



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

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

Held: MONDAY, 27 JUNE 2005 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott - Chair
Councillor Renold – Liberal Democrat Spokesperson
Councillor Porter – Conservative Spokesperson

Councillor J Blackmore
Councillor Hunt

Councillor Karim
Councillor Kitterick

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10. LIFELONG LEARNING BUDGET - REPORT OF INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANTS

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report presenting RSM Robson Rhodes' findings on the review of the budgetary problems in the Lifelong Learning Division, and set out the action plan which Cabinet had endorsed.

The Committee felt that the Divisional Organisational review began without a clear understanding of how the savings being proposed related to the detailed service budgets, and were of the view that there should have been a clear mapping exercise of what costs and savings had been expected, and where they had come from in order that these could be tracked as the review went on.

Concern was expressed over the lack of member involvement in the review, and it was noted that the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee had requested information on the review and expressed their concern about its potential results at an early stage. The Committee were of the view that more attention should be paid to the comments of Scrutiny at an earlier stage, and that where there is a concern by a Scrutiny Committee, the review should not be carried out by officers under delegated powers but should be subject to member oversight. It was suggested that the a requirement should be built into the Constitution to ensure that if Scrutiny request that a review should be carried out by members this should be the case. It was noted that there was a commitment in the action plan to revisit member involvement in scrutiny reviews.

Concern was also expressed regarding the project management methodologies which were used, and whether those carrying out the review

had been trained to the Prince 2 standard of project management. It was noted that at the time the review was carried out, Prince 2 was not the Council's project management system, but that a training programme was currently being progressed to ensure that staff were trained to the Prince 2 standard. It was requested that a skills audit be carried out and information provided to the Committee giving details of how many managers had been trained in each department, and how many of these were managing projects at any particular time.

RESOLVED:

That the following points be made to Cabinet:

- (1) That there be a change in the arrangements for deciding whether a review can be carried out under delegated powers, such that members have a greater input,
- (2) that future reviews carry out a mapping exercise in order to understand where costs and savings are coming from and going to,
- (3) that there be a change in procedure rules in order that Cabinet be formally obliged to consider the comments of Scrutiny, either by formal or informal mechanisms, and
- (4) that the Committee be provided with details of the number of people across departments who had been trained in accordance with the Prince 2 project management standard, and how many of these were managing projects at any particular time.