



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: MONDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2005 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor R Blackmore - Chair
Councillor Scuplak - Vice-Chair

Councillor Coley
Councillor Farmer
Councillor Grant

Councillor Gill
Councillor Metcalfe
Councillor Mugglestone

Councillor Suleman

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155. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Scuplak declared a non prejudicial interest in Report B, 'Waterside Supplementary Planning Document', as a director of the Leicester Regeneration Company.

156. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beacon Status

The Leader announced that the City Council's application for Beacon Status for Culture and Sport to Hard to Reach Groups had been shortlisted by the Advisory Panel for the Beacon Scheme.

Social Care and Health Department - Two star rating

The Leader announced that the City Council's Social Care and Health department had retained its two star rating from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). This rating put the department in the top quartile of the 83 authorities rated as having two stars.

Performance indicators showed an improved rating for Adults and Older Persons Services, taking the department from "promising" to "excellent". Services for children remained as "promising".

The CSCI judged the department as "serving most people well" across all services. However, despite continued improvement, the CSCI still rated the department at two stars.

It was noted that in assessing performance, the CSCI reached judgements

about performance against a set of standards and criteria, drawing on evidence from a number of standard sources. These included performance statistics, planned targets, monitoring information and inspections of services.

The Leader asked that his thanks and congratulations be passed to all staff in the Social Care & Health Department for this achievement.

Leicester's Individual Budget Pilot

The Leader announced that the Government had chosen Leicester as a pilot City for promoting the Individual Budget Scheme. which would be one of only 13 nationally.

It was noted that when the Government's Green Paper on the future of Social Care in England was published, ministers announced that pilot projects would be run to test out the concept of individual budgets that featured in the paper. The individual budgets aimed to offer a new approach to give people greater control over the services they needed and how these should be provided. The focus would be on Learning Disabilities and Physical Disabilities.

The pilot would start early next year and run between 18 months to 2 years. Ring-fenced funding would be made available by the government to help the Council set up the pilot project.

The Leader thanked all the staff who helped prepare the bid as a result of which Leicester has been selected as a pilot site.

National Children's Bureau/DFES/DH conference about NSF Disabled Children Standard 8

The Leader announced that Lord Adonis gave the keynote speech at the above conference on 30 November 2005.

Lord Adonis cited Leicester's "Disabled Children's Integration Programme" as one of three national exemplars of excellent and cutting edge practice. The Leader also commented 'It is worth noting that the other two examples given were specialist Disabled Children's Trusts: ours was the only generic trust with a key inclusive disabled children's policy. The event has confirmed the importance of maintaining our integration agenda for disabled children and those with complex needs. Our progress in this area both from the DfES, DH and parent/carer and young people's perspective is highly regarded and confirmed regularly at conferences of this nature'.

Andrew Cozens – Deputy Chief Executive

The Leader announced that this was the last Cabinet that Andrew Cozens would be attending before leaving the authority. The Leader expressed his and the Cabinet's thanks for his contribution to the City and wished him all the best for the future.

Arriva and FirstBus – Fare Increases

The Leader reported that he had invited representatives from both Arriva and FirstBus to the meeting to discuss the recent rise in bus fares. Representatives

from both companies explained the new fare structure and that the increases were the result of increased costs. Members expressed their concerns about the level of bus fares and the impact on the travelling public in Leicester.

At the proposal of the Leader it was agreed that the Cabinet enter into further discussions with Arriva and FirstBus to move towards a greater take up of bus services by the travelling public within the City of Leicester.

157. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November, having been circulated to Members, be taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Under this item Councillor Suleman made a statement as follows:-

'I would like to comment on Minute 134 regarding the Leader's Announcements.

I welcomed the visit of Hazel Blears MP to the city over the summer to discuss with community leaders issues around 'Preventing Terrorism Together'. However, I have more recently taken soundings among key official Muslim leaders regarding one of the Home Secretary's conclusions from the national programme of visits. He alleges that some groups supported the establishment of a National Advisory Council of Imams and Mosques.

I have not found support for such a proposal either locally or nationally.

I am therefore asking the Leader of the Council to make representations to the Home Secretary to clarify where he believes there is support for such a proposal. I should like to take this opportunity to express the strong concerns of Muslims about any such development that would be regarded by many as intrusive and counterproductive. I very much hope that the Home Secretary will reassure Muslims that no such proposal is currently being taken forward.'

158. MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Education Scrutiny – 29 November 2005

Integrated Services Review

The Committee resolved:-

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That it be requested that a report be brought to this Committee at the earliest opportunity which details the proposed budgets of the new departments; and

- (3) That Cabinet be requested to consider:
- the placing of Library services within the Children's Services department and;
 - the placing of the Youth Offending Service within the Children's Services department.

Cllr Grant thanked the Education Scrutiny Committee for its comments and reported that the placing of both Library Services and the Youth Offending Service had been finely balanced decisions as both services could sit successfully in a number of areas. However, on balance, it was considered that the Libraries link with Cultural services and the Youth Offending Service link with Community safety, were the strongest.

159. CITY CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS

Councillor Scuplak submitted a report which proposed a Public Realm Strategy for the City Centre and a detailed design for Gallowtree Gate. Approval was also sought for the release of £656,000 capital programme money to construct the Gallowtree Gate scheme.

It was noted that there had been consultation on the proposals but the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny triumvirate had expressed strong concern that the final report had not been presented to that Committee. Councillor Scuplak regretted this but explained that the timing of the Cabinet meeting had not allowed the report to go to Scrutiny Committee first and as there was a need for the Gallowtree Gate Scheme to start in January, this was the last opportunity for the report to be submitted to Cabinet. However, he expressed his willingness to receive any comments that the Scrutiny Committee may have and also noted that there would be further reports on the public realm strategy.

Councillor Scuplak went on to outline the proposed Gallowtree Gate Scheme. It was noted that the costs of the project had increased and he reported that work would be undertaken to ensure costs were contained and external sources of funding accessed to the maximum. However, he stressed that he did not want the quality of schemes to be compromised and therefore any increase in cost may increase contract length and phasing.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Public Realm Strategy for the City Centre, be approved;
- (2) that approval be given for the release of £656,000 capital programme monies to fund the Gallowtree Gate scheme; and
- (3) that under Cabinet Procedure Rule 12d), no objection be allowed to decision (2) above, due to the urgent need to begin the scheme in Gallowtree Gate in January 2006.

160. WATERSIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Councillor Scuplak submitted a report recommending a Supplementary Planning Document to the Local Plan, covering the proposed 'Waterside' district in the City.

RESOLVED:

that the Waterside Supplementary Planning Document be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the City of Leicester Local Plan, subject to the amendments set out in Section 7 in the Supporting Information and subject to further work on the maximum height of buildings, any amendments delegated to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for City Centre regeneration.

161. LIVING LANDMARKS LOTTERY BID - MARKET AND MARKET PLACE

Councillor Mugglestone submitted a report that sought Cabinet support for the submission of a bid to the Living Landmarks Lottery Fund for the regeneration of Leicester Market and the Market Place.

RESOLVED:

that authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead and the Chief Finance officer, to submit a lottery bid providing there is satisfactory expectation (at this stage) that a successful scheme would be financially viable.

162. THE INSTITUTE OF COMMUNITY COHESION AND LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

Councillor Blackmore submitted a report setting out a proposal that Leicester City Council become a founding partner of the Institute of Community Cohesion.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the invitation for the council to become a key partner of the Institutue of Community Cohesion, be accepted.
- (2) that the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Lead for Cohesion be nominated as members of the Partnership Board; and
- (3) that approval be given for core funding to be provided to support the Institute in its first three years of operation (2005 – 2008) to the amount of £20,000 per annum from the Community Cohesion Fund.

163. NEIGHBOURHOOD ELEMENT OF THE SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND

Councillor Farmer submitted a report seeking agreement to Leicester's approach to developing Neighbourhood Management in priority deprived areas, and seeking agreement to how funding is used.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that approval be given for option 5 detailed in the supporting information of the report, that is, to set up Neighbourhood Management in two priority areas along the lines of the Government Neighbourhood Management model in St Matthews and St Marks as one area and in Saffron Lane Estate as another, and fund better 'own grown' neighbourhood management, leadership and partnership working in three other priority neighbourhoods. Beaumont Leys / Mowmacre, St. Peters and New Parks.
- (2) that the Corporate Director of Housing be authorised in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Strategic Community Renewal and Safety to act on the development of proposals for the neighbourhood element of the Safer, Stronger Communities Fund and on the implementation of Leicester's neighbourhood management arrangements for the Cabinet; and
- (3) that the Corporate Director of Housing be authorised, in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Lead Member for Strategic Community Renewal and Safety, to set up a Cabinet Sub-Group and agree its terms of reference, to review potential areas of devolution of services and look at all neighbourhood management arrangements currently across the Council and report back in April 2006.

164. PLAY AREAS - HOUSING SITES

Councillor Metcalfe submitted a report informing Cabinet of the implications of transferring ownership and responsibility for maintaining and replacing play areas on Housing Department owned land.

It was noted that Cabinet in April had asked for a report outlining the implications of transferring ownership from the Housing to the Regeneration and Culture Department. Following this, a working group of officers from both departments was established to consider the options for transferring responsibility including the whole life cost of both maintaining and replacing play equipment.

The possibility of transferring land ownership and sites to Regeneration and Culture had been explored but rejected because the Director of Housing

considered that land ownership should remain with Housing to give flexibility for any future housing developments. It would also be inappropriate to transfer enclosed sites which were for the sole use of residents.

The report, therefore, proposed a renegotiated service agreement between Housing and Regeneration and Culture and offered 3 options:-

- a) a service agreement within the existing allocated budget of £43,100. This would enable play areas to be inspected in accordance with existing standards, but there would be insufficient funding to undertake minor repairs. Once the repairs allocation is exhausted, Housing would be contacted to consider additional funding for necessary repairs or replacement of equipment in order to keep play areas/equipment operational.
- b) an enhanced service agreement at a cost of £77,900. This would offer Housing the same level of service for inspections and maintenance that Regeneration & Culture currently carry out on their sites. This includes an increased allowance for repairs to play equipment, safety surfacing, and hard surfaces but not replacement equipment. Any equipment requiring replacement will be removed and only replaced if funding is available.
- c) an enhanced service agreement for the management and maintenance of all Housing play areas with adequate funds to inspect, maintain and replace equipment as and when necessary. This has been calculated at a cost of £190,700 per annum. This would ensure that housing play areas are inspected, maintained and equipment replaced as necessary together with works being carried out to non play equipment ie: seats, bins, fences, gates, etc. Approval of this option would mean that Housing play areas would be maintained and replaced to a higher standard than currently applies to Regeneration & Culture play areas.

It was noted that the both Corporate Directors of Housing and Regeneration and Culture favoured Option b) above, as this would ensure a consistent approach to the management and maintenance of play areas across the city.

RESOLVED:

that option 'b', outlined above, which brings housing sites in line with all other sites managed by the Council, be adopted and that any capital provision for 2006/7 and in future years be considered alongside other demands on the housing capital programme at that time.

165. SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME - MAJOR PROJECTS

Councillor Gill submitted a report outlining the main features of 2 major projects which were currently being undertaken in the Supporting People Programme.

RESOLVED:

that the requirement to undertake the review as detailed in the report be noted and the financial implications of any changes to the Council's services be considered as part of the budget preparation process for 2006 - 08.

166. LONG SERVICE AWARDS AND RETIREMENT GIFTS

Councillor Coley submitted a report which recommended the implementation of a new scheme to reward long serving employees in place of the Council's current retirement award scheme.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Council's current policy of recognising employees for their long-term commitment to the authority by presenting an award on retirement, be replaced by a scheme that will entitle employees to receive long service awards throughout their employment.
- (2) that a gift to the value of £100 be awarded on retirement for all employees achieving 20 years service or more
- (3) that Protection arrangements for current employees be in place for 5 years, therefore any employees within 5 years of retirement at the date the new scheme is implemented will receive protection as necessary.
- (4) that the new scheme be implemented on the 1 February 2006.
- (5) that as a transitional provision, employees with 35 or more years service on the implementation date will receive only the 35 year award but employees subsequently reaching 35 years service will receive this award in addition to the previous award for 25 years service; and
- (6) that the new scheme be commended to schools for implementation.

167. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Leader reported that he had agreed to accept two items of Urgent Business to the agenda as follows:-

- a) University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust's Application for Foundation status.
The reason for urgency was that the bid had to be submitted to the Department of Health by 9 December 2005.
- b) Highfields Centre – Community Governance Update

The reason for urgency was the need for a decision by the deadline of 15 December.

168. UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS OF LEICESTER - APPLICATION FOR FOUNDATION STATUS

Councillor Gill submitted a report outlining the proposal of the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust to apply to the Department of Health for Foundation status.

RESOLVED:

that the Cabinet expresses its support for the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust on their bid for Foundation Trust status subject to them:

- a) clearly demonstrating their accountability to local people
- b) clarifying the opportunity for ward Councillors' community leadership role
- c) committing to active engagement with the City Council's Area Committees, and
- d) addressing the points raised by the Health Scrutiny triumvirate

169. HIGHFIELDS CENTRE - COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Councillor Suleman submitted a report updating the Cabinet on discussions and progress regarding the community governance of the Highfields Centre, following the setting up of the Partnership Board.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the ongoing discussion with the Highfields Community Association be noted.
- (2) that the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning be asked to bring forward a report by March 2006 setting out, with the HCA and engaging the Partnership Board, a practical and affordable option for community governance for the Highfields Centre; and
- (3) that robust operational and financial arrangements be developed by 15 December 2005 to maximise usage of the Highfields Centre in the interim.

170. 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 detailed below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Paragraph 8

The amount of any expenditure to be incurred by the authority under any contract

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.

171. FORMER JOHN ELLIS COLLEGE - PROPOSED LEICESTER SCIENCE PARK (PHASE 1)

Councillor Coley submitted a report on the progress with the disposal of the former John Ellis College and the proposed Leicester Science Park. Members confirmed their commitment to this scheme and noted the capital programme implications of failure to secure adequate grant.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the progress of the proposed Leicester Science Park, be noted.
- (2) that the proposed delivery mechanism for the disposal of the former John Ellis site including the commencement of the second stage developer selection process, be approved.
- (3) that the Director of Resources, Access and Diversity be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources, Access and Diversity, to agree expenditure in excess of the figure in paragraph 4.2 of the report, subject to such expenditure being covered by EMDA grant funding.
- (4) That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to enter into all necessary contracts and agreements in respect of the remediation and infrastructure works.
- (5) that the Director of Resources, Access and Diversity be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for the Resources, Access & Diversity Department, to agree the detailed terms for the disposal of the property, subject to a further report once a preferred developer has been identified; and

- (6) that officers prepare contingency arrangements, in the event of any shortfall in grant funding.

172. INTERMEDIATE CARE CAPITAL BID PROJECT

Councillor Gill submitted a report on plans for the delivery on Intermediate Care Services in Leicester.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the proposed future plans for the delivery of Intermediate Care be supported.
- (2) that approval be given for the disposal of Brookside Court and the Corporate Director of Resources, Access & Diversity be authorised in consultation with the Interim Corporate Director of Social Care & Health and the Cabinet leads for Finance and Social Care & Health, to agree the terms; and
- (3) that approval be given in principle to earmark such part of the capital receipts from the disposal of Brookside Court as are needed to fund the Butterwick House redevelopment.

173. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 6.55pm.

