



Leicester  
City Council

**MINUTE  
EXTRACT**

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

Held: WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2004 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Bhatti- Chair  
Councillor Mrs. Middleton - Conservative Spokesperson  
Councillor Karim – Liberal Democrat Spokesperson

Councillor Draycott  
Councillor Renold

Councillor Garrity  
Councillor Willmott

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**80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Draycott declared a personal interest because a family member was a Council House Tenant, but declared that her interest was not prejudicial. Councillor Draycott also declared a non prejudicial interest as a member of the Fire Authority.

**81. BUDGET STRATEGY 2004/05 TO 2006/07**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report outlining the proposals to Cabinet and then Council for a three year corporate budget strategy, three year departmental revenue strategies for each department, and a general fund budget for 2004/05. It was noted that that the information contained in the Departmental Revenue Strategies had changed since the draft budget strategies were originally published and the proposed figures published for council tax had been reduced. It was also noted that a one off capital receipt of £8m had been received, although the effect of this on the budget for 04/05 was minor. The Schools Forum had met and were supportive of the proposals for growth in the schools block. The Committee were also informed that the precepts for the Fire and Police Authorities had now been set.

It was noted that 10 voluntary projects would be having the originally proposed cuts to funding reviewed as a result of the consultation exercise if Directors proposals were accepted. Some members of the Committee raised concerns that this may result in those groups which had lobbied the Council hardest being reviewed rather those groups which may be in the most need.

Councillor Willmott circulated information relating to the alternative budget proposed by the Labour Group, which had been prepared with technical

support from Officers, and summarised the main proposals for the Committee. Councillor Willmott stated that this budget focused on the priorities of the public, and savings were made from internal budgets to ensure a low council tax and no cuts to voluntary sector projects or community groups. The proposed low council tax rise would also avoid the Council being capped. It was also noted that the Labour Group believed that the alternative budget would ensure that work around community cohesion was not jeopardised.

Councillors Garrity and Renold expressed some concern that the figures in the alternative Labour budget were not achievable or sustainable over the three year plan, particularly figures relating to the amount of money that could be saved through internal reviews and the levels of inflation. Councillor Garrity also stressed that the Administration was willing to listen to any representations from community groups.

It was proposed by Councillor Willmott, seconded by Councillor Draycott that (with reference to the three options for the budget included in the report) the Committee supports a fourth option as outlined in the Labour Budget Proposals and urges Cabinet to consider all or part of them to prevent unnecessary cuts before it makes its recommendations to Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Renold that the word 'support' be changed to 'note' to read "the Committee notes a fourth option as outlined in the Labour Budget Proposals and urges Cabinet to consider all or part of them to prevent unnecessary cuts before it makes its recommendations to Council".

The proposal was voted on and carried by 4 votes to 3.

The Committee also heard from Mr Haji, representing the Somali Integration and Advocacy Centre regarding the proposed budget and the Somali community. The Committee expressed their concern that the community had been unable to meet with Council representatives until this stage in the budget process and felt that a way to use Neighbourhood Renewal Fund money to support the Somali community should be explored. The Committee also agreed that a full report on the needs of the Somali community and a full report on Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocations be brought to a future meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Willmott, seconded by Councillor Draycott and carried that:

"The Committee request the Leader of the Council meets with the Mr Haji, the Chair of the Somali Integration and Advocacy Centre and other community representatives, request that a full report on neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocations be brought to a future meeting and ask for a report on the needs of the Somali community to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Committee notes a fourth budget option as outlined in the Labour Budget Proposals and urges

Cabinet to consider all or part of them to prevent unnecessary cuts before it makes its recommendations to Council,

- (2) that the committee request the Leader of the Council meets with the Mr Haji, the Chair of the Somali Integration and Advocacy Centre and other Somali community representatives,
- (3) that the Committee request that a full report on Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocations be brought to a future meeting; and
- (4) that the Committee ask for a report on the needs of the Somali community to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

## **82. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm.