



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
CABINET

Held: MONDAY, 23 JULY 2007 at 5.00 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott- Chair  
Councillor Draycott- Vice-Chair

Councillor Bhatti	Councillor Kitterick
Councillor Connelly	Councillor Osman
Councillor Corral	Councillor Mrs Sood
Councillor Dempster	Councillor Wann

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Coley – Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group  
Councillor Mugglestone– Leader of the Conservative Group

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**33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**34. 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 Connelly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Appendix D, 'Decent Homes in the Private Sector – Home Improvement Area Programme' as he owned a property within one of the further Home Improvement Areas. Councillor Connelly left the meeting during discussion of this item.

Councillor Connelly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Appendix E, 'Community Safety Capital Programme 2007/08', as he owned a property on one of the roads in which an alley gate was to be fitted. Councillor Connelly left the meeting during discussion of this item.

Councillor Draycott declared a personal interest in Appendix D, Decent Homes in the Private Sector – Home Improvement Area Programme as her father was a Council Tenant within one of the further Home Improvement Areas.

Councillor Osman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Appendix P, Additional Units at Leicester Business Centre. Councillor Osman left the meeting during discussion of this item.

### **35. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Summer Play Services**

The Leader announced that £100,000 was to be invested in 40 settings where new play and youth activities would take place over the summer months, and that this extended programme of activities would benefit hundreds more children and young people across Leicester.

He stated that this was one in a line of good-news stories to be announced at Cabinet meetings. An announcement regarding improvements to street cleansing services was to be made at a future meeting.

### **36. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2007, having been circulated to Members, be taken as read and signed by the chair as a correct record.

### **37. MATTERS REFERRED FROM COMMITTEE**

#### **(1) Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freeman Area Committee – 2 July 2007**

##### **Youth Provision in the Area**

The following was agreed at the above meeting.

“That Cabinet be asked to introduce play facilities in Aylestone Playing Fields and Aylestone Park”.

Councillor Connelly responded to the referral and stated that he would ask for officers to prepare a report for the next meeting of the Area Committee that would consider whether additional play services can be provided in the Aylestone Playing Fields and Aylestone Park area. He also reported that the Gilmorton Community Rooms which was within the Aylestone ward had risen from twelfth to second on the priority list for play provision.

#### **(2) Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freeman Area Committee – 2 July 2007**

## **Responses to Questions from the Last Meeting**

The following was agreed at the above meeting.

“that Cabinet be asked that in future housing developments a Section 106 Agreement be used to help develop sports facilities in the local area”.

Councillor Kitterick responded to the referral and stated that this request was perfectly legitimate, and was happy to endorse it and bring it to the attention of the relevant planning officers.

### **38. THE CITY'S CASE FOR PROPER FUNDING FOR ITS POPULATION**

Councillor Willmott submitted a report that updated Members on lobbying activity currently being undertaken in advance of the 2008-11 local government finance settlement.

Councillor Willmott stated that he had written to Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and John Healey, Minister of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, to recognise that Leicester had been systematically under-funded due to the inability to precisely estimate the city's true population.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the report be noted, and;
- (2) that the Council's representations to central government be supported.

### **39. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE**

Councillor Bhatti submitted a report that sought Cabinet's views on whether the repairs service should be altered/extended to reflect the wishes of tenants attending the Tenants Conference in January 2007 on the Council's Housing Repairs Service.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the improvements agreed at the Tenants Conference on Repairs and subsequently endorsed by the Housing Management Board be noted, and;
- (2) That the Action Plan, timescales for undertaking the work and revised Mission Statement be supported.

### **40. DECENT HOMES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR - HOME IMPROVEMENT AREA PROGRAMME**

Councillor Bhatti submitted a report that sought Cabinet approval to declare further Home Improvement Areas.

Councillor Bhatti reported that an amended version of Appendix 3 that listed that streets included in the proposed Home Improvement Areas had been circulated to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That Halifax Drive, Belgrave Village, Catherine Street North, Crown Hills and Westcotes Central be declared, in the order listed, as Home Improvement Areas with Home Improvement Grants and other renewal services made available in accordance with existing policies, as resources permit.

#### **41. COMMUNITY SAFETY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08**

Councillor Bhatti submitted a report that outlined the Crime & Disorder proposals for the £400,000 from the Capital Programme 2007/08.

RESOLVED:

That the breakdown of the spending plan proposed for the Crime & Disorder £400,000 Capital Programme 2007/08 be approved.

#### **42. BARNES HEATH HOUSE**

Councillor Dempster submitted a report that advised Cabinet on the progress of work relating to services for disabled children and young people at Barnes Heath House and made recommendations in relation to the future developments at this establishment.

Councillor Coley referred to the need to provide a greater number of facilities for the community within this geographical area and asked whether consideration could be given to this. Councillor Dempster agreed to take Councillor Coley's comments into consideration.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the strategy for the development of Barnes Heath House be supported.
- (2) that the disposal of the former Mayfield Family Centre and the earmarking of the capital receipt for the development of Barnes Heath House be agreed, and;
- (3) that the proposed works at Barnes Heath House, subject to the formal addition of the scheme to the Capital programme once the scheme costs and funding projections are clarified, be agreed in principle.

#### **43. BRIEFING ON THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE ADULT SKILLS AND LEARNING SERVICE**

Councillor Corrall submitted a report that briefed Cabinet on the strategic direction of the Adult Skills and Learning service to 2010 and made recommendations on the immediate issues facing the service.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the three main aims of the development plan, which is required as a condition of funding by the Learning and Skills Council and the following associated actions be endorsed.
- (2) That the actions being taken to tackle the 'notice to improve' outlined in section 1.6 of the supporting information be endorsed.
- (3) that the national guidance from the Learning and Skills Council to introduce a fee of £1.98 per hour on ESOL courses in line with national policy be followed and the decision taken by the governing body of Leicester College be matched but implemented with appropriate care for staff and learners.
- (4) That the actions to maximise the support provided for those who cannot afford to pay the fees including the allocation of a specific learner support fund with Leicester College as outlined in section 1.9 of the supporting information be endorsed, and;**
- (5) That a further report in the autumn be sought to examine the overall position of Adult Learning across all sectors of Leicester with a view to our strategy being implemented by Academic Year 2008/09.

#### **44. HOUSING BENEFIT - REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF TO UNDERTAKE QUALITY ASSURANCE CHECKS**

Councillor Bhatti submitted a report that sought Members' support to provide extra resources for the Housing Benefits Service on a temporary basis to enable a range of quality assurance checks to be completed on individual processing officers work.

The Corporate Director of Adults and Housing stated that staff had worked vigorously to eradicate the backlog of cases that had been built up. He added that it was imperative to undertake quality assurance checks to monitor the work produced by the processing officers, identify errors and to take any

necessary remedial action.

RESOLVED:

That 6 additional staff at a cost of £180,000 per year, (to be reviewed at 12-months) to undertake the necessary quality assurance checks to reduce the loss of subsidy to the Council be agreed.

#### **45. LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS PROGRAMME 2007/8 - PHASE ONE**

Councillor Kitterick submitted a report that asked Cabinet to approve part of the 2007/8 Local Environmental Works programme estimated at £380,000.

RESOLVED:

That part of the 2007/8 Local Environmental Works Programme estimated at £380,000, as detailed in the report, be approved.

#### **46. EQUAL PAY**

Councillor Willmott submitted a report that sought Cabinet approval for a compensation package to avoid potential equal pay claims.

Councillor Coley commented that the cost of the package under the present administration had risen by 50%. The Leader stated that this figure was similar to many neighbouring authorities including Nottingham and Derby, and that the total costs under the previous administration could have eclipsed the £12m figure.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the compensation package for equal pay mitigation be approved.
- (2) that the costs of the package including administration and implementation costs be approved.
- (3) that the proposed implementation proposals as set out in the report be approved.

#### **47. SINGLE STATUS FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT**

Councillor Willmott submitted a report that presented the Council's Single Status Agreement for Cabinet approval as a consultation proposal, subject to the successful conclusion of current negotiations between Council officers and the Trade Unions.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the proposals for the Single Status Framework Agreement and the implementation thereof be approved for consultation, subject to outstanding details being approved by the Corporate Director of Resources in

consultation with Leader.

- (2) that the financing of the agreement and the implementation as set out in the Financial Implications be approved and the increase of the budget of Regeneration and Culture by £0.1m per annum to meet the costs of harmonising the terms and conditions of former DSO staff be agreed.
- (3) that the changes to employees' terms and conditions be referred to the Employees Committee subject to the outcome of the formal consultation process, be agreed.
- (4) That the Chief Finance Officer be given delegated authority to adjust departmental budgets to reflect the costs of the agreement as described in paragraph 7.1, and;
- (5) that the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader, be given delegated authority to determine the maximum available budget for administering the agreement and the equal pay settlement (not to exceed £0.7m).

#### **48. BRIDGE REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME 2007/08**

Councillor Kitterick submitted a report that sought Cabinet approval to spend the 2007/8 Bridge Refurbishment budget.

RESOLVED:

That the expenditure of the 2007/8 Bridge Refurbishment budget be approved.

#### **49. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE – QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT (2006/07)**

Councillor Draycott submitted a report that provided an overview of the Council's and the partnership's performance in delivering services to citizens over the last quarter (effectively the outturn for 2006/07).

Councillor Draycott stated that it was pleasing that the number of outstanding benefit claims had continued to fall in the previous quarter. She also stated that the state of many footways had significantly deteriorated and improvements in the standard of these were required. Furthermore, Councillor Draycott felt that significant work was needed to improve staff sickness levels within the authority, which currently fell below the target set. Finally, she stated that work was needed to improve the number of private sector homes that were vacant for more than 6 months.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that those areas demonstrating continuous improvement in

performance be noted, and;

- (2) that the fourth quarter performance results be noted.

#### **50. LEICESTER SHIRE CONNEXIONS - GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor Dempster submitted a report that explained the background to Connexions, the local position, transition arrangements and proposals for future governance.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the position from April 2008 be noted
- (2) that the principle of jointly working with the County Council on this matter be supported, and;
- (3) that a further report detailing the proposed way forward be received once the implications of the options have been fully researched and considered.

#### **51. ADDITIONAL UNITS AT LEICESTER BUSINESS CENTRE**

Councillor Kitterick submitted a report that outlined the approved funding available for creating additional office accommodation at the Leicester Business Centre (LBC) located on 111 Ross Walk, Leicester.

RESOLVED:

that the proposed development that will create an additional sixteen business units in the centre be approved

#### **52. 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 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.

##### Paragraph 3

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).



- Digital Media Centre
- Lease of Land at Bradgate Street/Ravensbridge Drive

### **53. LEASE OF LAND AT BRADGATE STREET / RAVENSBRIDGE DRIVE**

Councillor Willmott submitted a report that sought approval to the grant of a lease of Council owned land on Bradgate Street/Ravensbridge Drive on a one-to-one basis in order to facilitate the relocation of Cemex UK Ltd. from the Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC) Waterside intervention area and more specifically the Waterside Exemplar Area.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the disposal of land at Bradgate Street/Ravensbridge Drive by way of a lease to Cemex under the terms, rent and conditions set out in the recommendations in the report, once vacant possession of the land has been obtained, be approved at marginally less than best consideration.
- (2) That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to negotiate and enter into all necessary documentation arising out of this letting under the detailed terms of the related letting as set out in recommendation 3.3 the report
- (3) That the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader, be given delegated authority to agree detailed terms of the letting to Cemex, as set out in recommendation 3.4 the report.

### **54. DIGITAL MEDIA CENTRE - APPOINTMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERING SERVICES PROVIDER**

Councillor Kitterick submitted a report that determined whether or not to proceed to the construction phase.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) that the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Culture, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Culture and the Leader be delegated authority to negotiate with Blueprint and, subject to agreement of the appropriate terms and satisfactory conclusion of the negotiation process, to appoint Blueprint (General Partner) Ltd, as the Development Partnering Services provider, and;
- (2) that the additional expenditure of £20,000 on development work as identified in the financial implications be approved.

**55. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 6.00pm.

