



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2002 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott - Chair
Councillor Patel - Vice-Chair

Councillor Bhatti	Councillor Holden
Councillor Draycott	Councillor Osman
Councillor Getliffe	Councillor Roberts
Councillor Westley	

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100. 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 Willmott declared a non-prejudicial interest in Report C, "Leicester Regeneration Company: Progress Report", as a Director of the Company.

The Chief Executive also declared an interest as a Director of the Company.

101. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Leader's Announcements.

102. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2002, having been circulated to Members, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

103. ITEMS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Cabinet received the following items from the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee arising from its meeting on 19 September 2002 :-

a) SICKNESS ABSENCE MONITORING APRIL 2001 TO MARCH 2002

“RESOLVED:

- (3) Cabinet work towards a more sophisticated, standard approach to sickness monitoring as soon as possible”.*

Councillor Osman responded as follows:-

Having attended the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee Councillor Osman supported the recommendation that a more sophisticated, standard approach to sickness absence monitoring approach be considered for use as soon as possible.

Councillor Osman also gave his support to the suggestions made by the Scrutiny Committee regarding improving vacancy management levels as he had been closely involved in working groups on this matter.

b) INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE YEAR

“RESOLVED:

that the Committee’s disappointment and concern be conveyed to Cabinet that the Cabinet hasn’t yet implemented a system for it to receive and monitor the implementation of reports of the Internal Audit section, and that the Cabinet be asked what action will be taken to address this”.

Councillor Patel responded as follows:-

He noted that the audit function was not the same in the Finance and Resources Cabinet portfolio as in the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee portfolio. He also noted that the Audit Commission recommended that Scrutiny Committees take the lead role in monitoring audit reports as under the current arrangements being operated. He felt this should continue and requested the Scrutiny Committee to forward any particular issues of concern for Cabinet’s consideration.

c) LEICESTER REGENERATION COMPANY: PROGRESS REPORT

Under this item Councillor Willmott referred to the following resolutions of the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2002.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the comments made at the Special Briefing on July 1 2002 as attached to the report at Appendix C, be endorsed and it be recommended that they be sent to the Leicester Regeneration Company and their consultants;*
- (2) that the officer summary, drawn up as a result of officer and Member discussion, in relation to Stage 2 of the*

Masterplan as attached as Annex D, be endorsed and it be recommended that they be sent to the Leicester Regeneration Company and their consultants.

He wished to clarify that those recommendations were to the Cabinet, which had the role of commenting to outside bodies on executive matters.

104. BUDGET STRATEGY 2003/04 TO 2005/06

Councillor Patel submitted a report that advised the Cabinet of the current budget position and made recommendations on the preparation of next year's budget given the current uncertainty surrounding government funding levels.

Councillor Patel also responded to the comments made by the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2002, which had been circulated.

With regard to the comments regarding the shortfall in Social Services funding he noted the continued pressure but commented that an additional £1.1 million funding had been approved in 2002/03 along with Neighbourhood Renewal Fund monies, as well as the final £1.6 million of the extra £3 million for Social Services that was agreed in the budget strategy two years ago. He also commented that the Social Services budget had been increasing faster than the Standard Spending Assessment. Further consideration could be given to the matter when the results of the review of revenue grant distribution were announced.

Councillor Patel also responded to the comments made regarding concern over the impact of the Revitalising Neighbourhoods project as an unquantified spending pressure. He commented that the costs were quantified when the matter was reported to Cabinet in February 2002 and that the costs continued to be monitored and managed.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the considerable uncertainty facing the budget for 2003/04 and subsequent years, be noted;
- (2) that commitment to 3 year planning be reaffirmed, and to note that the process recommended this year was an undesirable departure from normal practice;
- (3) that the proposed approach to the budget strategy, be endorsed; and
- (4) that the potential need to review the budget strategy later in the year, dependent upon the outcome of the government's funding review, be noted.

105. REVENUE GRANT DISTRIBUTION REVIEW - LEICESTER'S RESPONSE

Councillor Patel submitted a report recommending a response to the Government's Revenue Grant Distribution Review.

It was noted that the Revenue Grant Distribution Review arose from the Local Government Finance Green Paper in 2000 with the aim of replacing the Standard Spending Assessment method of funding for Councils. The Government was consulting on a number of options which ranged from a loss of grant for Leicester of up to £9 million and to potential gains of up to £20 million.

Councillor Patel stated the Council would continue to lobby the government to ensure that Leicester received a fair deal in funding.

The comments of the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee on 19 September 2002 had been circulated to the Cabinet. Councillor Patel thanked them for their support.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that it be noted the Government has taken account of some of the issues on which the Council has made representations on the draft proposals; however, further efforts were required in order to persuade the Government to ensure they are included in the final system;
- (2) that the principles guiding Leicester's response as set out in paragraph 3 of the supporting information, be approved;
- (3) that the issues proposed to be addressed in the response to the consultation paper, as set out in the supporting information, be supported;
- (4) that the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to submit the Council's formal response on the consultation paper to Government, in line with the proposals in the report;
- (5) that the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to vary the response to reflect the consensus view of SIGOMA (the Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities) and HEASIG (the High Ethnicity Authorities Special Interest Group); and to address any new issues which might arise between now and the close of the consultation period.

106. LEICESTER REGENERATION COMPANY: PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor Willmott submitted a report updating the Cabinet on the progress made by consultants in the preparation of the Masterplan for the Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC) area. The report also gave the Cabinet a formal opportunity to comment on Stage 2 of the process, and the preparation of a draft Strategic Framework for the LRC area. The Strategic Framework had a number of policy implications for the Council and these were addressed in the

report.

Councillor Willmott commended the work undertaken so far by the consultants and the focus on the economic needs within the City. He also supported the five major projects which comprised the strategic framework for the LRC area. He also commented that the economic improvements should be to give opportunities for all Leicester's Citizens.

Members of the Cabinet also welcomed the extension of the consultation and the recognition of the need for affordable housing, particularly in the inner city area.

It was also requested that consideration be given at all stages to the communities living just outside the LRC area to ensure they benefit from the work being undertaken.

The minutes of the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2002 had been circulated to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the officer summary, drawn up as a result of officer and Member discussion, in relation to Stage 2 of the Masterplan, (attached as Annex D to the report), be endorsed and sent to the Leicester Regeneration Company and their consultants;
- (2) that in principle support be given to the proposed Strategic Framework for the Leicester Regeneration Company area, as summarised in Annex B of the report, but remain unconvinced at this stage about proposals to move the Market and note that further more detailed work would be required on the implementation and delivery of the Strategic Framework and the City Council would need to give further consideration to the implications of this work.
- (3) that the Leicester Regeneration Company be advised that the City Council looks forward to seeing the Strategic Framework developed and asks for continued priority to be given to; public consultation; linking benefits to all who live in the City; delivering a balanced programme of social, economic and physical regeneration and a continued emphasis on promoting sustainable development; and
- (4) that the City Council, in giving its in principle support for the Strategic Framework, trusts that this will enable the private sector and other partners to be confident in making their own contribution to the successful regeneration of the City.

107. THE MODERNISATION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY RESOURCES

Councillor Getliffe submitted a report that informed the Cabinet of the next phase of proposals for the modernisation of Children and Family Resources and sought agreement for the proposed reconfiguration for the City Council's family support services.

The minutes of the Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee on 16 September 2002 were circulated to the Cabinet. Councillor Getliffe welcomed their views and agreed with the need to keep users of the services and staff who work in the services informed at all times of any changes that were to be made. He also supported a further report to the Scrutiny Committee regarding the protection of assets.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the reconfiguration of family support services proposed in this report, together with the development of a detailed action plan, be approved;
- (2) that the change of role for all centres contained within the proposed reconfiguration be approved, and approve that detailed negotiations proceed with partner organisations, where relevant, to implement the reconfiguration;

which are:

- Bishopdale Family Centre to become a Mainstreaming Sure Start Centre
- Belgrave Family Centre to become a Mainstreaming Sure Start Centre
- St Peter's Family Centre to become a Sure Start Centre subject to further negotiation with the Sure Start Partnership Board
- Jubilee Family Centre to become a Sure Start Centre subject to further negotiation with the Sure Start Partnership Board
- Charnwood Family Centre to become Community Family Centre with further negotiation regarding use of site and the LIFT project
- St Andrew's Family Centre to become the base for a comprehensive Contact Service
- Mayfield Family Centre to be developed to respond to the particular needs of disabled children in addition to maintaining a role as Community Family Centre

- St Christopher's Family Centre to be developed to respond to the particular needs of children aged 13+, in addition to maintaining a role as a Community Family Centre
- Johnson Family Centre to be developed to respond to the particular needs of children aged 13+ in addition to maintaining a role as a Community Family Centre.

108. IMPLEMENTING FAIRER CHARGING GUIDANCE

Councillor Getliffe submitted a report informing the Cabinet of a review of current charging arrangements with a view to implementation of statutory guidance on charging for Home Care and Other Non-Residential Social Services (Fairer Charging). He also noted wide consultation had been undertaken on the proposals which would result in a benefit for service users but would increase costs for the Council.

Councillor Getliffe moved a further recommendation which requested that the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health produce a further report considering the implications of raising the level of maximum charge for new service users.

The minutes of the Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee from 16 September 2002 were circulated to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the work completed so far in meeting the Government's timescales for implementing the statutory guidance, be noted;
- (2) that the changes to the charging policy and actual charges as detailed in the report, be approved; and
- (3) that recognising the high level of subsidy involved in the proposed maximum charge for home care, the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health consider further the implications of raising the level of maximum charge for new service users, to reduce the subsidy to those on higher incomes who are in a position to pay more towards the cost of services arranged for them.

109. BASE BUDGET PREPARATION 2003/04

Councillor Patel submitted a report which explained the process by which the Council's 2003/04 base budget was being prepared and summarised the principles supporting the process. He noted that the process for 2003/04 was the same "Cash Limiting" process as undertaken previously under which each department was set a cash limit for its base budget which took into account a

number of uncertainties and assumptions for future budgetary pressures.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the framework for base budget preparation be endorsed; and
- (2) that the cash limits for each department, as set out in the Supporting Information of the report, be approved.

110. STATUTORY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2001/2002

Councillor Patel submitted a report that presented the Statutory Statement of Accounts which, due to Accounts and Audit regulations required the Council to formally approve the accounts prior to audit, and subsequently to approve any changes following the audit.

The minutes of the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee on 19 September 2002 had been circulated to the Cabinet. It was noted they had no comments on the accounts.

RESOLVED:

that the Statement of Accounts for 2001/2002 be submitted to Council for approval.

111. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT

Councillor Osman submitted a report that advised the Cabinet of works recommended to be funded from the Disability Discrimination Act Initiatives Budget for 2002/2003. The report also advised members of the recommended level of Access to Work portion of the budget.

The minutes of the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee on 19 September 2002 had been circulated to the Cabinet and their comments were noted.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the works in Appendix 3 of the report including the allocation of £20,000 to Access to Work and a sum of £59,775 for urgent works required in the light of complaints received, be approved;
- (2) that the inclusion of £6,000 for alterations to the Leicester Promotion Tour Bus, be approved;
- (3) that the Corporate Director of Environment, Regeneration & Development Department be authorised to order the works;
- (4) that the Corporate Director of Resources, Access & Diversity be authorised to seek all necessary consents;

- (5) that the Corporate Director of Resources, Access & Diversity's Head of Legal Services, be authorised to sign any contracts (if necessary) to allow the works to proceed; and
- (6) that the Corporate Director of Resources, Access & Diversity be authorised to approve further works during the year as necessary under delegated powers.

112. AMENDMENTS TO FINANCE PROCEDURE RULES

Councillor Patel submitted a report seeking to change Finance Procedure Rule 7 to reflect the existence of the Internal Audit Charter and embed it within the constitution.

RESOLVED:

that Council be recommended to amend Finance Procedure Rule 7 as set out in the Supporting Information.

113. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5.30pm.

