



Leicester  
City Council

## MINUTE EXTRACT

### Minutes of the Meeting of the HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2005 at 6.00pm

#### P R E S E N T :

Councillor Westley - Chair  
Councillor Green (Liberal Democrat Spokesperson)  
Councillor O'Brien (Conservative Spokesperson)

Councillor Dempster                      Councillor Sood

#### I N A T T E N D A N C E

Dr Stephen Whitehead – Advisor to the Committee  
Councillor Gill – Cabinet Lead Member  
Sakarlal Gajjar – East Leicester PCT PPIF

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#### **11. 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 applied to them.

Councillors Green and Westley declared a non-prejudicial interest as they both had relatives who were employed at Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Councillor Westley declared a non-prejudicial interest in Item 7, "Choosing Health White Paper: Public Health Implications of Smoking," as he was a smoker.

#### **16. UK INFLUENZA PANDEMIC POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Service Director, Democratic Services submitted a report which updated the Committee on issues relating to a potential influenza pandemic and its possible effects, including the preparatory measures to ensure continued delivery of essential Council services.

The Director of Public Health gave a presentation which explained the medical aspects of a pandemic, including past pandemics and how a future pandemic may occur and its potential impact on the population.

Members welcomed the preparatory and ongoing work which had been undertaken and recognised that having procedures in place would ease the situation when it occurred. Members felt that prevention was an issue and asked about the potential for immunisation and control measures to reduce the spread amongst people by using masks or cancelling public gatherings. Members felt that flexibility amongst Council workers would be paramount and suggested that work commence on preparing the workforce for such an event. Members also asked how much warning there would be upon the discovery of an outbreak.

It was explained to Members that a vaccine would probably not be available for several months following an outbreak due to its formulation and production. Basic hygiene measures such as hand washing would slow its progress and the wearing of masks would be more appropriate for people who were already infected. Any restriction on public gatherings or school closures would have to be considered more carefully due to potential implications of this measure. Work had started on how to prepare Council workers as it was Corporate Directors' Board who had requested that Members consider this matter. Preventive measures would be investigated and dialogue would be commenced with staff and unions and the Council's responsibility of care towards staff would be considered. It was explained that there would hopefully be a couple of weeks' warning of an outbreak coming to the country which would enable national, regional and local procedures to be implemented in advance.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report and the comments of the Health Scrutiny Committee be referred to Cabinet for consideration.