



Leicester
City Council

MINUTES EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the FINANCE, RESOURCES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 23 JANUARY 2003 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Blackmore - Chair
Councillor Mrs. Middleton - Conservative Spokesperson
Councillor Connelly - Labour Spokesperson

Councillor Coley

Councillor Gajjar

Councillor Subedar

* * * * *

77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were requested 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.

87. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Proposed Long Leasehold Disposal of Western Park House and Pavilion, Western Park, Leicester

The item was considered urgent by virtue of the fact that information had appeared in the press which the Committee wished to consider as soon as possible.

The Corporate Director, Resources, Access and Diversity, circulated a report as requested by the triumvirate providing further details of the disposal of Western Park and Pavilion, following press reports concerning the land to be disposed of with the building. The Committee noted that the letting of the proposed area of land surrounding the building should not have a significantly adverse impact on the Park and the public amenity. The Corporate Director of Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal is agreeable to releasing this area of public open space for use as private garden land and the proposal had the support of officers of Development Control who would need to consider a planning application for the change of use from public open space to private garden land.

Concern was expressed about the length of the lease (125 years) and the technical details of work needed to be done to the area resulting from the sale. It was suggested that in future the leases should be for the minimum time to make it marketable and park users should be consulted before any decision is taken.

The Committee were also worried about the loss of public open space and worried that this could set a precedent for future disposal of public land. It was stressed that Scrutiny and Ward Councillors should be consulted at the earliest opportunity and before any decision was made.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That whilst the Committee obviously welcomes the capital receipt that this lease will bring for the Council and the fact that the building involved will have significant refurbishment work done to it, Members nevertheless are concerned at the loss of public open land resulting from this arrangement and it recommends that steps are taken in an effort to make good this loss,
- (2) that the Committee is also concerned at the length of lease and recommends that, where possible, shorter leases are negotiated and restrictions on future development should be insisted on when granting leases of this kind in land adjacent to public open space, and
- (3) that the Committee recommends in future decisions likely to result in a loss of public open space be referred to this Scrutiny Committee for comment at the earliest opportunity and before any marketing is undertaken.