



Leicester
City Council

APPENDIX A

MINUTES EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the PROCEDURES WORKING PARTY

Held: Monday 29 March 2004 at 2.15pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Allen (for Cllr Scuplak)	Councillor Henry
Councillor John Blackmore	Councillor Johnson
Councillor Draycott	Councillor Smith (for Cllr Suleman)
Councillor Farmer (for Cllr R Blackmore)	Councillor Wann (for Cllr Willmott)

Officers in Attendance

Martyn Allison	Asst Chief Executive
Adam Archer	Revitalising Neighbourhoods Team (for Item 72)
Cathy Carter	Revitalising Neighbourhoods Team (for Item 72)
Peter Nicholls	Service Director, Legal Services
Charles Poole	Service Director, Democratic Services
Tom Stephenson	Town Clerk
Frances Wake	Committee Services

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72. AREA COMMITTEES FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT: OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK AND TOOLKIT

The Town Clerk submitted a report presenting for discussion a proposed operational framework for the establishment of Area Committees in Leicester and a guidance document to support Councillors in their roles as members of Area Committees.

Some Members expressed concern at the lack of response by Councillors to the request for volunteers to be part of the first stage of Area Committee implementation and considered this to show a lack of support among Members and suggested that there should be further consultation on the proposals. However, other Members felt that the response did not reflect Members' attitude towards Area Committees generally and that there had already been sufficient and extensive consultation on the proposals.

Another concern raised by some Members was the proposals for community engagement and how this was to be achieved recognising that this involved a substantial amount of time and expertise. Officers reported that in other Authorities where a system of Area Committees had been adopted, there were dedicated Neighbourhood officers, who took responsibility for community engagement. However, there were officers already working in neighbourhoods who could support this work.

There were also views expressed that some of the issues raised in the report could benefit from the input of the Area Committees themselves and would also engender ownership by the Area Committees.

The Working Party however agreed that the views of Scrutiny and Members generally on the detailed operational framework would be beneficial. The Working Party did however give its initial response to the individual recommendations in the report.

AGREED:-

- (1) that the recommendations with regard to the Legal framework should be considered by Finance Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee (FREOPS) before submission to full Council for approval to the ensuing required amendments to the Constitution;
- (3) that Option 2 be supported for a boundary change to the original proposals;
- (4) that FREOPS views be sought on the proposals for the phasing of the introduction of Area Committees, and a letter be circulated to all Members, giving them the opportunity to indicate their interest;
- (5) to recommend that no decision be taken on delegated decisions until after the Area Committees were set up;
- (6) to recommend the proposals on community engagement as a starting point;
- (7) to recommend the addition of 'community cohesion' as a role for Area Committees;
- (8) that the toolkit be accepted as a 'work in progress'; and
- (9) to recommend that unless additional money can be identified, existing Area Forums be given notice of withdrawal of secretariat support from within Committee Services;

Recommendation 9 was voted on and was carried 5 for and 3 against, with Councillor Draycott indicating that the Labour Group did not support the proposal to withdraw City Council support from the existing Area Forums.