



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: MONDAY, 21 MAY 2001 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott - Chair
Councillor Patel - Vice-Chair

Councillor Draycott
Councillor Getliffe
Councillor Holden

Councillor Osman
Councillor Roberts
Councillor Subedar

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247. 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 Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Holden declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Best Value Review of Libraries (Minute 254).

248. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) OFSTED Inspection

The Leader reported that following the recent successful OFSTED inspection of the LEA he had received a letter from Estelle Morris, the Minister for School Standards expressing her congratulations and thanks to the local authority for the progress that had been made on improving standards since the previous OFSTED inspection. The Leader added his thanks to Members and Officers for the hard work that had been put into achieving these improvements.

(b) Leicester Tigers Rugby

The Leader reported on the recent unique successes of Leicester Tigers culminating in the European Cup victory and added his congratulations.

(c) Local Strategic Partnership

The Leader reported that progress was being made towards the setting

up of a single local strategic partnership between all relevant agencies in the City and commented on the broad support from senior figures across the City for the consultative conference on 11 May 2001.

249. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 8 MAY 2001

RESOLVED:

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 May 2001, having been circulated to Members, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Under this item, Councillor Draycott reported for the Cabinet's information that following the decision at the last Cabinet meeting with regard to the Braunstone Housing Survey, a meeting had taken place between the Council and New Deal in Braunstone, at which New Deal had put forward a new proposal which the Council was currently considering.

250. SERVICE PROFILE - COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Councillor Patel gave a presentation on the services provided by this Department.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted.

251. REVIEW OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Councillor Subedar submitted a report proposing a re-alignment of the original review proposals for primary education. The Cabinet was asked to support the deferring of the broader scope of the original review proposals, in particular the plan to undertake a rolling programme of area based reviews of the structure of primary education. This would enable the service to focus more clearly on its primary purpose of supporting and challenging schools in addressing the agenda to raise standards. It was proposed to take a more progressive approach to the removal of surplus places and to the amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools for the time being. It was proposed however to take forward work on the strand of the original review regarding admission to school at 3 plus and 4 plus to address the education disadvantage and consequent depressed attainments for summer born children which were compounded by the current arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the outcome of consultation about first time admission arrangements, be noted;
- (2) that approval be given for further work to be undertaken to investigate the feasibility of introducing a single date for first time admissions at 4 plus and to model a range of options for school based provision at 3 plus;
- (3) that a further report be submitted on the outcome of the feasibility study and associated research;

- (4) that a steering group of key stakeholders be established for both areas of work;
- (5) that the area review process be deferred and instead amalgamations be taken forward where it was enabled by headteacher vacancies or at the request of governing bodies; and
- (6) that approval be given to contract with an external provider to progress this work during the summer and autumn terms.

252. HIGHFIELDS SPORTS CENTRE LOTTERY BID

Councillor Subedar submitted a report setting out progress on the preparation of a viable scheme for a sports centre at Highfields Youth and Community Centre and providing a series of options and proposals for consideration in approving and progressing the scheme. It was noted that both a full and reduced scheme had been prepared, the full scheme depending on the outcome of a bid for EU objective 2 funding.

It was noted that the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee had considered the report and had supported the scheme but asked to be kept informed of the development of the scheme and were also concerned to ensure that robust management arrangements were in place.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that approval be given for either the full or reduced scheme, the final decision about which to pursue, to be delegated to the Director of Education in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, when the outcome of the bid for EU objective 2 funding was known;
- (2) that officers prepare a detailed scheme for tender;
- (3) that the decision of Members last year to run the scheme as a Council project be confirmed;
- (4) that the advice of officers in relation to the income projections for the sports centre be noted;
- (5) that the expenditure issues that would be resolved as part of the management review and finalisation of the business plan be noted;
- (6) that the support of Sport England for the scheme be noted;
- (7) that the strategy adopted to reduce the Council's VAT liability and its potential budget implications for the Centre

be noted;

- (8) that the risks associated with this project and the steps to be taken to reduce these risks through the further development of the business plan and the conduct of the management review centre, be noted;
- (9) that the views of Highfields Community Association and their support for a review of lay and professional management arrangements, be noted;
- (10) that approval be given for the establishment of a joint management review by Highfields Community Association and officers of the Council to prepare recommendations for the lay and professional management of the centre;
- (11) that the Director of Education submit a report following the management review setting out proposals for the strategic plan for the centre, the professional leadership of the expanded centre and the arrangements for engagement of the local community in the management of the centre;
- (12) that a joint management approach between Highfields Community Association and the Education Department to the implementation of the project, be endorsed and that the appointment of a part-time project officer to support the implementation of the sports centre build, the further development of the business plan and the securing of additional revenue streams for the expanded centre, be approved.

253. SOUTH BRAUNSTONE NEIGHBOURHOOD LIBRARY

Councillor Subedar submitted a report informing the Cabinet of the proposal to develop a new library and resource centre in Braunstone. It was noted that the proposal involved building a new library and resource centre on the site of the current community centre, either as an extension to the existing facility or demolishing the building and developing a totally new build. The facilities would include a library, 20-place computer suite, community spaces, café and play area. Further details would emerge through the consultation process. It was noted that the choice of extension or total new build would be covered during the options appraisal and presented to the Braunstone Community Association for their decision.

The Cabinet welcomed the proposal as an example of a constructive working relationship between the City Council and the people of Braunstone.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the broad approach to the project be approved and officers be authorised to progress a detailed scheme development;

- (2) that approval be given for the establishment of a project team, including directors from the Braunstone Community Association to develop a managed project; and
- (3) that it be noted that further reports would be brought to the Cabinet as details were developed.

254. BEST VALUE REVIEWS YEAR TWO - FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE, FINAL SCOPE AND ROUTING FOR THE REVIEWS

Councillor Willmott submitted a report seeking approval to the outcome of the fundamental challenge stage of the Best Value review process for three Best Value Reviews; 'Services to Vulnerable Children'; 'Libraries'; and 'Financial Management Services'.

Councillor Willmott proposed that 'Services to Vulnerable Children' and four specific areas of the Library Services (library service to education, records office, prison library service and links to higher education) now undergo a full service assessment and that the remainder of the library service and 'Financial Management Services' did not require further review, although specific areas of improvement had been identified.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the outcomes of the fundamental challenge stage for each review be noted;
- (2) that the recommendations resulting from the reviews be approved; and
- (3) that the proposed routing for each of the reviews be approved.

255. NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND BIDS - MECHANISMS FOR USE IN YEAR ONE

Councillor Draycott submitted a report which proposed a mechanism and timetable for the use of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, to enable it to be used as effectively as possible in year 1. It was noted that the proposed mechanisms recognised the main features and criteria of the Fund detailed in Parliament's Special Grant Report and was also a mechanism which had been jointly developed by the Leicester Regeneration Agency and the City Council.

RESOLVED:

- that the mechanism and timetable for the use of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in year 1, as detailed in the report, be approved.

256. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE -EVINGTON FOOTPATH CONSERVATION AREA

Councillor Roberts submitted a report seeking approval to the adoption of the Evington Footpath Conservation Area Character Statement.

The Leader commented on the amount of work that went on within the City Council with regard to conservation areas and suggested that a presentation be given to a future meeting of the Cabinet on this work.

RESOLVED:

that the Evington Footpath Conservation Area Character Statement, as detailed in the report, be adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan.

257. JOINT INVESTMENT PLANS - LEARNING DISABILITIES AND WELFARE TO WORK FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Councillor Getliffe submitted a report introducing two local authority led Joint Investment Plans. These were; 'Adults with Learning Disabilities' and 'Welfare to Work for Disabled People'. It was noted that the Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee had welcomed the plans.

RESOLVED:

that the 'Adults with Learning Disabilities' and 'Welfare to Work for Disabled Adults' Joint Investment Plans be approved.

258. PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT - WAIVER OF STANDING ORDER

Councillor Holden submitted a report seeking approval for a waiver of Standing Order 86.1 to assist with the procurement of the new waste management contract. It was noted that Standing Order 86.1 required that the Director should normally accept the lowest tender submitted for a contract. However, the EU regulations under which the waste management procurement was being conducted allowed acceptance of the most "economically advantageous" tender which would provide greater flexibility to the Council in making such an important decision. It was noted that whilst price was a key determining factor in deciding which tender should be accepted for this contract there were other important criteria that the Council needed to allow scope for inclusion.

RESOLVED:

that approval be given for a waiver of Standing Order 86.1 in the case of procuring the private finance initiative in waste management contract and the Director be authorised to accept the "most economically advantageous" tender.

259. 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 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.

Appointment of Auctioneers and Other Disposal Delegations

Renewal of Allotment Leases held by Allotment Societies

Sale of 125A + B Barkby Road

260. APPOINTMENT OF AUCTIONEERS AND OTHER DISPOSAL DELEGATIONS

Councillor Patel submitted a report seeking the necessary approval in connection with the disposal processes of property by way of auction and other matters of disposal, in connection with property disposals necessary to meet the requirements of the City Council's Capital Programme.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that approval be given for the appointment of the firm of auctioneers identified in the report, and a contract to provide auction services to the City Council for the period up to 31 March 2002, be entered into;
- (2) that the appointed auctioneers be authorised, in accordance with Standing Order 75(b)(ii), to sign contracts on behalf of the City Council in respect of property that has been passed to them for disposal;
- (3) that the Director of Environment, Development and Commercial Services be authorised to approve:-
 - (a) reserve prices for the properties to be sold;
 - (b) any sale prior to auction arising from offers which he considered were unlikely to be achieved at auction;
 - (c) the new purchaser, in the event of any property

sold at auction and the purchaser subsequently requesting that the property is purchased in a different name to that of the original purchaser, subject to the Head of Legal Services being satisfied that the Council's legal position is protected throughout;

- (d) in the event of any property failing to sell at auction the sale of such property at any time subsequent to the auction in the event of an acceptable offer being received;
 - (e) in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Lead Member for Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities, the inclusion of such properties that are considered for sale by auction and in these circumstances the delegation to include (a) to (d) above;
- (4) that the Director of Environment, Development and Commercial Services be authorised, in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Lead Member for Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities, to agree the terms for the disposal of property other than by way of auction in accordance with the circumstances referred to in the report;
 - (5) that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to exchange contracts and complete the sale of any property in accordance with any terms agreed before five working days prior to or five working days after the auction arising from resolution (3) above and in accordance with any terms agreed as a result of the disposals of property by the other methods arising from resolution (4) above and subject to the circumstances set out in the report.

261. RENEWAL OF ALLOTMENT LEASES

Councillor Patel submitted a report seeking approval to renew the leases of land let to allotment societies on the terms contained in the report. In addition the report sought delegated authority for the Director of Environment, Development and Commercial Services to renew those leases that were still outstanding.

RESOLVED:

that approval be given for the renewal of leases on the basis detailed in the report and that the Director of Environment, Development and Commercial Services be authorised to renew those leases still outstanding with other allotment societies.

262. SALE OF 125A & B BARKBY ROAD

Councillor Patel submitted a report informing the Cabinet that four sealed offers were received for the above property and recommending that the highest offer received should be accepted.

RESOLVED:

that the highest offer received for the disposal of the above property as detailed in the report, be accepted and in the event of this offer falling through that the second highest offer as detailed in the report, be accepted.

263. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 5.44pm.