



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: TUESDAY, 29 MAY 2007 at 10.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott- Chair
Councillor Draycott- Vice-Chair

Councillor Bhatti
Councillor Connelly
Councillor Corral
Councillor Dempster

Councillor Kitterick
Councillor Osman
Councillor Mrs Sood
Councillor Wann

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1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Connelly, Corral and Draycott declared personal and prejudicial interests in the item of Any Urgent Other Business, 'Relocation of Bishop Street Post Office Branch'. Councillors Connelly, Corral and Draycott left the meeting during discussion of this item.

2. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cleaning Machine – City Centre

The Leader reported that a machine for cleaning the granite paving in the city Centre was to be purchased.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2007, having been circulated to Members, be taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

4. DATES OF CABINET MEETINGS IN 2007/08

It was noted that these were still being considered by Members.

5. BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

Councillor Dempster submitted a report that set out a summary of the Building Schools for the Future scheme, its overall objectives and expected benefits together with issues which were still needed to be resolved before the Council formally committed to the programme.

It was noted that this report asked for the scheme to be supported in principle and that a further report would be needed to be agreed by Cabinet before work progressed.

Mark Challenor, Unison, with the permission of the Chair spoke on the item. He stated that Unison supported the Building Schools for the Future programme, but stressed that it was vital that the client structure be set up effectively and that the risks associated with the programme be suitably controlled. He further stated that it had to be recognised that this was a Council-wide initiative, and affected not just only the Children and Young People's Department. He made various other points which Councillor Dempster undertook to consider.

The Leader thanked Mark Challenor for his comments and suggested that the appropriate Task Group, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Children and Schools, continued to scrutinise the project in detail.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that support for the scheme in principle be confirmed and that Council be requested to add the appropriate provision to the Capital Programme.
- (2) that the Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Service Director, Legal Services be authorised to continue to negotiate the commercial agreement with the Preferred Bidder to deliver phase one of the Building Schools for the Future programme and to establish the Local Education Partnership (LEP).

6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair reported that he had agreed to the admission to the agenda of an Item of Urgent Business on the Relocation of Bishop Street Post Office. The reason for urgency was that comments on the proposal were required by Post Office Limited no later than 20 June 2007.

7. RELOCATION OF BISHOP STREET POST OFFICE BRANCH

The Director of Partnerships and Performance submitted a report that sought the views of Cabinet on the proposed service that the relocated Bishop Street Post Office Branch would offer when it moved to WH Smith at 39 Gallowtree Gate.

It was noted that the City Council had been approached to provide comments on the proposed opening hours, access arrangements and facilities at the new location.

The key area of concern highlighted by officers was access arrangements both within the store and outside of it, in particular for disabled customers and people with buggies.

The Cabinet strongly opposed the proposals. They felt that the service at Bishop Street Post Office was very well used, had good access arrangements and provided a very efficient service, and the move to W.H. Smith would be a downgrading of service, in particular because of the size of the outlet and the access arrangements. In addition, the potential for increased service hours which could be provided at W.H. Smith was not considered to be of such significant value as a service development compared to the disadvantage of the new location.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Cabinet calls on the Post Office to reconsider its decision to relocate the Bishop Street Post Office to W.H. Smith on Gallowtree gate as this is an unsuitable venue and would represent a substantial downgrading of service, in terms of access arrangements as detailed in the report.
- (2) that the extension of opening hours could be met at Bishop Street; and
- (3) that the Post Office be requested to consider a partnership with the Council that addresses the financial issues without the need for relocation.

8. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 11.20am.

