



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2002 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott - Chair
Councillor Patel - Vice-Chair

Councillor Draycott
Councillor Getliffe
Councillor Holden

Councillor Kavia
Councillor Roberts
Councillor Subedar

Councillor Westley

* * * * *

167. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were requested to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Holden declared an interest in the item entitled "Best Value Reviews – Improvement Plans – Libraries and Information Services".

168. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 December 2001 and the special meeting held on 10 December 2001, having been circulated to Members, be received, taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

169. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Year Honours

Councillor Willmott offered congratulations for the New Year Honours awarded to Pat Hobbs MBE in the Housing Department for her work with the homeless and to Freda Hussein MBE from Moat Community College for her work to improve community relations in Leicester.

Asset Management Planning

Councillor Willmott also congratulated those who had ensured the Council's Asset Management Plan and the capital strategy which had both received the highest rating from the Government Office for the East Midlands. This meant that the Council would receive an extra £100, 000 in capital funds for the forthcoming financial year.

170. YEAR 2 & 3 NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND PRIORITIES AND PROCESS

Councillor Draycott submitted a report which proposed a framework for the allocation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) for Years Two and Three. It was noted that this differed from the method of allocation used in Year One, which had been based on competitive bidding. It was now proposed to use the partnerships in operation across the City in the six community plan themes. Consultation would take place with these partnerships and there was still an expectation that the NRF monies would be targeted towards wards with highest levels of deprivation. Councillor Willmott noted a recent article in the Leicester Mercury in which local people recognised the importance of the Council's priority areas, education and social services, as areas where NRF monies should be spent.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the strategic resource allocation and priorities, criteria for schemes and process and timetable, as set out in paragraphs 2.4, 4 and 5 of the report, be approved;
- (2) that other partners within the framework of the Leicester Partnership and its sub partnerships be consulted;
- (3) that the Leicester Strategic Partnership and its sub partnerships be consulted and the NRF sub Group provide a score card to assess schemes.

171. THE TRANSPORT OF SERVICE USERS WITH SOCIAL CARE NEEDS

Councillor Getliffe submitted a report outlining proposals for improved management and greater consistency of decision making in respect of commissioning and providing transport for service users with social care needs.

Councillor Getliffe also noted that the Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 17 December 2001, had given its support to the proposals contained within the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Children's Transport Policy and Revised Eligibility Criteria for the provision of transport to those with social care needs, as contained in the report, be noted;
- (2) that arrangements to strengthen the commissioning

function within Social Services, as contained in the report, be noted;

- (3) that options for the future provision and procurement of transport be considered within the changes arising from "Revitalising Neighbourhoods";
- (4) that a review of the charging policy for transport be commissioned.

172. LIBRARIES REVIEW 2000 ACHIEVING INCLUSION SIX MONTHS REPORT APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2001

Councillor Roberts submitted a report seeking the Cabinet's approval of the progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Libraries Review 2000 report "Achieving Inclusion". Councillor Roberts noted the progress made in the Library Service, where there had been a number of developments such as extended opening hours, special children's services, a top ten bestseller feature and work done on diversity. He congratulated the Head of the Libraries Service and all her staff on the improvements made.

Members of the Cabinet also recognised the benefit of the Libraries Service to persons from all backgrounds and of all ages, particularly in developing Information Technology awareness.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the six monthly report noting progress to date, be approved; and
- (2) that the Director of Arts & Leisure be authorised to approve any amendments to the plan.

173. ANNUAL LIBRARY PLAN 2001

Councillor Roberts submitted a report which sought Members approval for the draft Annual Library Plan for Leicester, required by Government to be submitted to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Councillor Roberts congratulated the Head of the Libraries Service on the progress made within the libraries service.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the draft Annual Library Plan for 2001 be recommended to Council for approval.

174. BEST VALUE REVIEWS - IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Councillor Westley submitted a report seeking the Cabinet's approval to the

improvement plans from three Best Value reviews; Financial Management, Services to Homeless People and those Libraries and Information Services subject to assessment. He considered each improvement plan individually;

Services to Homeless People

Councillor Westley commented that the improvement plan was a thorough document which demonstrated practical ways in which improvements could be made to homeless services. He particularly noted the increased opening hours that would improve access.

Financial Management

Councillor Westley commented there were a number of positive aspects of the Financial Management service. He also noted there were areas identified for improvement by the plan. These included the re-implementation of the Financial Management Information System, the need to ensure staff are suitably qualified and further reviews to ensure the service meets the needs of the revitalising neighbourhoods project.

Libraries and Information Services

Councillor Westley commented with regard to the Record Office service, that he felt the City was not receiving best value from the joint arrangement. He felt; the location was difficult for City residents to get to, especially those to the north of the City; the service was poorly marketed and promoted; the staffing of the service did not reflect the cultural make up of the City and that the collection of resources also did not recognise the diverse nature of the City.

He recommended that the joint arrangement be renegotiated to address the issues outlined above.

RESOLVED:

- (1) Services to Homeless People
that the Overall Improvement Plan for Services to Homeless People be approved by redirecting resources; and
- (2) that the requirement to save 2% of the budget of services having a Best Value Review be not met from this service but met from other Housing General Fund Budgets;

- (3) Financial Management
that the proposed improvement plan be approved; and
- (4) that the Performance Indicators, which arose from the review, as outlined in the report be noted.

Libraries and Information Services

- (5) that the current joint arrangement with the Libraries Service for Education be discontinued and the savings (after the Best Value saving of £5,548) be redirected to support children's out of school hours learning through the public library network; and
- (6) that the joint agreement for records and archive services be renegotiated (after 2% Best Value saving) with a strong emphasis on ensuring improvements for city residents to address the weaknesses identified in the review; and
- (7) that the updated (November 2001) Libraries Service Improvement Plan 2001-2004, be noted.

175. COUNCIL TAX - TAXBASE

Councillor Patel submitted a report outlining the Council's requirement to set a "taxbase" for the purpose of setting its Council Tax and to enable the Police Authority to set its Council Tax. The report also detailed the recommended taxbase for 2002/2003.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the report be endorsed; and
- (2) that the Council be recommended to agree a taxbase for 2002/2003 of 71,802 properties, expressed as the equivalent number of "Band D" properties.

176. COLLECTION FUND SURPLUSES

Councillor Patel submitted a report that identified the estimated financial position of the Collection Fund Account as at 31 March 2002. The calculation of the estimated surplus or deficit for this account was a statutory requirement as the figure needed to be taken in to account during the Council Tax setting process.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the estimated collection fund surplus figure of £1.2 million be approved; and
- (2) that the estimated shares payable to the Police Authority and the City Council as detailed in this report.

177. ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

RESOLVED:

that consideration of this report be deferred to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

178. DISTRICT AUDIT MANAGEMENT LETTER 1999/2000 - PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor Patel submitted a report informing members of the actions taken or being taken to implement the key recommendations arising from the District Audit Management Letter for 1999/2000.

Members noted that a previous issue raised by the District Auditor regarding voluntary sector funding was currently being reviewed and the Cabinet would be considering the matter at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the progress made, be noted; and
- (2) that the key recommendations contained within the 1999/00 District Audit Management Letter, be considered to have been completed.

179. TRANSFER OF REGULATORY FUNCTIONS CARE STANDARDS ACT 2000

Councillor Getliffe submitted a report informing the Cabinet of the implications of the Care Standards Act 2000, both in terms of transfer of regulatory functions provided by Leicester City Council and in relation to Local Authority Provision which would be regulated and inspected externally from April 2002.

Councillor Getliffe praised staff involved for a smooth transition to the new inspection regime. He also thanked the work of the Inspection Advisory Panel which was attended by volunteers. Concern was expressed that there may be no role for these volunteers on the new commission.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted.

180. SURE START SAFFRON, LINWOOD CENTRE, SOUTHFIELDS LIBRARY, KINGFISHER YOUTH CENTRE, SAFFRON, LEICESTER

Councillor Patel submitted a report setting out a proposal to partly lease two properties and one site in the Saffron area to enable the implementation of the Sure Start III initiative.

RESOLVED:

that the City Council enter into three separate leases with Barnados on the terms outlined in the report.

181. PRIVATE SESSION

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 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.

FORMER AVALON CENTRE, DUXBURY ROAD

182. FORMER AVALON CENTRE, DUXBURY ROAD

Councillor Patel submitted a report regarding the freehold sale of the former Avalon Centre, Duxbury Road.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the freehold sale of the former Avalon Centre, be agreed as per the terms outlined in the report;
- (2) that the Director of Environment, Development and Commercial Services be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Finance and Resources, to accept , if appropriate, the second highest offer in the event that the sale to the successful bidder, for whatever reason, did not proceed;
- (3) that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to prepare and execute the formal documentation necessary to effect the disposal; and
- (4) that the approach outlined in the report concerning the Serbian Orthodox Church be approved.

183. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5.41pm.