



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: MONDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2004 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor R. Blackmore - Chair
Councillor Johnson- Vice-Chair

Councillor Coley
Councillor Hunt
Councillor Metcalfe

Councillor Mugglestone
Councillor Scuplak
Councillor Suleman

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190. 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.

There were no declarations.

191. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Barry Coles

Councillor Blackmore informed the meeting that Cabinet Member, Councillor Barry Coles was ill in hospital. He reported that Councillor Coles had undergone surgery in Nottingham's Queens Medical Centre. Councillor Blackmore and the Lord Mayor had sent best wishes.

Liveability Pilot Scheme

Councillor Blackmore noted that the Council had been successful in being selected as a pilot for the Government's Liveability Scheme in the St. Georges area. The scheme would assist in providing a higher quality street environment and it would seek to create better pedestrian links to surrounding residential areas such as St Matthews. The total amount of the grant involved was around £3 million although the exact sum was yet to be confirmed.

192. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2003, having been circulated to Members, be taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

193. MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no matters referred from Scrutiny Committees.

194. SPINNEY HILL PARK PROPOSED SITE FOR POLICE STATION

Councillor Coley submitted a report detailing the results of a consultation exercise as to whether there was public support for a police station on Spinney Hill Park. The report was considered at Cabinet on 15 December 2003 and referred to full Council on 29 January 2004 for their views. The report also sought approval to the terms of the land disposal should Cabinet agree to the building of the Police Station.

Councillor Coley noted that the majority of the Council were supportive of having the Police Station on the park. He noted that in the Spinney Hill area there was a fear of crime and the station would help to alleviate this fear. As well as the consultation exercise, he had spoken to residents himself, the majority of whom were in favour of the proposals. The majority of the objections to the proposal were from people or organisations from outside of the local area. He conceded that he was originally not in favour of the proposals but said he had been convinced by the support demonstrated through the consultation exercise that had taken place. He also said that this would demonstrate to the Heritage Lottery Fund that there was public support, which was necessary if a future grant for the park was to be successful.

The relevant draft minute extract of the Council meeting held on 29 January was circulated to the Cabinet. Councillor Coley outlined for the Cabinet the issues that were raised. A key issue that was raised was that the monies received from the sale of the land be utilised for park improvement and improved visibility on the park to make it a safer environment. Councillor Coley suggested a recommendation, which stated that money gained from the sale of the site should be used for parks and open spaces in the local area.

Another key issue that was raised as part of the Cabinet discussion was that there be no further development, either within the site currently proposed or any further extension. The Cabinet agreed to a recommendation which stated that further development on the site was only possible with the Council's consent.

The Town Clerk also requested that he be given leeway to negotiate on the price that was mentioned within the private section of the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that approval be given for the disposal of approximately 1590 square metres (1900 square yards) of land within the

Spinney Hill Park as indicated edged on plan no. 2002/124 to Leicestershire Police Authority upon terms outlined in the Appendix to the report;

- (2) that the Town Clerk be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Link Member for Resources, Access and Diversity, to approve any further amendments to the terms of the disposal, including that any further development on the site only be permitted with the Council's absolute consent; and
- (3) that it is the Cabinet's intention that the Capital receipt from the disposal of the land be earmarked for the improvement of parks and open space in the local area.

195. PROPERTY SERVICES REVIEW IN ACCORDANCE WITH BEST VALUE PRINCIPLE

Councillor Coley submitted a report, detailing the Property Services Review in accordance with Best Value Principles, the focus of the review, the emerging issues and improvement activities. He noted that this review was different from the current review of property currently being undertaken by a Cabinet sub-group.

The relevant minutes extract from the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee held on 22 January 2004 were circulated to the Cabinet. Councillor Coley noted that the Committee endorsed the Review.

Members of the Cabinet asked why the review only identified savings of £126,000. The Service Director, Property, explained that this figure was identified purely from revenue costs within a small part of the division. The majority of the division were trading units therefore any savings made in these areas would show up in other departmental budgets.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Improvement Plan, as attached to the report, be endorsed; and
- (2) that the £126,000 per year savings which the review will generate, be noted.

196. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF E-GOVERNMENT - FINAL REPORT AND IMPROVMENT PLAN

Councillor Coley submitted a report concluding the e-government Best Value Review and made recommendations for improvement.

The relevant minute extract from the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee held on 22 January 2004 was circulated to the Cabinet. The Committee endorsed the review.

The Chair noted that there was provision of free internet access in all the city's libraries. He felt this wasn't publicised widely enough and he asked Officers to ensure this was undertaken.

Councillor Hunt also commented about the provision of electronic information access points which were currently in libraries and area housing offices. He stated that a report was due to be submitted to Cabinet in the near future, which would promote the use of these facilities further than at present.

RESOLVED:

that the Improvement Plan attached to the report as Appendix A, be endorsed.

197. THE EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF 88 CEDAR ROAD & 1 LANCASHIRE STREET/ 255 MELTON ROAD LEICESTER (7)

Councillor Metcalfe submitted a report recommending that Compulsory Purchase Orders be sought on a number of properties under the Council's Empty Homes Strategy in order to secure their improvement, proper management and occupation as residential dwellings.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the following land and dwellings outlined in the appendices to the report be made the subject of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) under sections 9 and 1 of the Housing Act 1985 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, in order to secure their improvement, proper management and occupation as residential dwellings:-

88 Cedar Road
1 Lancashire Street / 255 Melton Road; and

- (2) that the necessary capital expenditure be authorised from the Empty Homes Strategy in line with the agreed capital programme.

198. PRIVATE SESSION

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rule 19 of the Council's Constitution, the Chair agreed to a request from Councillor Draycott to remain in the meeting for consideration of this item as Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

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 7

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority).

Paragraph 8

The amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Authority under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services.

PROPOSAL FOR THE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF
SELECTED SITES IN THE STRASBOURG DRIVE /
BISHOPDALE ROAD AREA.

**199. PROPOSAL FOR THE RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED
SITES IN THE STRASBOURG DRIVE / BISHOPDALE ROAD AREA**

Councillor Metcalfe submitted a report seeking all required authorities to enable the proposed site assembly and developer selection process required to secure the proposed redevelopment of selected sites in the Strasbourg Drive / Bishopdale Road area.

The relevant minutes extract from the Housing Scrutiny Committee held on 15 January 2004 were circulated to the Cabinet. The Scrutiny Committee recommended that option 5 be approved as recommended by the Corporate Director of Housing. The Corporate Director explained however that he was now recommending option 4. This option was not supported previously because of the expected timescales regarding the achievement of the capital receipt. The timescales had now been amended and he now proposed option 4 as being the most beneficial to the Council as it allowed more control over demolition.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the proposal to seek the residential redevelopment of the selected sites A-H inclusive as outlined in Option 4 of the attached report, be approved;
- (2) that staff be authorised to achieve and complete under delegated powers the required site assembly, including,
 - (i) the repurchase of six owner-occupier properties, preferably via negotiation, and, as a last resort via Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), including the payment of any associated/required costs (a separate report will be brought to Cabinet if CPOs are required);

- (ii) the re-housing of any affected tenants, awarding them priority status through Compulsory Home Loss compensation points in the allocation system, including, if required, exercising powers to obtain vacant possession and the payment of homeless and associated compensation packages;
 - (iii) the offering of alternative leasehold properties under existing leasehold arrangements, including the payment of any required appropriate disturbance compensation;
 - (iv) keeping empty any void council-owned properties within the affected site until they can be demolished unless it proves viable to use these as short-term temporary housing under licence; and
- (3) that staff be authorised to commence a selection process to seek and, under delegated authority, appoint developers to redevelop the selected sites.

200. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 5.58pm.