



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: MONDAY, 3 APRIL 2006 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor R Blackmore - Chair

Councillor Coley
Councillor Farmer
Councillor Grant

Councillor Gill
Councillor Mugglestone
Councillor Suleman

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254. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No declarations were made.

255. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cabinet portfolios

The Leader reported that Councillor Suleman was the Cabinet Lead for the new Children's Services Department and that Councillor Gill was the Cabinet Lead for the new Adult and Community Services department.

Junior Chess Championship

The Leader reported that he had attended the Leicestershire & Rutland Junior Chess Championship organised by the Leicestershire & Rutland Chess Association and was pleased to see young people gathered together and competing in such a competition. He expressed his congratulations to all who entered.

Across the Board Exhibition

The Leader also gave a reminder that there was only another few weeks to visit the 'Across the Board' exhibition at New Walk Museum.

Charter for the Bereaved

The Leader reported that after 2 years of hard work the City Council had achieved Charter status for Bereavement services. It was noted that the Charter

for the Bereaved was intended to improve and update cemetery and crematoria services and all related aspects of bereavement. It was developed by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) to set the standards of service for the industry. In order to become a member of the Charter, bereavement services had to show that we were able to satisfy 35 basic rights connected with all aspects of bereavement.

256. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2006, having been circulated to Members, be taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

257. MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

- a) Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 13 March 2006

Refugees and Asylum Seekers Advice Project (RASAP)

The following was agreed at the above meeting.

- 1) that the Committee gives its support to Cabinet in approaching the Home Office for further funding for the project;
- 2) that Neighbourhood Renewal Funding be sought and that work be undertaken to actively seek other funding sources; and
- 3) that the Council provide interim funding for the project until a longer term solution has been found however if the proposed avenues for funding the project prove unsuccessful, then the Council underwrites funding for the project.

Councillor Farmer reported that to date no reply had been received from the Home Office to the letter from the Cabinet requesting continued funding for RASAP. It was noted that it was hoped that the project would be funded from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) through the 'new arrival strategy'. However, no decisions on the NRF had yet been taken. The Cabinet could not agree to underwrite the project should other sources of funding not become available as the Council did not have the resources. However, it was noted that the Leicester Partnership had given in principle agreement for transitional NRF funding to continue the project.

- b) Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 13 March 2006

Planning Application Statistics

The following was agreed at the above meeting.

- (1) that the Cabinet be asked to re-consider the name of the Development Control Committee, possibly to include the word 'Planning';
 - (2) that Cabinet be requested to consider this report and give consideration to the concerns of the Committee, with regard to the potential deteriorating performance in the planning service which could result from the budget cuts;
 - (3) that that Committee asks for a report back on the Action Plan to improve the performance of the planning service;
 - (4) that the Committee would like the use of pre-planning discussions promoted if they proved useful;
 - (5) that the Committee requests to see statistics on comparator cities with regard to their planning services.
- c) Development Control Committee - 21 March 2006

Planning Application Statistics

The following was agreed at the above meeting.

that the report be referred to Cabinet and that the Committee's concerns be responded to.

Councillor Farmer responded that with regard to the name of the Development Control Committee, the request of the Scrutiny Committee would be referred to the Council whose decision it was. He did not accept that the budget reconfiguration should lead to a reduction in performance but added that the Cabinet was concerned about the current level of performance in the process for determining planning applications and advised that the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture would be providing for Cabinet Members a 'road map' for developing and completing a full action plan to address the issues along with some 'quick wins'. A report on the action plan would also be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee as requested. It was noted that the main area of difficulty was the determination of major planning applications, which although the department had determined twice as many of these applications within the required timeframe over the last year, given that the number of applications had doubled in the same timeframe, due to the level of regeneration activity currently happening in the City, the performance failed to meet the major applications target. Other targets, however, had been met. Councillor Farmer also supported Development Control Committee's request to officers for pre-planning discussions and for further work on comparator cities.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that Council be asked to consider the request of the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee with regard to the name of the Development Control Committee; and

- (2) that the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture provide for Cabinet Members a 'road map' for the provision and completion of an action plan to improve planning application determination performance and submit a report on the action plan to the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, in due course.

258. JOINT ADOPTION SERVICE OF LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND FUNCTION INCLUDING ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor Suleman submitted a report which introduced the Joint Adoption Service Statement of Purpose and Function and the Adoption Team Annual Report. The relevant minute extract of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 14 March 2006 had also been circulated to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the contents of the Adoption Team Statement of Purpose and Function be approved; and
- (2) that the achievements of the Adoption Team and the monitoring of its activities as contained within the Annual Report be noted and commended.

259. EDUCATION CAPITAL STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME 2006/07 - 2007/08

Councillor Suleman submitted a report seeking approval to an Education Capital Programme for recommendation to Council.

The relevant minute extract of the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 2 March had also been circulated to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the proposed Education Capital Programme be recommended to Council;
- (2) that additional expenditure of £0.5 million from the modernisation allocations for 2006/07 and 2007/08 for the new Braunstone Primary Schools be approved, subject to approval of the Capital Programme by Council, or alternatively to be funded from departmental reserves/schools' block reserves
- (3) that the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services be authorised to implement the programme in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the flexibilities described in paragraph 2.5 for items 1), 3) and 4) in the report, subject to the approval of the programme by Council;

- (4) that Council be recommended to authorise the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services to exercise the flexibilities described in paragraph 2.5 for item 2) in the report.

260. CITY STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Councillor Gill submitted a report seeking Cabinet approval to the above Strategy.

RESOLVED:

that the shared city strategy for older people be approved.

261. FAIR ACCESS TO CARE SERVICES ACCESS, ELIGIBILITY AND PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Councillor Gill submitted a report which addressed the requirement to determine eligibility for services under the Government's guidance on Fair Access to Care Services. The relevant minute extract of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 14 March 2006 had also been circulated to the Cabinet and it was noted that the Scrutiny Committee had supported the recommendations in the report. Councillor Gill also noted the comments of the Scrutiny Committee that they thought that the report should have been considered during September/October prior to the budget being finalised.

RESOLVED:

that the threshold of eligibility be placed at 'substantial' and 'critical' as set out in Appendix A of the report.

262. OLD HUMBERSTONE CONSERVATION AREA

Councillor Farmer submitted a report which sought Cabinet approval to the extension of the Old Humberstone Conservation Area and the adoption of the Old Humberstone Conservation Area Character Appraisal as supplementary guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan. It was noted that the proposals were supported by the Ward Councillors and the Scrutiny triumvirate.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the extensions to the Old Humberstone Conservation Area as shown on the plan appended to the Appraisal be approved; and
- 2) that the Character Appraisal for the Old Humberstone Conservation Area be adopted as supplementary guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan.

263. FEES FOR LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

This item was withdrawn from the agenda by the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture.

264. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Councillor Blackmore reported that he had agreed to take one item of urgent business as follows:-

Performing Arts Centre

The reason for urgency was that if the report was not considered this could give rise to delays in the project's timetable and consequently an increase in costs of the project.

The report was recommended for consideration on the private agenda because it involved the likely disclosure of 'exempt' information, as defined in the Paragraph 3 and 5 under Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and in all the circumstances of the case it was considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

265. PRIVATE SESSION

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 3 and 5 under Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) and taking all the circumstances into account, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the information as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

266. GRANBY HALLS, WELFORD ROAD

Councillor Coley submitted a report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that spending of up to £35,000 of earmarked capital receipts for the provision of new access/egress to Granby Halls car park be approved;
- (2) that the Corporate Director of Resources, Access and Diversity in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Resources, Access and Diversity be authorised to agree any expenditure in excess of £35,000 from Corporate resources to meet any other legitimate costs associated

with the provision of a new access/aggress at Welford Road to serve the Granby Halls Car Park; and

- (3) that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to enter into all necessary contracts and agreements arising out of this work.

267. PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

Councillor Mugglestone submitted a report. Cabinet Members expressed concern at the increased costs of this project.

RESOLVED:

that £700,000 of the contingency sum for the Performing Arts Centre be released for spend against the provisional sum packages.

268. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 6pm.

