



Leicester
City Council

**MINUTE
EXTRACT**

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

Held: MONDAY, 14 JUNE 2004 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Bhatti - Chair

Councillor Draycott
Councillor Fitch (for Cllr. Karim)
Councillor Willmott
Councillor Hunt (for Cllr. Garrity)
Councillor Renold

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1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

There were no declarations.

**8. NRF PROGRAMME 2004/06 - LEICESTER PARTNERSHIP
INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY PROGRAMME**

The Service Director, Regeneration submitted a report providing an overview of the Leicester Partnership's Infrastructure and Capacity Programme, It set out the priorities agreed by the Leicester Partnership that under-pinned the development of the Infrastructure & Capacity Programme.

Members of the Committee expressed concerns that the Leicester Partnership 'Infrastructure & Capacity' programme had been allocated too much of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) and that there was little detail about what the money was being spent on.

The Team Leader, Urban Regeneration explained what the five strands of the 'Infrastructure & Capacity' programme were and what they hoped to achieve. He also stated that the programme was responding to the issues agreed for improvement between the Government and the Partnership as a result of its most recent accreditation examination and advice from the Audit Commission. There were also new Government requirements for monitoring and reporting. He also stated that it was important to have systems which ensured the programmes which the NRF was funding were effective and full public

accountability was maintained for where the money was spent.

Members of the Committee also felt that the NRF allocations didn't focus enough on providing capacity building in wards which hadn't been the beneficiaries of previous regeneration funding. The Team Leader, Urban Regeneration stated that there were a number of projects funded through the NRF programme that would contribute towards building capacity within individual wards he also said the Partnership would continue to review its membership to ensure adequate representation from the community. There were already a number of community representatives on the Partnership and that with a population of almost 300,000 in the city and numerous communities in the City ensuring adequate representation, yet keeping Partnership numbers manageable was a difficult balance to achieve.

Other Members of the Committee noted that the structures required by the Government for the allocation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund created unnecessary bureaucracy. It was suggested that high level lobbying of the Government Office of the East Midlands take place to ensure that systems could be streamlined. It was also thought that there was little evidence of what the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund had achieved in the wards it was set up to help.

Further concerns were expressed by members of the Committee, whilst it was recognised that there was a need for effective administration of the NRF, but it was felt that the amount of money being spent on administration was too large. The Team Leader, Regeneration commented that the budget for the Infrastructure and Capacity programme was not simply administration but dealt with a number of more strategic issues that would build up the ability of the Partnership to deliver its City-wide function effectively. He felt that too often in the past across the City, various partnerships had been established with little support, had become talking shops and had achieved little. Delivering the NRF programme was only one of the significant responsibilities of the Partnership, and that these responsibilities could grow substantially. He suggested that the infrastructure & capacity element was an early investment in the Partnership's future, would ensure the city got it right first time and sustained the involvement and support of all its members.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet be informed that it is the view of the Committee that the amount of money being spent on administration of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is disproportionate and that Cabinet be asked to look at ways of rebalancing the expenditure between activities and administration.