



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the
RESOURCES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Held: MONDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2005 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Karim - Chair
Councillor J Blackmore – Labour Spokesperson
Councillor Grant – Conservative Spokesperson

Councillor Hall

Councillor Renold

Councillor Coley

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93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests that they may have in the business to be discussed and/or indicate that section 106 of the Local Government Act applied them.

There were no declarations of interest.

94. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR CONSULTATION

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report setting out the consultation process carried out with the voluntary sector organisations for the 2004/05 to 2006/07 Budget Strategy and analysed it in the context of the Judicial Review and the resulting fresh consultation. The Committee's comments were sought on the outcomes of the analysis for similar consultations and discussions with the sector.

Concern was expressed that the report had not answered the questions which had been originally asked by the Committee, and that the decisions which had been taken at Cabinet in relation to the setting up of a Commission were not included anywhere in the report. It was explained that the Committee had originally asked that details be given on all of the organisations whose funding had changed, and how they had been affected, but that this had been very difficult to collate as Organisations who were no longer funded by the Council were under no obligation to submit their details. It was noted, however, that a report detailing this would be submitted as soon as possible, although it was acknowledged that the lack of this information should have been referenced in the report. It was agreed that any Member with queries about a specific organisation could raise these outside of the meeting, although the information

requested may not be available.

The Committee also expressed their concern that the wording of the recommendations included in the report were too subjective. In particular, it was felt that the phrase 'where possible' in relation to changes in the consultation process could be used as an opt out in any future consultation exercise. The Committee suggested that wording be changed to the effect of saying adequate consultation would take place 'unless there were identifiable reasons why not'. Concern was also expressed regarding the use of the word 'discrete' in relation to consultation with the voluntary and community sector, as it was felt that this could be misleading, and it was suggested that this could be changed to 'distinct'.

The Committee also raised concern that when decisions were being taken regarding which voluntary services should and should not be funded, too much importance was placed on whether the service was core or not, rather than what the organisation actually did and whether it provided value for money. The Committee felt that there needed to be a clear definition of what the service being commissioned was and that the Council should define what it expected from the service and measure how well it had met these expectations. Organisations not performing should be made aware that this may affect any future funding. The Committee were of the view that there needed to be a clearer process mapped out regarding what was expected from voluntary organisations and how this might affect their funding in the future.

It was noted that at its meeting on 24 January 2005 Cabinet had agreed to the setting up of a Commission to examine the relationship between the City Council and the local Voluntary and Community Sector, which would provide an ideal model of a relationship and analysis of the similarities and differences of Leicester to this model. It was also noted that the exact detail of the Commission was currently being decided on, and it was agreed that the work of the Commission could be reported to future meetings of the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Renold, seconded by Councillor John Blackmore and

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Committee express concern that the questions which had previously been asked had not been sufficiently answered,
- (2) express their concern that the decisions taken by Cabinet on 24th January 2005 in relation to the voluntary sector were not contained in the report,
- (3) express the view that the recommendations in the paper were not sufficiently developed;
- (4) that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that more work

is done to develop procedures, including the work of the proposed Commission,

- (5) that the Committee express to Cabinet that it takes the view that value for money is an essential part of decision making about funding,
- (6) that the Committee express to Cabinet that it takes the view that more information is needed about what the voluntary groups do, and
- (7) that the Committee receive a further report on the Commission at their meeting on 17 March 2005.

95. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.58pm.

