



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: MONDAY 15 JULY 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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43. 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.

44. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Comprehensive Spending Review

Councillor Willmott referred to the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. He felt the most significant announcement was the continuance of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund until 2005-06. He also felt the extra resources announced for schools were to be welcomed. Leicester City Council, however, would continue to lobby its specific case for more funding.

45. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2002, having been circulated to Members, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

46. ISSUES RAISED AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Cabinet received two items from Scrutiny Committees as follows:-

a) **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

THE FORMATION OF A HISTORIC BUILDINGS TRUST IN LEICESTER (MINUTES EXTRACT)

- (2) that Cabinet be requested to instruct officers to initiate a publicity campaign to publicise the work of the Leicestershire Historic Buildings Trust.

Councillor Kavia, the Cabinet Lead for Strategic Planning and Regeneration responded to the Scrutiny Committee by explaining that Historic Buildings Trusts were charitable bodies which sought to refurbish listed buildings that were in poor condition. He endorsed the view of the Scrutiny Committee to support the existing Leicestershire Historic Buildings Trust and to give publicity to this Trust to encourage members of the public to become involved. He expected this publicity to include articles in the Link, the Leicester Mercury and other media where possible.

b) **SOCIAL SERVICES AND PERSONAL HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

REVENUE BUDGET (MINUTES EXTRACT)

- (2) that Cabinet be asked to consider how Persons From Abroad will be funded this year as no provision had been made in the Social Services budget.

Councillor Patel, the Cabinet Lead Member for Finance and Resources responded to the Scrutiny Committee by explaining he acknowledged the problem which existed. He commented that lobbying of Government to seek extra funding had been undertaken with a great deal of support from local Members of Parliament. Councillor Getliffe also commented that he shared the concerns of the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Willmott also welcomed the views of the Scrutiny Committee commenting that if the Government didn't provide extra resources then the situation would have to be reviewed. He also noted there were areas where he felt that the Government was not responding on a number of issues such as the provision of national insurance numbers.

47. DEVELOPMENT OF A YOUTH STRATEGY FOR LEICESTER

Councillor Roberts submitted a report setting out the proposals for the development of a Youth Strategy to meet the needs and diversity of young people in Leicester, meet the needs to promote social inclusion and cohesion across the City and to satisfy the national policy agenda. The report also

provided a detailed analysis of the services that the City Council currently provided directly or by funding the voluntary sector.

The minutes of the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2002 had been circulated. The Cabinet noted the Scrutiny Committee's concerns with regard to the levels of consultation with young people, in particular over aspects of sexuality. The Principal Youth Officer commented that the Young People's Council had not been consulted because during the time of the strategy's preparation, a new Council was being elected. However, it was noted that a day conference was being planned for September. There was also a long-term strategy for consultation built into the strategy including the setting up of youth forums.

Members of the Cabinet welcomed the plans to involve young people in the planning of services more; however it was commented that efforts should be undertaken to ensure the views of all young people were taken in to account, including those who would not traditionally participate.

The Cabinet did express concerns over the suitability of school buildings for youth provision and whether accreditation schemes were suitable for all young people.

The Principal Youth Officer in response stated that right location was important and the primary consideration was open access within a reasonable distance of where young people lived. Some young people were happy with schools and some were not and it was expected a range of premises would be used. Community Learning Clusters, who were responsible for finding accommodation, had been given a specification for the location of youth provision.

It was noted that accreditation schemes would not be compulsory for young people, but it was felt that these were often more appropriate where the young people did not adjust well to formal education.

Councillor Willmott commented that the National Youth Parliament was currently meeting in Leicester and from discussions he'd had there, it appeared that bodies such as the Young People's Council did not exist everywhere which was to Leicester's credit.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Youth Strategy, be approved;
- (2) that the Transforming Youth Work Plan, be approved; and
- (3) that the allocation of £125, 000, already in the budget be approved and distributed on the basis of the analysis set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

48. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor Osman submitted a report updating the Cabinet on the progress against the Health and Safety Project Plan and presenting the Annual Report on Health and Safety.

The minutes of the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee held on the 4 July 2002 had been circulated and Councillor Osman referred to the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee regarding a request for a further report, to which he gave his support.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the progress made and further action taken, be noted and the good practice be commended; and
- (2) that it be noted that the Best Value Review of Human Resources would include a recommendation to strengthen the Health and Safety function of the Council.

49. VACANCIES WITHIN THE CITY COUNCIL

Councillor Osman submitted a report which responded to the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee's request that Cabinet give consideration to the vacancy situation across the Council. The report set out the current situation regarding vacancies across all departments. Departments were asked to provide information for the six month period up to 30 April 2002.

Councillor Osman informed the Cabinet he would be attending the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee in September to discuss the matter. He also noted the Best Value Review of Human Resources would look at this matter and would be reported to Cabinet in September.

Councillor Draycott queried whether the recruitment and retention difficulties faced by the Council were exacerbated by the lack of affordable housing for key workers in the City. Councillor Westley requested a comparison of the terms and conditions of similar local authorities was also felt to be useful to ensure the Council could attract and retain staff effectively.

Councillor Osman commented he would discuss the issue of key worker housing with the Cabinet Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Regeneration with a view to provision for this being included where possible in developments being undertaken in the City. He also stated he would seek to provide the Cabinet with information regarding comparisons with other similar authorities.

RESOLVED:

- that the issues for and action being taken by Departments, be noted.

50. RELOCATION OF REGISTRATION SERVICE AND FURTHER TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENTS

Councillor Patel submitted a report that updated the Cabinet on progress with the refurbishment and occupation of the Town Hall, seeking approval for the relocation of the Registration Service from Pocklington's Walk to the Town Hall and to secure the transfer of funding from existing schemes to enable the initiative to commence.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the relocation of the Registration Service into the Town Hall and the further improvement works as described in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved;
- (2) that the revised scheme be financed from the capital programme provision for the Register Office allocation and that provision be reduced from £819,000 to £500,000;
- (3) that the Director of Resources, Access and Diversity be authorised to finalise the scheme details and proceed with the necessary services and works required; and
- (4) that the Head of Legal Services enter in to any necessary contracts to enable the scheme to be undertaken.

51. INTERPRETATION, TRANSLATION AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Councillor Osman submitted a report seeking support for the key findings of a consultants report on 'Interpretation, Translation and Communication Services'; and for consultation to be undertaken to inform a formal review process within the Council, for the future delivery of these services.

This review of services was undertaken jointly with the Health Community through the Leicester Health Action Zone. The purpose was to move towards a joint integrated communication service for the City, best able to meet the future demands for and the specific needs of the two bodies and users \ customers.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the overall direction and consultant's recommendations, contained in paragraph 2.1 of the Supporting Information, be supported in principle;
- (2) that the Service Director, Human Resources and Equalities, undertake consultation on the resulting organisational changes and bring back proposals for implementing them and for the new service delivery arrangements;
- (3) that the Council continue to work in partnership with the Health Community in determining and shape a longer-term

vision for communication services in the City.

52. CAPITAL STRATEGY - SINGLE CAPITAL POT SUBMISSION 2003/04

Councillor Patel submitted a report which noted the Council's responsibility to submit a Capital Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan to Government Office by 31 July 2002, to be used in the assessment of the Single Capital Pot allocation for 2003/04. The report recommended a revised Capital Strategy Statement, rolled forward to 2005/06, for submission.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the draft capital strategy statement shown at Appendix 1 of the report, be endorsed;
- (2) that the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Finance and Resources, be authorised to make any necessary amendments required as a consequence of any further Government guidance.

53. REVENUE GRANT DISTRIBUTION REVIEW - A FAIR DEAL FOR LEICESTER

Councillor Patel submitted a report outlining the progress to date of the Revenue Grant Distribution Review and to highlight the concerns the Council had about possible outcomes of the Review. The report also sought support for a lobbying strategy that aimed to address these concerns.

The minutes of the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee on 4 July 2002 had been circulated and Councillor Patel noted the support of the Scrutiny Committee for the lobbying strategy.

Councillor Willmott circulated additional recommendations, which endorsed the view of the Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities outside London. This referred to a request for a fairer distribution of grant money which recognised the level of deprivation in Cities in the Midlands and North of the country. Councillor Willmott reported that he had written to the Leaders of the other political groups on the Council hoping for their support in the lobbying strategy. He felt this was the last chance to make a significant difference to Local Government funding for some time. He also referred to the underspend by central Government and felt this money should be distributed for local spending as this could go some way to relieving deprivation and regenerating cities such as Leicester.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that it be noted that the Government is currently reviewing the Local Government finance system and that the outcome of the review will significantly affect the resources made available to address the many, major needs of our local communities;

- (2) that City Council's concerns relating to the Revenue Grant Distribution Review, be noted;
- (3) that lobbying efforts to secure a "fair deal" for Leicester be supported;
- (4) that the arguments set out in 'Prosperity for all', the paper prepared by the Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities outside London, be warmly endorsed; and
- (5) that the view of the Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities outside London in calling for a fair deal for the majority of England's Local Authorities which allows them to tackle the poverty, deprivation and educational failure which particularly blights authorities outside the "golden triangle" of London and the south east, by introducing a fairer Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) system, be endorsed; and
- (6) that specifically the Cabinet strongly urges the Government to:-
 - Properly take account of multiple deprivation by basing its system around the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD),
 - Address the consequences of decline including population decline which exacerbates demands upon resources rather than reducing them,
 - Create a revised system for distribution of resources that removes the current implausibility of high deprivation and high council tax and ensures the more deprived the area, the more it gets from central government,
 - Ensure the system reflects the 'actual' cost of providing services rather than a theoretical cost,
 - Ensures properties are revalued regularly and that the revised values come in to use quickly,
 - Provide adequate revenue support for capital investment based upon need.

54. LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND ROAD SAFETY PLAN

Councillor Bhatti submitted a report seeking the Cabinet's approval for a draft road safety plan for the Leicestershire Police area, and to agree that consultations with user groups be undertaken on the Speed Management

Strategy part of the plan.

Members of the Cabinet queried the process of changes to the classification of the highway network. Guidance was currently being awaited in respect of any review of the road hierarchy and details would be included in a future report on the consultation on the speed management strategy. Members were reassured that the speed management strategy would not override any current policy on the provision of traffic calming on distributor roads.

Concern was specifically expressed about the speed of traffic outside schools. Officers commented that for speed to be reduced outside schools it would not be feasible to slow traffic down without physical measures, as the Police would feel they could not enforce such a reduction. Officers also commented that if requests were made for speed cameras they would have to fit a certain criteria before they could be implemented.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the draft Road Safety Plan for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland as attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- (2) that consultation on a speed management strategy be undertaken with user groups and other interested bodies; and
- (3) that a further report on the speed management strategy be prepared for consideration by Cabinet following consultations.

55. 2001 RESIDENTS SURVEY ACTION PLAN

Councillor Willmott submitted a report presenting the draft Residents Survey Action Plan and seeking approval for the Action Plan, as attached to the report, to be included in the 2002/03 Best Value Performance Plan.

Councillor Willmott requested that the Action Plan be developed further in the context of the Corporate / Cabinet plan to set out clear timescales for improvement measures and who would be responsible for implementing the measures. The plan should be modified to address existing base lines, resources, partner responsibilities and any new areas of public concern.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Residents Survey Action Plan attached to the report be approved for its inclusion into the 2002/03 Best Value Performance Plan:
- (2) that consideration be given to the provision of a corporate Cabinet Plan which looked at the Council's performance and suggested ways in which to tackle areas of concern.

56. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.10pm.