



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Held: THURSDAY, 22 JANUARY 2008 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Westley – Vice-Chair (In the Chair)
Councillor Mugglestone

Councillor Corral	Councillor Hall
Councillor Hunt (for Cllr Suleman)	Councillor Joshi
Councillor Naylor	Councillor Russell

Co-opted Members

Mr Edward Hayes – Church of England Diocese

Standing Invitees

Rebecca Barrow	Youth Representative
Jess Evans	Youth Representative

Also In Attendance

Councillor Dempster	Cabinet Lead Member for Children, and Schools.
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304. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Blackmore and Follett, Cem Turhan and Edward Hayes.

305. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Corral declared a personal interest in Appendix B, 'Housing Revenue Account – Budget 2009/10' and Appendix C 'Housing Capital Programme 2008/09 and 2009/14' as he had relatives who were Council tenants.

Councillor Westley declared a personal interest in Appendix B, 'Housing Revenue Account – Budget 2009/10' and Appendix C 'Housing Capital Programme 2008/09 and 2009/14' as he was a Council tenant.

312. HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09 AND 2009/14

The Interim Corporate Director of Adults and Housing and the Chief Finance Officer submitted a report that advised Members on the position at period 7 on this years capital programme, revised the forecast for the 2008/09 out-turn and proposed a five year Housing Capital Programme for 2009/14, for Members' approval.

The Service Director, Housing Improvement and Repairs introduced the report. He stated that the capital programme had reduced in terms of resources, and this was partly due to the significant fall in capital receipts. It was reported that an average 260 council-owned properties were usually sold annually, but that the projected total for the current year was 60. It was further stated that the type of property being sold had changed with leasehold properties taking up 50% of sales.

It was explained that a five year programme had been proposed in order to meet the decent homes standard. He summarised the areas of spending, explaining that significant resources were in the programme for the Kitchen and Bathroom modernisations, digital television switchover, energy efficiency, Tenants and Residents Associations and wind turbines. A total of £118m was to be invested in Leicester homes over the next five years.

A Member of the Board asked how much money had been allocated to Environmental Budgets in the previous budget. The Service Director, Housing Improvement and Repairs stated that this figure stood at £50,000, with £400,000 being proposed for 2009/10.

In response to views from members in connection with the £900,000 proposed for the digital television switchover, it was reported that this sum covered more than simply the provision of the digital box.

A members of the Board stated that £440,000 was an insufficient amount for new and replacement door entry systems. Members also questioned whether the prioritising of works should be guided by crime statistics, as many incidents of anti social behaviour were not recorded. In terms of the resources, the Service Director, Housing Improvement and Repairs explained that there was many demands for resources within the programme, and that half of the amount allocated would replace existing systems. He also stated that he would be happy to consider alternative ways of prioritising works.

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A Member of the Board felt that the Disabled Facilities Grants programme should be extended. The Service Director, Housing Improvement and Repairs acknowledged this but stated that almost four and half times the amount made available by Government was being spent. In response to a further point, it was confirmed that the council had consulted with the health authority in terms of allocating resources for Disabled Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants.

In respect of efforts made to encourage tenants to use their properties more energy efficiently, it was reported that significant engagement in this field had been made with the Tenant and Resident Associations and support mechanisms were in place to assist with those who encountered difficulties in paying fuel bills. There was also a provision open to anyone to upgrade their insulation and get energy advice should this be necessary.

Members generally felt that much of the detail within the programme could have been scrutinised at an earlier stage, and that an engaged process including consideration by the Adults and Housing Task Group could have taken place.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the report be noted; and
- (2) that the Adults and Housing Task Group be asked to scrutinise future programmes of the Housing Revenue Account and the Housing Capital Programme prior to consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board