



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
CABINET

Held: MONDAY 17 JUNE 2002 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott - Chair  
Councillor Patel - Vice-Chair

Councillor Bhatti  
Councillor Draycott  
Councillor Getliffe  
Councillor Holden

Councillor Kavia  
Councillor Osman  
Councillor Roberts  
Councillor Westley

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**31. 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.

No declarations were made.

**32. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

**33. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2002, having been circulated to Members, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**34. ISSUES RAISED AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

The Cabinet received two items referred from the Housing Scrutiny Committee as follows:-

a) ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ANNUAL REPORT INCORPORATING CRIME AND DISORDER ACTIVITIES (MINUTES EXTRACT)

(3) that, given that Anti-Social Behaviour Orders were not tenure

specific, and cut across the work of a number of Departments in the City Council, that during the budget round 2003/04, Cabinet be asked to consider meeting the cost involved from Corporate Budgets, rather than expecting the Housing Department to find the resources.

Councillor Patel, the Cabinet Lead Member for Finance and Resources responded to the Scrutiny Committee by explaining that the budgetary process was based on the allocation of funds to departments and that there were no corporate budgets. He recognised there were areas of pressure which could be considered during the budgetary process next year.

Councillor Willmott also commented that if unforeseen pressures did arise during the year, consideration could be given to areas where there were problems to ensure a high standard of service continue to be provided.

b) VOIDS PILOT SCHEME – EXTENSION

The Scrutiny Committee agreed to amend the minutes of its previous meeting on 9 April regarding discussion of a report on the Voids Pilot Scheme. The Committee on 9 April 2002 received the report and was asked to suggest changes which may help to reduce the re-let times of void properties. The minutes of that meeting were amended to reflect a reference made by the Chair to a previous report on the 'Cost of Tenancy Terminations' and the comments made during its consideration at Housing Scrutiny Committee on 10 January and that these should be drawn to Cabinet's attention as follows:-

At its meeting on 10 January 2002, a number of options were considered for reducing the cost of tenancy terminations. Option 1 'Financial reward to tenants who left the property in good condition' was moved, voted on and lost by 4 votes to 3.

Councillor Draycott in response stated that the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee requested a report on the level of voids and the possibility of incentives for tenants for leaving a property in good condition. The Scrutiny Committee agreed that the current tenancy regulations were sufficient. It was also noted that a report was submitted to a subsequent meeting on a pilot scheme to reduce voids in Humberstone which was successful in reducing voids and the Scrutiny Committee supported it.

**35. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SELF ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

Councillor Willmott submitted a report informing the Cabinet of the Self Assessment of the Council's Performance in preparation for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council.

The Chief Executive outlined for the Cabinet the process which had been undertaken so far. The document had been acknowledged by all concerned as an honest and fair appraisal of the Council's strengths and weaknesses. It had

been arrived at through discussions with all the Council's political groups and Corporate Directors following interviews with the Chief Executive. The District Auditor and the Improvement and Development Agency had been invited to challenge the draft and had made constructive suggestions.

Councillor Draycott referred to the Housing matters contained in the Self Assessment noting the steps the Housing Department had taken to improve their performance. These included the programme of rationalisation and replacement of parts of the housing stock and the window production factory. This had created a healthy financial position which allowed the Housing Department to undertake planned maintenance as well as reactive maintenance. She acknowledged there were problems with the Housing Benefits section that were due to be solved by September. However if this was not the case then more action would be taken.

Councillor Willmott referred to the need for the Cabinet to take an overview of how the Council was performing and asked the Chief Executive to report back to a future meeting on a 'Cabinet Plan'. This would take the form of a holistic view of the performance of the Council by taking a number of performance indicators from across Departments which would show the general performance of each area. He also requested this included comparisons with similar authorities.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) to note, that the report was considered by the Organisations Working Party and was signed off by the Leader and the Chief Executive and sent to the Audit Commission on 29 May as required;
- (2) that the main story in the self assessment and the strengths and weaknesses set out in the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the Chief Executive submit a report to a future meeting on the provision of a 'Cabinet Plan' which brings together a number of performance indicators from across the Council to give an indication of general performance.

**36. BRAUNSTONE LEISURE CENTRE - APPROVAL TO PROCEED**

Councillor Holden submitted a report that sought approval to the financing of the Braunstone Leisure Centre Project to enable it to proceed to the next stage of development. The report detailed the progress on the project and the development of the overall capital funding package; the steps taken to attract additional funds and reduce expenditure and sought the approval to an increased contribution from the City Council to enable the project to proceed.

Councillor Holden also commented that all the funding for the Leisure Centre was now in place and the extra funding from the Council underlined its commitment to ensuring that the Leisure Centre was a success.

Councillor Willmott thanked the Lottery and the Braunstone Community Association for the funding they were providing. He also noted that this had been a difficult process, to assemble the funding which had now reached a successful conclusion. He thanked all the Officers involved in this process.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that support for the development of the Braunstone Leisure Centre at a total estimated cost of £9,878,741, be confirmed and the Council's contribution to the scheme totalling £6,578,741 as detailed in the report, be confirmed;
- (2) that additional City Council funding from "corporate" capital resources of £2,878,741, be approved, to be funded by:-
  - a) reducing the cost of the Bursom Sub Station by £400,000 to £1,400,000;
  - b) reducing the cost of the relocation of the registration office scheme by £320,000 to £500,000, if approved by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> July;
  - c) increasing the corporate capital receipts target in 2002/03 by £600,000 as a consequence of the revised registration office scheme; subject to approval by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> July
  - d) moving the Saffron Lane scheme (£600,000) from the approved capital programme to the reserve programme;
  - e) approving the use of a further £958,741 of "corporate" capital programme resources from the current capital programme contingency of £2m;
- (3) that the Acting Corporate Director of Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal, in consultation with the Cabinet Members Working Group, be authorised to approve the procurement arrangements and authorise the appointment of Architectural Services, Quantity Surveying and Cost Consultancy, M&E Services (including design and structural engineering services);
- (4) that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to enter into contracts where appropriate, for the appointment of consultants;
- (5) that progression to the Project Authorisation stage in accordance with the Council's Project Management Standards be approved, in order that the project can commit

to Start Up and Outline Design stage;

- (6) that the ringfencing of specific land sales to the Braunstone Community Association for this project at an estimated £0.7m, be approved; and
- (7) that the City Council's contribution to the Project be increased by £2m instead of ringfencing the receipts from the sale of St. Margaret's Baths and Granby Halls Leisure Centre (estimated at £2m), the overall impact of this on the Council's corporate resources being nil, assuming the receipts are achieved.

### **37. REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION - SCHOOLS WITH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (SARs)**

Councillor Roberts submitted a report informing the Cabinet of the details of the key element in the strategy to provide greater opportunities for inclusion for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Councillor Roberts noted it was Government policy to educate children with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools and this was to be done by providing schools with extra resources to accommodate this.

With regard to the request by the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee's to increase the size of the Special Education Needs Project Board, Councillor Roberts moved a further recommendation, detailed below at (4), which was approved. He also moved a further recommendation which is also included at (5) below regarding the results of consultations with Schools.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) that the consultation with schools on achieving School with Additional Resources status, be approved;
- (2) that a renegotiation of contracts with schools with special units to become Schools with Additional Resources, be approved;
- (3) that the establishing of formal partnerships between mainstream and special schools to increase inclusion opportunities, be approved;
- (4) that approval be given to the expansion of the Special Educational Needs Project Board as set out in the report and the Corporate Director of Education be asked to explore the practicalities and feasibility of including 1 or 2 parents of Special Education Needs Children on the Board; and
- (5) that the results of the consultation with Schools and the

renegotiation of contracts with Schools with special units be reported back to Cabinet when completed.

### **38. PROPOSED LOCAL NATURE RESERVES**

Councillor Holden submitted a report seeking authorisation for the declaration of Local Nature Reserves at Watermead Country Park, Watermead Ecology Park and Birstall Meadows; Goss Meadows and the Orchards in Anstey Green Wedge; Knighton Spinney; and the Greenlife Reserve and the Rally Bank next to Humberstone Park.

Members of the Cabinet welcomed the report by asked about the provision of finance for ongoing planned maintenance and inspection of the nature reserves.

Officers in response stated that Environ had received a grant of £76,000 that would be to assist in the promotion of site management committees made up of community volunteers. Environ also had a long term commitment to the sites to ensure they were well kept and used. Officers undertook to ensure that Environ made regular checks on the sites to ensure they were well maintained.

The Cabinet emphasised the need for Officers to ensure that the sites were proactively maintained and that if there were any problems with this, they should be reported to the Cabinet.

Members of the Cabinet also welcomed the involvement of volunteers in the management of the Local Nature Reserves. It was also agreed that Officers would investigate ways to publicise further the Local Nature Reserves.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) that following consultation with English Nature and agreement with Charnwood District Council, the land at Watermead is declared a Local Nature Reserve;
- (2) that the formal procedure of declaring Aylestone Meadows a Local Nature Reserve is completed, with a minor amendment to the original boundary proposed in 1990; and
- (3) that following consultation with English Nature, the six nature reserves managed by Environ for the City Council are jointly declared a Local Nature Reserve.

### **39. ABANDONED SHOPPING TROLLEYS**

Councillor Holden submitted a report recommending to Cabinet that the City Council adopts the provisions relating to abandoned shopping trolleys contained within the Environmental Protection Act 1990. He noted these powers were being exercised not only in relation to a well-publicised specific

problem in Beaumont Leys but to all supermarkets in the City.

Officers commented that although the powers in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 wouldn't come in to force until September, discussions would continue with the supermarkets to ensure that progress continues to be made during the intervening period.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the provisions relating to abandoned shopping trolleys contained within Section 99 and Schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, be adopted on a city-wide basis with effect from 17th September 2002;
- (2) that, until such time as these powers come into effect, officers, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the relevant cabinet leads, review the need for any interim measures to address any local problems with abandoned shopping trolleys; and
- (3) that the Corporate Director of Environment, Regeneration and Development assumes responsibility, under delegated powers, for the implementation of these powers once they come into effect.

#### **40. BEST VALUE REVIEW- YEAR THREE ICT AND E-GOVERNMENT FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE, FINAL SCOPE, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ROUTING FOR THE REVIEW**

Councillor Westley submitted a report seeking approval to the outcome of the fundamental challenge stage of the review process, the final scope and terms of reference for the review and the recommended routing of the ICT and E-Government Best Value Review.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the outcome of the fundamental challenge stage as detailed in sections 3 and 3.1, be approved, summarised as follows:
  - ICT is a core discretionary service;
  - That decommissioning is not an option as ICT is so integral to Council business, although alternative forms of service delivery could be considered;
  - The function is likely to grow over the coming years due to e-government; greater emphasis on business continuity; and the Freedom of Information Act (which is the responsibility of the Corporate ICT function);
- (2) that approval be given for the proposal that the Best Value review be managed in two parts: the first part being to address the questions:
  - Is the Council investing effectively in ICT?

- Does the Council's ICT support service represent good value?

this work to be completed by the end of August 2002;  
the second part of the review to look at the following questions:

- Will our e-government strategy ensure the organisation meets the e-government objectives of: building services around citizen choice; making government and its services more accessible; social inclusion and better access; and using information better?
- Do we have the ICT capacity and capability to meet the Council's strategic agenda including Revitalising Neighbourhoods and e-government?;

this part of the review to be deferred until early 2003 pending a review of the Council's e-government and ICT strategies;

- (3) that the work programme detailed in appendix A2 of the report, be approved, to address the issues raised by the first phase of the review;
- (4) that the review should be subject to a full service assessment (as detailed in section 3.3 of the report).

#### **41. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN**

Councillor Westley submitted a report informing the Cabinet of the content of the third Best Value Performance Plan and outlining the revised publication and distribution arrangements for the Plan.

Councillor Osman queried whether the methodology used as a standard for Best Value Reviews would be used for the Diversity Best Value Review. Officers in reply commented that the methodology was flexible to meet the requirements of the review and it would be ensured first that the methodology was suitable before the review commenced.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the full Best Value Performance Plan be endorsed, noting the Government changes to the arrangements for publishing the plan and its contents; and
- (2) that the Plan be recommended to Council.

#### **42. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 5.58pm.