



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL
(CORPORATE ISSUE)

CABINET	6 NOVEMBER 2000
EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	14 NOVEMBER 2000
FINANCE, RESOURCES & EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	21 NOVEMBER 2000

"20/20" VISION FOR LEICESTER - THE LEICESTER PLEDGE

Report of the Director of Education

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek the support of Members to the "Leicester Pledge" to raise educational standards, and to seek Members' views on options for increasing resources to schools to meet the pledge.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Education service inherited at Local Government Reorganisation had a legacy of low expectations and under funding. Despite strides made by the City Council, particularly increasing funding from 97.25% of SSA in 1997/98 to 99.7% of SSA in 2000/01, there remains an urgent and serious need to do more.
- 2.2 Our response to this need will be judged at the second Ofsted visit, which is expected to commence in January (calls for documentation are being received already).
- 2.3 The process of reconstruction is well underway. The Minister for Schools' deadlines have all been achieved, but a reconstructed partnership with schools depends on a genuine partnership with commitment on both sides.
- 2.4 The Leicester Pledge addresses this need, and would be a two way agreement between the Council and Schools. The Council would promise to provide effective support and challenge to schools, a leading edge IT learning grid, and increased funding. Schools, for their part, would agree to meet specific targets for improvements in the years ahead.

- 2.5 To secure the success of the pledge, Members support to additional funding is sought. Two options are provided which would:
- (a) increase funding to the level of the Education SSA, at a cost of £0.6m p.a. over and above current plans; or
 - (b) provide £1.5m per annum over and above current plans by 2003/04;

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 (i) That the Leicester Pledge is supported.
- (ii) That the Cabinet approve changes to the Budget Strategy subject to the Council's endorsement in due course.
- (iii) That the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider the proposals and make observations, and endorse the action proposed.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The present budget strategy includes a plan to passport Education SSA to the Education service. Whilst raising educational standards is a priority for new funding, the strategy envisages that spending in excess of passport will be funded from savings generated by Best Value reviews. Leicester Pledge will therefore result in a pre-commitment of this funding and will increase the necessity for Best Value savings in later years.

5. Report Author/Officer to Contact

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