



Leicester
City Council

**MINUTE
EXTRACT**

Minute extract of the Meeting of the
EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Held: TUESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2004 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott - Chair
Councillor Maw - Conservative Spokesperson
Councillor Vincent – Liberal Democrat Spokesperson

Councillor Almey (for Cllr Keeling)	Councillor Mrs Middleton
Councillor Corrall (for Cllr Shelton)	Councillor Panchbaya
Councillor Draycott (for Cllr Hall)	Councillor Seare
Councillor Farmer (for Cllr Renold)	Councillor Sood
Councillor Fitch	Councillor Tessier
Councillor Kitterick	Councillor Thompson

Co-opted Members (Voting)

Mr Edward Hayes - Roman Catholic Diocese

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

Mr Resham Singh Sandhu Leicester Council of Faiths
Ms Jane Rolfe - Primary Sector
Mr Adam Suddaby - Incorporated Colleges
Mr Geoff Rawnsley - City of Leicester Governors Association

In attendance

Councillor Johnson Cabinet Link Member for Education & Lifelong Learning

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49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they had in the business to be discussed and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

The meeting was asked to note the general interests of Members as governors as follows:

	School / College	Category of Governorship
Cllr Almey	Avenue Infant School	LEA
Cllr Draycott	Rowlatts Hill Primary School	LEA
Cllr Mrs Maw	Willowbrook Primary School	LEA
Cllr Mrs Middleton	Caldecote Community Primary School	LEA
	Fullhurst Community College	LEA
Cllr Panchbaya	Spinney Hills Primary School	LEA
Mr G Rawnsley	Crown Hills Community College	LEA
	Mayflower Primary	LEA
Mr. A. Suddaby	Leicester Adult Education College	Co-opted
	Ellesmere College	Co-opted
Cllr Thompson	Sandfield Close Primary	LEA
	Northfield House Primary	LEA

57. DRAFT REVENUE STRATEGY FOR THE EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING DEPARTMENT

The Corporate Director of Education and Lifelong Learning and the Chief Finance Officer submitted a joint report which gave details of the Corporate Director's proposed departmental revenue strategy and the budget process. The report also passed on a request from the Cabinet Link Member for the Committee's views on the Strategy and whether the Committee endorsed the Strategy as the best way forward, or had any alternative proposals it wished Cabinet to consider. The Strategy document gave details of key issues, objectives and the policy context of the proposals together with details of the reduction and growth proposals.

It was stated that raising educational standards was the Council's top priority and that in order to meet the needs of schools which were facing significant financial pressures and the needs of services supporting schools it would be necessary to reprioritise spending from lifelong learning whilst still addressing priorities in other areas. The draft Strategy sought to do this whilst meeting Government funding passport requirements to schools and the corporate savings target. Details of potential savings identified from within the LEA block grant and further reduction proposals were distributed at the meeting.

The Committee agreed to accept representations under Scrutiny Procedure Rule 7b from Kevin Lyles (Voluntary Action Leicester), Ben Kingston (Voluntary Action Leicester) and John Preston (Leicester Council for Voluntary Youth Service) and Gary Garner (UNISON) who spoke against the proposals. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the number of posts put at risk and potential redundancies, negative effects on existing recruitment and retention problems and concerns that the Council's Political Conventions' were being used to restrict debate. It was suggested that the proposals would affect the most deprived communities in the City and impact on education conducted outside of the classroom. In relation to playgrounds, it was stated that grants represented excellent value for money and the proposals would have serious consequences for the safety of the children and the City.

Members expressed concern in relation to the effect of the proposed voluntary sector cuts on the community with groups run by minority communities, women's groups, play groups and some of the most deprived areas particularly badly affected with consequent negative affects on community cohesion and crime and disturbance. It was suggested that these effects necessitated the Chief Constable being asked for comments. In addition it was suggested that many of the groups affected supported educational achievement and so the proposals would have a negative impact on standards in schools. It was further suggested that there was no corporate need for the level of savings identified and that funds would be taken from education budgets and placed elsewhere within the Council. The effect of the proposals on minority communities was raised and it was suggested that the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act needed to be considered.

In response it was stated that the new administration had identified significant funding commitments for which monies had to be found. Therefore a consultation process was being undertaken with all comments welcomed. Cabinet would then consider all proposals and submissions before submitting their recommendations to Council. It was emphasised that the savings listed were proposals and that nothing had been decided upon.

It was also suggested that growth proposals should be scrutinised and that an extra meeting could be called to consider revised proposals submitted by Members.

Councillor Kitterick seconded by Councillor Willmott proposed the following resolution:

'That the Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) do not endorse the proposed revenue strategy;
- (ii) that the Scrutiny Committee seeks to develop alternative proposals and which reject the removal of the voluntary sector.

Councillor Draycott requested that voting be recorded.

Upon being put to the vote, Councillors Corral, Draycott, Kitterick, Sood, Willmott and Mr Hayes voted in FAVOUR of the resolution. Councillors Almey, Farmer, Fitch, Mrs Maw, Mrs Middleton, Seare, Thompson, Tessier and Vincent voted AGAINST the resolution. Councillor Panchbaya ABSTAINED.

The resolution was LOST.

At the conclusion of the discussion some Members expressed the view that the views of Committee members should be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration. Members also expressed the view that the item should be further considered at the extra meeting of the Committee scheduled for 10 February 2004.