



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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8. SCRUTINY IN DEPTH INVESTIGATIONS

The Service Director (Democratic Services) submitted a report outlining the procedural and related issues associated with the conduct of an in depth scrutiny investigation. It was noted that a report on the effective working of scrutiny would be going to Council in September, which would encourage the use of in depth investigations as a tool in effective scrutiny.

The Committee welcomed the report in terms of the guidelines it set out for the workings of an investigation, but stressed the need for investigations to be able to be experimental at this stage. The Committee were also of the view that should the Chair and party spokespersons agree on a subject for an in depth investigation, this should take place and receive the necessary support from officers. However, the Committee questioned how much of the information which they requested would be made available during the course of an investigation, and if something was considered to be within delegated powers whether access to the information would be given. It was felt that all information requested should be required to be disclosed, unless there was a clear legal reason why this should not be the case.

The Committee were also of the view that there should be a formal mechanism for the reporting of findings and comments from the in depth investigations to Cabinet. The Committee also felt that Cabinet members should be required to attend meetings to explain their responses to the findings of the investigations.

Concern was expressed around the resources which would be available to the Committee when undertaking these reviews, and were informed that there was policy support available from the Chief Executive's office and departmental

support may also be available, depending on the investigation being carried out. If investigations required any additional resources a case could be made to Cabinet for these.

The Committee outlined six areas which they would like to look at in depth, the Performing Arts Centre, the Lifelong Learning Review, project management arrangements in the Council, the sale of Council properties, the proposals to refurbish the New Walk Centre and the accessibility to Council services on line. It was agreed that the Chair and party spokespersons would prioritise these and scope how an investigation could take place. This would then be circulated to all members of the Committee for comment and work could begin on an in depth investigation at the meeting on 4 August 2005. The Committee were reminded of the need to operate within its terms of reference when conducting any in depth investigation.

It was agreed that the protocol outlined in the report should be accepted as guidance at this stage, with the following amendments proposed by Councillor Renold and agreed by the Committee to be considered by Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That there be a stronger line on the resources which would be available when carrying out investigations,
- (2) that when an in depth investigation is set up, officers be required to give all of the information requested by a scrutiny committee, unless there was a clear legal reason why this should not be the case, and
- (3) that there should be an obligation on Cabinet to consider the findings of an in depth investigation , and for Cabinet members to attend meetings of Scrutiny to explain their responses to Scrutiny's findings.