



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
CABINET

Held: MONDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2005 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott - Chair  
Councillor Draycott - Vice-Chair

Councillor Bhatti  
Councillor Connelly

Councillor Getliffe  
Councillor Kitterick

Councillor Corral

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**172. 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 Getliffe declared a personal interest in the report Revenue Budget Strategy 2005/06 2007/08 in view of him being a Council tenant. Councillor Draycott also declared a personal interest in the report as a member of her family was a Council tenant. However under paragraph 10 (d) of the Members' Code of Conduct, they regarded themselves as not having a prejudicial interest as long as the discussion did not relate to individual tenancies.

**173. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader announced that the Cabinet would shortly be receiving a report evaluating the operation of tenants associations and assessing their impact and effectiveness in the City.

The Leader also announced that it was the intention of the Cabinet to move Members and associated services from the New Walk Centre to the Town Hall. The Town Hall would need to be completely modified to provide suitable meetings accommodation, and the resulting space at New Walk Centre could then be used to house the Customer Services Centre. It was noted that a feasibility study would come to Cabinet in due course.

**174. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2005, having been circulated to Members be taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **175. MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

### **Special Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee – 7 February 2005**

The Committee agreed the following at the above meeting.

#### Voluntary and Community Sector Consultation

- That the Committee express concern that the questions which had previously been asked had not been sufficiently answered,
- express their concern that the decisions taken by Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2005 in relation to the voluntary sector were not contained in the report,
- express the view that the recommendations in the paper were not sufficiently developed,
- that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that more work is done to develop procedures, including the work of the proposed Commission,
- that the Committee express to Cabinet that it takes the view that value for money is an essential part of decision making about funding,
- that the Committee express to Cabinet that it takes the view that more information is needed about what the voluntary groups do, and
- that the Committee receive a further report on the Commission at their meeting on 17 March 2005.

Councillor Willmott welcomed the close involvement of Scrutiny in the development of the proposals.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet welcome and note the views of the Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee and refer them to the Voluntary and Community Sector Commission for consideration in producing its recommendations.

## **176. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2005/06 2007/08**

Councillor Getliffe declared a personal interest in the report Revenue Budget Strategy 2005/06 to 2007/08 in view of him being a Council tenant. Councillor Draycott also declared a personal interest in the report as a member of her family was a Council tenant. However under paragraph 10 (d) of the Members' Code of Conduct, they regarded themselves as not having a prejudicial interest as long as the discussion did not relate to individual tenancies.

Councillor Draycott submitted a report requesting Cabinet to approve a provisional three year corporate budget strategy, three year departmental revenue strategies for each department and a general fund budget for 2005/06. The key elements of the budget were outlined, and it was noted that under the proposals there would be a 4.3% increase in the City's Council Tax, with the precepts for the Police and Fire Authorities likely to be between 4.5% and 4.955%.

Minute extracts from each of the Scrutiny Committee and the comments from Unison were also circulated. It was noted that there had been no comments from the business sector.

It was noted that Scrutiny Committees had been generally supportive of the proposed budget. With regard to the specific comments made by the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee relating to the proposals to delete the post of an Exclusions Officer, 2 Team Leaders in Early Years and freeze vacancies in the Youth Service, it was noted that these comments had been considered and would now be deleted from the proposed budget.

The Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee had recommended that the proposed funding of broadband for all Members should be deleted, and it was noted that this was now being funded for all Members for one year from alternative funding sources.

It was also reported that Cabinet had acknowledged the views of the Leisure and Environment Scrutiny Committees regarding their proposals to delete the proposals to remove the charges for toilets and the proposals relating to the reinstatement of free charges to the Guildhall but that these proposals would remain in the budget as a previous commitment had been given that charges for these services would be removed. In particular, it was felt that the people of Leicester should be encouraged to access the City's Museums and charging for this was therefore inappropriate.

Councillor Corral expressed his concern regarding the potential cost of CCTV cameras on Great Central Way, as a budget had only been provided for one camera which would not cover the whole area. Concern was also expressed regarding the cost of alley gates, and it was agreed that issues around the value for money of the gates should be explored.

Cabinet thanked Officers in Financial Services for their work on the Revenue Budget Strategy, and the Scrutiny Committees for their comments. It was also

Cabinet's view that the comments of Scrutiny were very important in the process and that their views had been taken on board.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the provisional corporate budget strategy for 2005/06 to 2007/08, the draft departmental revenue strategies prepared by each Corporate Director, and the overall budget for 2005/06 be approved, subject to the following amendments:

- deletion of the following proposed reductions in Education:

LR5 – freeze vacancies in the Youth Service

LR11 – Exclusions Officer

LR7 – 2 Team Leaders (Early Years)

- deletion of the following proposed reduction in Regeneration and Culture:

4.4 – Environment Team

and that it be noted that these changes will not affect the proposed tax, but will leave reserves at an estimated £5.2 million and increase the estimated budget gap in 2007/08 from £4.0 million to £4.1 million,

(2) that the Chief Finance Officer be asked to prepare a formal budget and council tax resolution, and consequential prudential indicators, for Council approval,

(3) that subject to the approval of the budget by Council on 23 February and the Council's normal procedures, Corporate Directors be authorised to take any action necessary to deliver their departmental revenue strategies for 2006/07 and 2007/08,

(4) that it be recommended to Council that the approved budget shall form part of the policy and budget framework of the Council, and that future amendments shall require the approval of full Council, subject to the following:

- that Cabinet may authorise the addition, deletion or virement of sums within the budget, of up to £5million for a single purpose;
- flexibilities and permissions provided in finance procedure rules,

(5) for the purposes of (4) above, it be noted that a separate

maximum virement amount has already been agreed for the Performing Arts Centre,

- (6) that a revised schedule of determinations to the Council's finance procedure rules as shown at Appendix 6 be approved,
- (7) that an increase to the 2004/05 capital programme by £63,000, to fund a programme of improvements to New Walk Museum be approved, to be funded by means of a revenue contribution from underspendings on the current year's corporate budgets,
- (8) that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for crime and disorder, to determine and spend the monies set aside in the budget to combat crime and disorder,
- (9) that a group of Members be set up to make the City's case for improved funding from central government when the formulae for grant support are reviewed in the coming months, to produce proposals for balancing the budget in 2007/08 and beyond, and to oversee the Council's approach to the delivery of efficiency savings,
- (10) that as part of the above review (or at a future date), it be agreed to consider the amount of budget growth required for highways maintenance in 2007/08, and
- (11) that Council be requested to delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to vary components within the Council's overall borrowing limit (the "authorised limit") which relate to borrowing and other forms of finance.

## **177. A CITY ACADEMY FOR LEICESTER**

Councillor Willmott submitted a report asking Cabinet to decide whether to approve the establishment of a City Academy on the site of the Mary Linwood Secondary School by the Church of England and their industry partners. The minute extract from the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 11 January 2005 had also been circulated.

It was reported that the outcome of negotiations with the DfES on the proportion of any proceeds of the sale of Southfields/Newry schools that the Council keep for outdoor sports facilities were still not known.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the establishment of a City Academy on the site of the former Mary Linwood School be supported,

- (2) that the transfer of the Mary Linwood site to the sponsors subject to detailed negotiations and agreement be supported,
- (3) that as Cabinet wished to support the proposal, and had approved the transfer of the Mary Linwood Site to the sponsors, that subject to the Council obtaining the necessary statutory disposal consents, Cabinet agree that:
  - (i) the Town Clerk be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and Regeneration and Property and the Corporate Director for Education and Lifelong Learning, authority to negotiate and agree appropriate terms for the transfer of the site and the proposed joint use arrangements for the Linwood playing fields to the Academy (or the vehicle formed for the purposes of holding this site for Academy purpose)
  - (ii) that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to enter into the formal documentation necessary to complete the disposal,
- (4) that the disposal of the Southfields/Newry Schools site be approved as follow:
  - (i) to offer the site for sale at a nominal undervalue, to the Leicester Lift Company having first option to purchase the site for primary care facilities, and
  - (ii) if satisfactory cannot be agreed with the Leicester Lift Company the site be offered on the open market, after the preparation of supplementary planning guidance for the disposal of the site prior to marketing,
  - (iii) delegate to the Town Clerk and Corporate Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and Regeneration and Property to select the preferred purchaser and subsequently agree the detailed terms of the disposal,
  - (iv) authorise the Head of Legal Services to enter into the formal documentation necessary to complete the proposal,
  - (v) delegate to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the

Leader and Councillor Waddington, to agree with the DfES the relevant proportion of the capital receipt from the sale of the site that can be used to provide sports facilities for the local community and/or the Academy, and

- (5) that Cabinet make support for the Academy conditional upon the DfES allowing the Council to retain an acceptable proportion (to be decided by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Education) of the proceeds of sale of Southfields/Newry to invest in outdoor sports facilities,
- (6) that officers be authorised to work with Aylestone Park Football Club and request that the Town Clerk submits a further report on the outcome of these discussions in due course.

#### **178. SUPPORT SERVICES REVIEW**

Councillor Draycott submitted a report seeking Cabinet's support for a project seeking to improve the efficiency of the Council's back office operations. It was noted that concern had been expressed regarding the cost of carrying out the previously proposed review, and the potential impact on staff; and that therefore a review would be undertaken in personnel administration first.

##### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That a review to improve support services, subject to a successful pilot exercise, be supported,
- (2) that a pilot review of personnel administration be approved,
- (3) that the release of £40,000 of the £400,000 set aside for purposes of the support services review be approved, but no more until a subsequent report is submitted to Cabinet, and
- (4) that a further report on completion of the pilot work described above be requested.

#### **179. ENERGY SERVICES**

Councillor Bhatti submitted a report advising Cabinet of the outcome of consultation with Members on the Housing, Strategic Planning, Leisure and Environment and Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committees, and sought the way forward for Energy Services in the City. It was noted that the consultation had been broadly positive.

## RESOLVED

- (1) That a Cabinet Energy Agency Working Group be established to consider and make recommendations to Cabinet regarding Services to be delivered by the Energy Agency and how the provision of these services will be integrated in the Council's overall organisational framework,
- (2) that the membership of the Working Group be approved as follows: the Leader, Councillors Bhatti and Corrall and Councillor Vincent in his capacity as Chair of the Energy Agency,
- (3) that the Council continue to operate a dedicated shop front for Energy Services in the Council and look for better alternative sites,
- (4) that a comprehensive marketing strategy be developed to highlight the work of the Energy Service in the City and beyond and the opportunities available through the shop for citizens to access high quality advice and energy efficient goods at competitive prices, this could include a re launch of the shop facility either in its current or a new location, new product lines, revised opening times and more internet access,
- (5) that, given the requirements of the Energy Efficiency Directive, which comes into force in January 2006, where all public buildings have to be certificated for their use of energy and water, that Officers consider how best the energy agenda can be moved forward so that the Council complies and opportunities to reduce costs and reinvest savings can be maximised,
- (6) that the Council continue to hold the position of Vice President of Energie-Cities,
- (7) that the Corporate Directors Board sets up a mechanism to review the role of the Sustainable City Officers Group (SCOG) and other environmental management groups, in consultation with the leader of the Council, to make sure they meet the strategic needs of the Council,
- (8) that staff continue to explore the options available for creating an Energy Services Company which limits the liability on the Council, and
- (9) that the Council continues to support the Leicester Energy Agency, who should act as an advisory body to the



Council, but any proposals from the Agency that effect the Council must be agreed by Cabinet, or the Corporate Director of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing before being implemented, and that the Corporate Director for Housing be given authority to negotiate an agreement between the Council, De Montfort University and the Leicester Energy Agency to formalise this arrangement, and that the Head of Legal Service be given delegated authority to sign the agreement on behalf of the Council.

#### **180. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 5.53pm.