potentially mean that the Council would exceed its VAT exemption levels. She indicated that Sure Start nationally was lobbying Customs and Excise to make allowance for this issue but welcomed any support from the Council on this issue.

The relevant minutes extract from the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 27 April 2004 was attached to the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the strategy be endorsed and its implementation be supported;
- (2) that the future transfer of Sure Start programmes to the governance of the Leicester City Council where necessary or appropriate be agreed in principle and the respective corporate directors be authorised to make the necessary arrangements, subject to specific approval of reserved matters by cabinet at the time;
- (3) that the city Council become the lead agency and accountable body for the New Parks Sure Start Programme with effect from the 1 September 04 and it be approved in principle that this scheme is added to Education & Lifelong Learning Department's Capital Programme;
- (4) that the transfer of the lead agency role for Beaumont Leys and Stocking Farm Sure Start Programme from the NSPCC to the City Council, (the Council is already the accountable body) be approved;
- (5) that the Cabinet supports the Council raising the VAT issue formally with appropriate ministers and government

departments.

45. THE SOMALI COMMUNITY IN LEICESTER

Councillor Blackmore submitted a report which responded to the resolution made by the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee held on 12 July.

The Leader welcomed members of the Somali Community in the audience and he noted that a letter had been received from Mr. Haji from the Somali Integration and Advocacy Centre which raised further issues. Members of the Cabinet asked that the proposed Officer level task group considered those issues.

The Corporate Director of Social Care and Health informed the Cabinet that officer co-ordination of issues relating to the Somali community had been going on for sometime although this new proposal would help to formalise those arrangements.

Members of the Cabinet asked that this group consider issues relating to all new arrival communities and that the work of the group be reported regularly. It was also requested that these arrangements be put in place as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that an officer-level task and finish group be created, involving appropriate partner organisations and accountable to the Community Cohesion Project Board, to consider the issues raised by the Somali Community in the context of a wider review of the way in which the Council and other bodies provide services for new and existing communities within the City;
- (2) that officers write to key representatives of the Somali Community to inform them how the Council will be considering the issues they have raised.

46. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME

Councillor Gill submitted a report presenting the Audit Commission's 'Star Rating' for the Supporting People Programme which was published on 25 June 2004.

The Cabinet thanked the Supporting People Manager for a successful inspection.

The Corporate Director of Social Care and Health noted that this was one of the best inspections in the country undertaken so far.

The Supporting People Manager thanked the Council and its partners for

support in achieving such a good inspection.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Audit Commissions 'good', two –star rating for the Supporting People Programme, be noted;
- (2) that the areas of good practice highlighted in the report, be noted;
- (3) that the actions being taken in respect of recommended improvements, be noted;
- (4) that staff and partners be commended for their efforts in achieving this rating.

47. DEVELOPING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE CENTRES THROUGH LIFT AND NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES

Councillor Gill submitted a report requesting that delegated powers be given to the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services to determine whether the Council signs the Strategic Partnering Agreement for the Leicester LIFT initiative.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services determine whether and if so the terms on which the Council should enter (by accession or otherwise) into the Strategic Partnering Agreement described in the report;
- (2) that the Head of Legal Services and the Assistant Heads of Legal Services be authorised to execute the Strategic Partnering Agreement and/or any accession or any other related agreement and if he/she thinks fit give any undertaking or side letter required.

48. EXTRA CARE HOUSING

Councillor Gill submits a report outlining the potential to develop Extra Care Housing in Leicester and seeking an agreement to submit a bid to the Department of Health Extra Care Housing Development Fund (to develop a local strategy for extra care as part of the bid preparation).

RESOLVED:

- (1) that approval be given to proceed with selection of a housing developer and submission of the bid to the Department of Health Extra Care Housing Fund;
- (2) that it be agreed to proceed with the development of a Leicester Extra Care Strategy, which will include a strategy

for revenue funding; to be part of the wider multi-agency Older Person's Strategy being developed this year for the City;

- (3) that a further report on recommendations for a site to be brought to Cabinet, following more detailed investigation with Property Services of potential existing City Council sites; this will include consideration of where the proposal fits within the current property disposal framework as the Department of Health have indicated that they will give preference to bids that can demonstrate they have secured a site;
- (4) that Councillor Gill be appointed Cabinet Lead for the project, if the project is successful since the project meets the requirements for a major project under the LCC project management guidelines;
- (5) to note that assistance in the competitive selection of a housing developer will be given by the Housing Department's Development Team on a partnership basis; any preferred providers resulting to be used to work with us to develop and also take forward any extra care projects agreed within the extra care strategy (3.2);
- (6) that a progress report be submitted alongside the proposed Extra Care Strategy, in due course.

49. REVIEW OF CENTRALLY LOCATED ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS

Councillor Scuplak submitted a report informing the Cabinet of the progress to date with regard to the review currently being undertaken of centrally located administrative buildings, this review being part of the wider Property Efficiency Review.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the report be noted; and
- (2) that a further report be submitted for the end of September 2004 to include:-
 - additional information where necessary
 - financial implications
 - timetable for implementation.

50. HIGHWAYS CAPITAL SPEND 2004/05

Councillor Ramsdale submitted a report seeking Cabinet approval of expenditure from the City Council Capital budget 2004/05.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the expenditure of £300,000 on Local Environmental Works from the City Council's 2004/05 Capital Budget as detailed in paragraph 1.4 of the Supporting Information, be approved; and
- (2) that the expenditure of £100,000 on Highway Maintenance from the City Council's 2004/05 Capital Budget as detailed in paragraph 1.6 of the supporting information, be approved.

51. WAIVER OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

Councillor Blackmore submitted a report advising the Cabinet of Waivers to Contract Procedure Rules approved by the Town Clerk, as required by paragraph 4.2(b) of these rules.

RESOLVED:

that the waivers be noted.

52. THE EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF VARIOUS HOUSES 2004 (NO.13)

Councillor Blackmore submitted a report that sought approval to make six Compulsory Purchase Orders under the City Council's Empty Homes Strategy on six long term privately owned vacant properties in areas of priority housing need.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the following land and dwellings outlined in the appendices to the report be made the subject of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) under sections 9 and 17 of the Housing Act 1985 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, in order to secure their improvement, proper management and occupation as residential dwellings:-
 - 4 Elsadene Avenue,
 - 9 Longcliffe Road,
 - 53 Surrey Street,
 - 326 Abbey Lane,
 - 104 Harrow Road
 - 35 Normanton Road;
- (2) that the necessary capital expenditure be authorised from the Empty Homes Strategy in line with the agreed Capital Programme.

53. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME

Councillor Ramsdale submitted a report responding to his request to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture to reinstate elements of the changes made to the Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Councillor Ramsdale noted that the Highways and Transportation Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 16 June 2004 had discussed the matter and had requested that reconsideration be given to the changes made with regard to the Concessionary Travel Scheme.

The Leader commented that there was a need to press bus companies to provide a cheaper fares scheme for older people.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that Travel Concessions be reinstated for elders outside Leicester and by rail;
- (2) that £40,000, to cover the cost of the reinstatement in 2004/05 be found from the Regeneration budgets, and in particular from the Economic Development and Community Safety Grant Aid budget and £60,000 per annum from 2005/06 from the same source in subsequent years.

54. PRIVATE SESSION

The Cabinet agreed to a request from Councillor Willmott to remain in the meeting whilst the exempt reports were discussed.

RESOLVED:

that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following reports in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, because they involve the likely disclosure of 'exempt' information, as defined in the Paragraphs detailed below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Paragraph 9

Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

MUSEUMS COLLECTION FACILITY

PROPOSAL BY DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY

55. MUSEUMS COLLECTIONS FACILITY

Councillor Scuplak submitted a report informing Members of the progress made in identifying a suitable property for the Museums Service Collections

facility, seeking delegated authority to agree terms for its occupation and also seeking approval to dispose of Humberstone Annex and Belgrave House and Stables to provide the receipt for the necessary investment in the property and other cultural facilities.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Corporate Director of Resources, Access and Diversity be authorised in consultation with the Cabinet Links for Regeneration and Property, Culture and Finance to:
 - (i) agree terms for the lease and occupation of Unit 10 Chiswick Road, Leicester,
 - (ii) following the marketing of Humberstone Annexe and Belgrave House and Stables, approve terms for the disposal of these two properties,
 - (iii) in the event that satisfactory terms cannot be negotiated for the lease of 10 Chiswick Road,
 - (a) to approve terms for the occupation of alternative premises which may be by leasehold or freehold acquisition,
 - (b) authorise the potential purchase of alternative freehold or leasehold premises to be financed by additional prudential borrowing. Such a purchase only to be undertaken in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, subject to him being satisfied with any arrangements made, and additionally where the capital financing costs have been accounted for within the Regeneration and Culture Departmental budget;
- (2) that Humberstone Annexe and Belgrave House and Stables are marketed for disposal and the City Council acquire the lease of 10 Chiswick Road; and
- (3) that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to enter into the various legal agreements necessary to complete the acquisition and disposals.

56. PROPOSAL BY DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY

Councillor Scuplak submitted a report which sought the Cabinet's guidance on whether officers should pursue negotiations with De Montfort University (DMU) for the provision of a publicly accessible pool within a proposed new leisure facility DMU wish to develop on land at Duns Lane.

RESOLVED:

that officers are instructed to seek further information from De Montfort University with regard to the level of the capital contribution for the shared use of the proposed publicly accessible pool, (on the basis of no revenue contribution) before the Council decides whether or not to support the proposal in principle.

57. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.24pm.

