



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
CABINET

Held: MONDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2007 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor R Blackmore - Chair

Councillor Coley  
Councillor Gill  
Councillor Grant  
Councillor Mugglestone

Councillor Ramsdale  
Councillor Sandringham  
Councillor Smith  
Councillor Suleman

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**181. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Scuplak.

**182. 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.

**183. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Charity Pancake Race

The Leader reported that the above event was to take place the next day, Shrove Tuesday, at Leicester Market, with proceeds towards the Lord Mayor's Charity.

Leicester Leys Leisure Centre

The Leader reported that a new session of Pilates classes were starting at the above Leisure Centre

UNICEF report: Child Poverty in Perspective

The Leader referred to the above recently published report and asked Councillor Suleman to comment. Councillor Suleman reported that the Council with the Primary Care Trust had commissioned an analysis of the impact of the report on Leicester.

### Pastoral Care - Primary Schools

Councillor Suleman reported that arising from the school improvement meetings, it had become clear that there was a need for high level family support posts to work with parents and families on issues that interfered with children's ability to learn. He noted that at present dealing with these kinds of issues detracted teaching staff from focusing on the quality of teaching and learning. He reported that it was proposed to create a number of posts as additional capacity to enable this family work to be completed without over reliance on school based staff. Further he noted that all of the evidence suggested that freeing up teachers in this way improved outcomes for children and young people and increased the parental capacity to engage with the school in a positive way.

## **184. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2007, having been circulated to Members, be taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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

- a) Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee – 8 January 2007

### **Building Schools for the Future – Update and Local Employment Scheme**

The following was agreed at the above meeting

“That as the issue has corporate implications Cabinet and the Town Clerk be requested to consider the opportunities available to benefit the City from the Building Schools for the Future Programme”.

Councillor Suleman agreed that the Building Schools for the Future programme was a great opportunity for the City and reported that a full report on the programme and the opportunities it afforded would be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet

- b) Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee – 18 January 2007

### **2006/07 Capital Programme Monitoring – Period 7**

The following was agreed at the above meeting

“that the committee expresses its concerns to Cabinet about the level of slippage in Regeneration and Culture Department Capital Programme”.

Councillor Coley referred to the report to the last Cabinet on the

progress of the capital programme and that overall the Council was performing well. He acknowledged that there were 2 key areas of slippage. One was in relation to the Performing Arts Centre which had encountered delays beyond the Council's control. The second was the St George's Infrastructure Liveability project and officers had been asked to prepare an update to Scrutiny and Cabinet members on the amount of slippage on this project, the reasons, action taken and any lessons learned.

- c) Resources and Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee - 16 November 2006

**Scrutiny Research Project: Executive Briefing Note for Scrutiny Report**

The following was agreed at the above meeting

“that Cabinet and all Scrutiny Committees be recommended to consider amending the existing report format to remove the summary report at the front because it did not serve its purpose and that on future reports a feedback section be attached to the rear for Councillors to give feedback to report authors”.

Councillor Coley proposed that Scrutiny experiment with an amended report format over a 6 month period and give feedback to Cabinet.

- d) Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Committee – 10 January 2007

**Adult Social Care Performance 2006/2007**

The following was agreed at the above meeting.

“that Cabinet’s attention be drawn to the fact that the departments rating to improve has declined and that further financial constraints might well have a serious impact on the capacity to improve”.

Councillor Ramsdale reported that he shared the Scrutiny Committee's concerns and that the pressure on Adult Social Care budgets was a nationwide issue. He noted that provision had been made in the budget proposals for an extra £6.3 million to be spent on Social Care Services over the next 3 years.

- e) Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Committee - 10 January 2007

**Adult Learning - Update**

The following was agreed at the above meeting.

“that the information be noted and that the comments expressed regarding the future of free ESOL courses be fed back to Cabinet.”

Councillor Ramsdale agreed with the importance of ESOL courses and submitted a briefing note outlining the action being taken by the Council to try and change the policy of the Learning and Skills Council who funded these programmes.

- f) Spinney Hills and Stoneygate Area Committee - 20 November 2006 and 29 January 2007

### **Highways - Response to Working Group**

The following was agreed at the meeting on 29 January 2007

“that Cabinet be requested to consider the proposals of the Highways Working Group which were supported by the Area Committee”.

Councillor Mugglestone reported that he was happy to consider any individual requests in respect of parking enforcement.

## **186. CITY COUNCIL MEETING – 25/1/2007: ITEMS FOR REPORT BACK TO CABINET**

Councillor Coley submitted a report a report that informed Members of the items of business from the meeting of full Council on 25 January 2007, which potentially will impact on the work of Cabinet or will be or relevance to Cabinet in terms of future reports.

He noted in particular the list of projects referred for consideration for funding from the Area Committee budget in areas where no Area Committees were currently set up. He urged Members in these areas to participate in setting up these Area Committees so that these budget proposals could be considered in the areas.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Council resolutions and the initiation of the action arising, including steps to establish the remaining Area Committees, be noted; and
- (2) that further necessary reports be submitted to Cabinet as soon as practicable.

## **187. AREA COMMITTEE EXPENDITURE**

Councillor Sandringham submitted a report that sought Cabinet approval of spending proposals by Area Committees.

RESOLVED:

that the expenditure proposals in Appendix A of the report be approved.

**188. INSPECTION BY THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL CARE INSPECTION OF LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL ADOPTION SERVICE 2006**

Councillor Suleman submitted a report that advised Cabinet of the outcome of the Commission for Social Care Inspection of the Leicester City Council Adoption Service which took place over 8 days in September 2006.

The relevant minute extract of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 8 January 2007 had been circulated to the Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) that the report of the Commission for Social Care Inspection into the Leicester City Joint Adoption Service be noted.
- (2) that the statutory Requirements and Good Practice Recommendations contained within the report be acknowledged; and
- (3) that the work of the Adoption Team and the commitment of the staff within the service in maintaining the service as among the highest performing services in England and Wales be recognised.

**189. REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FOSTERING BY THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL CARE INSPECTION**

Councillor Suleman submitted a report that advised Cabinet of the outcome of the Inspection of Leicester City private fostering service by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

The relevant minute extract of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 8 January 2007 had been circulated to the Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) that the content of the Commission for Social Care Inspection report of the private fostering arrangements and the excellent outcome of this inspection be noted; and
- (2) that the hard work and contribution to the positive report by staff be commended.

**190. REPORT BY THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL CARE INSPECTION OF LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL FOSTERING SERVICE 2006**

Councillor Suleman submitted a report that advised Cabinet of the outcome of the Commission for Social Care Inspection of the Leicester City Council Fostering Service, which occurred between 18 to 22 September 2006.

The relevant minute extract of the Children and Young People Scrutiny

Committee on 8 January 2007 had been circulated to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Final Report of the Commission for Social Care Inspection Report of the Leicester City Council Fostering Service be noted; and
- (2) that all of the staff and foster carers who have worked hard to produce such an outstanding inspection report be commended.

## **191. ONE-OFF INVESTMENT IN CULTURAL SERVICES**

Councillor Mugglestone submitted a report that sought Cabinet's agreement to expenditure on specific schemes included in the ring-fenced Cultural Services Capital Programme.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the commitment of capital expenditure in 2007/08 of £785,000 on 4 schemes detailed in the report be authorised.
- (2) that a variation to the ring-fenced programme of investments as set out in Appendix 2 be approved; and
- (3) that the withdrawal of Humberstone Park Depot and Evington House from the disposals programme for the reasons set out in Paragraph 2.1 of the Supporting Information be approved.

## **192. CITY CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS - CURRENT PROGRAMME**

Councillor Mugglestone submitted a report that updated Cabinet on the current position of the three projects delivering public realm improvements in the city centre, brought to its attention required programming and funding changes and sought approval to the release of capital programme funding.

The relevant minute extracts of the Highways and Transportation Scrutiny Committee on 21 November 2006 and Economic development and Planning on 23 November 2006 had been circulated to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that a reduction from £19.39m to £16.09m in the City Centre Development Project, and a reduction in the scope of the current programme be noted.
- (2) that the Council contribution to the City Centre Development project of £6.84m, of which £2.4m of this has already be approved be noted; and that a further £4.44m that is required to complete the schemes detailed in

paragraph 3.7 of the supporting information, be approved.

- (3) that the release of £473,000 of capital programme monies to fund the Cultural Quarter Infrastructure Project be approved.
- (4) that additional external funding sourced for the Cultural Quarter programme and a transfer of funding from this programme to support the PAC as agreed in January 2007 be noted.
- (5) that the Corporate Director be authorised to proceed with works in the Cultural Quarter to ensure completion of works prior to the Performing Arts Centre being launched to include delegated powers of authority to enter into contract with Builders for Phase 2, the cost of which is detailed on page 9.
- (6) that the expenditure on the Leicester Regeneration Company Public Realm Project of £750,000 be noted; and
- (7) that the project costs for City Centre Development, Cultural Quarter and Leicester Regeneration Company public realm include each project's contribution towards the "Big Picture" promotional activities which amounts to £200,000 be noted.

### **193. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2007/08 - 2009/10**

Councillor Coley submitted a report that requested Cabinet to consider a 3-year corporate budget strategy, 3 year departmental revenue strategies for each department, and a general fund budget for 2007/08 and to recommend these to the Council.

Councillor Coley recommended that Cabinet approve the budget for recommendation to Council but signalled his intention to propose amendments at Council as follows:-

- a) to provide funding for pastoral care in primary schools; and
- b) to delete proposals R2 to R4 in the Housing Department revenue strategy given the reported adverse effect of these measures.

Councillor Coley noted the comments of the Scrutiny Committees and the Unions. He also referred to an amended Appendix 6 of the Regeneration and Culture budget strategy and an addition to Appendix C of the Resources budget strategy, the latter of which had been omitted from the papers and both of which had been circulated.

Also further to the report, Councillor Coley reported the increases in the Police

and Fire precepts of 5%. It was noted that the proposed increase of the City Council's budget was 2.6%, bringing an overall proposed Council Tax increase of 3% for 2007/08.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the draft corporate budget strategy for 2007/08 to 2009/10, the draft departmental revenue strategies prepared by each director, as amended by the additional papers and the draft overall budget for 2007/08 as described in the report be approved for recommendation to Council;
- (2) that the Chief Finance Officer be asked to prepare a formal budget and council tax resolution, and consequent prudential indicators, for Council approval;
- (3) that subject to the approval of the budget by the Council on 21 February and the Council's normal procedures, authorisation be given to corporate directors to take any action necessary to deliver their departmental revenue strategies for 2008/09 to 2009/10;
- (4) that the Director of Resources be authorised to spend £0.3m of monies set aside for the cost of job evaluation on project management costs;
- (5) that the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to give effect to the budget adjustments arising from the Business Improvement Programme, when these are known;
- (6) that the Council, notwithstanding (7) below, recommend that authority be given to the Cabinet (after consulting the party spokespersons for Resources and Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee) to enter into contracts with individual members of staff to discharge potential "equal pay" liabilities; to determine how the cost shall be met; and to make arrangements for the administration of such agreements;
- (7) that Council be asked to agree 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 to a maximum amount of £1m for a single purpose;

flexibilities and permissions provided in finance procedure rules.



- (8) that the schedule of determinations to the Council's finance procedure rules as shown at Appendix 6 be agreed
- (9) that subject to its approval of the budget, Council be recommended that the elements of the budget shown at Appendix 7 of the report shall be controllable budget lines for the purposes of Finance Procedure Rule 4.3.6 (being the level at which the budget is disaggregated for the purposes of applying the Council's virement rules);
- (10) that the Council be recommended to approve the treasury strategy included as Appendix 8 and the investment strategy included at Appendix 9 to this report;
- (11) that the 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; and
- (12) that the following reports which are outstanding from previous years' budget recommendations be sought;-
  - a) Asset management plan for the City's highways by June 2007
  - b) Review of Subsidised bus services by October 2007

#### **194. CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO THE LOSS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AT BLACKBIRD ROAD PLAYING FIELDS**

Councillor Coley submitted a report that asked Cabinet to consider the objections to the loss of public open space at Blackbird Road Playing Fields in the light of the Council's decision to sell the land. There had been 4 objections although it was noted that one of the objections had been signed by 7 people from the Blackbird Road Playing Fields Action Group. It was noted that the majority of the land was owned by Gateway College and the rest by the City Council. All of the land was currently undeveloped. However, the proposed development included 25% more public open space than the area of land currently owned by the City Council. It was also noted that all of the issues raised by the objectors had been addressed at the planning approval stage and no new issues had emerged.

Councillor Ramsdale referred to the Blackbird Road Playing Fields Action Group and their concerns regarding the development of the land and urged that every effort be made to encourage the best development possible for the benefit of the existing properties.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) that the objections received be noted.

- (2) that it be noted that the issues relating to open space were dealt with at outline planning permission stage; and
- (3) that the objections received be rejected in the light of the open space provision, which will be provided as part of the development of the site.

#### **195. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Councillor Blackmore reported that he had agreed to accept three items of urgent business to the agenda as follows:-

- a) Matter referred by the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2007 on the Barker Review of Land Use Planning which the Committee had requested that Cabinet consider and comment on. The reason for urgency was that comments were required back to the Department for Communities and Local Government by 5 March 2007.
- b) Matter referred from the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee on 14 February 2007 on the Functional Structure Review. The reason for urgency was that the item related to the budget.
- c) Matter referred from the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee on 14 February 2007 on the Future of the 14-19 Curriculum. The reason for urgency was that the item related to the budget.

#### **196. MATTER REFERRED FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - BARKER REVIEW OF LAND USE PLANNING**

At its meeting on 8 February 2007, the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee agreed the following:-

“That the Committee refer the report to Cabinet for their consideration and comments”.

Councillor Blackmore reported that Cabinet supported the Scrutiny Committees views.

**RESOLVED:**

that Cabinet note and support the comments on the Barker Review of Land Use Planning made by the Economic Development and Planning Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2007 and that the Acting Director of Regeneration and Culture be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Regeneration, to finalise the Council's comments on this matter for dispatch to the Department for Communities and Local Government, East Midlands Development Agency and the Regional Assembly.

**197. MATTER REFERRED FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE REVIEW**

At its meeting on 14 February 2007, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed the following:

‘that Cabinet be asked to reconsider the requirement for the Department to meet Integrated Services programme efficiency savings targets in the light of the transformational change’

Councillor Suleman responded that he and Cabinet recognised the challenges involved in the creation of a new department and were looking at the management of efficiency targets within existing budgets.

**198. MATTER REFERRED FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - FUTURE OF 14-19 CURRICULUM**

At its meeting on 14 February 2007, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed the following:

‘that Cabinet be requested that sufficient resources be made available to the department to meet the requirement to develop the 14-19 curriculum in the City and that consideration be given to the creation of a 3<sup>rd</sup> tier post to manage this work’.

Councillor Suleman reported that he and his Cabinet colleagues recognised the enormous challenge of transformation that the department faced, of which 14-19 was part and had asked the Corporate Director to consider this as part of the departments organisational review.

**199. PRIVATE SESSION**

Councillor Blackmore reported that he had agreed that Councillor Draycott could remain in the meeting for the consideration of the private agenda in her capacity as ward councillor.

RESOLVED:

that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following report in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, because it involves the likely disclosure of 'exempt' information, as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)', 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.

## **200. PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF GODSTOW WALK - SELECTION OF A PREFERRED PARTNER**

Councillor Smith submitted a report on the above.

The Corporate Director agreed to look into options for bringing forward the timetable of demolition works subject to their being no significant increase in costs.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) that approval be given for the sale of the freehold interest with vacant possession of Godstow Walk as indicated edged on the plan attached to the report totalling approximately 0.67hectares (1.66 acres) to Bellways in the sum detailed in report.
- (2) that the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing and the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Housing, be authorised to negotiate the detailed terms of sale including if necessary a minor variation reduction of no more than 15% on the price approved in (1) above; and
- (3) that the Service Director Legal Services be given authorisation to enter into all legal documentation to facilitate the sale.

## **201. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 6.10 pm.

