



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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17. CHOOSING HEALTH WHITE PAPER: PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF SMOKING

The Service Director (Community Protection and Well Being) and the Director of Public Health submitted a report which introduced a presentation given to the Committee by the Assistant Director of Public Health and the Head of Food/Community Public Health on the public health implications of smoking.

The presentation informed the Committee on several aspects of the issue which included: 1) Smoking and Health, outlining Leicester's statistical position in comparison with the rest of the country and targets and priorities for the future; 2) Smoking and Deprivation, explaining the differences in smoking habits and the effects of smoking in different areas of the City; 3) Reducing the Impact of Smoking, such as education, increase of smoking cessation services and reducing the impact of passive smoking; 4) The City Council's Role, including the welfare responsibilities of the Council as an employer, initiatives to assist the PCTs' Stop Services and its regulatory role; 5) The Choosing Health White Paper and its aims of reducing the amount of smokers, targeting harder to reach communities, reducing second hand smoke, reducing smuggled tobacco and carrying out national publicity. It was explained that reducing smoking was fundamental to increasing life expectancy, disadvantaged people statistically smoked more and suffered worse health and that elements of action to tackle the problems were already in place, but required citywide leadership to increase their effectiveness.

Members discussed the issue and made several comments. They felt that support should be made more freely available to people who wished to stop smoking. This should include actions such as the Health Service being more proactive with regard to location of service outlets, more support from GPs and making prescriptions for cessation treatments free as a way of reducing the impact on deprived communities. Members also felt that education was a key priority and that this should be targeted through the schooling years from juniors onwards. Members were also concerned about the effects of passive smoking outside doorways to public buildings. They mentioned that smoking bans inside premises would result in people smoking outside instead and it was mentioned that this had personally been experienced by doorways into New Walk Centre, the Magistrates' Court and hospitals. It was felt that the University Hospitals Leicester should set an example to the public and encourage smoking not to take place outside main entrances to their buildings.

It was explained to members that work was being carried out to make all hospital grounds smoke free by 2006. The Committee was further advised that the proposed ban in public places would reduce smoking by 3-4%, that public pressure should be encouraged to "de-normalise" smoking and to create an environment where it would be easy to resist. It was agreed that there needed to be more readily available smoking cessation services in Leicester.

Councillor Westley, seconded by Councillor O'Brien moved that the background papers and a suitable covering report proposing a review of the Council's existing policies be referred to Cabinet and Council for full debate by all Members. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That a report be prepared for Cabinet and Council, based on the background papers, proposing a review of the Council's existing policies on smoking in its own premises and those it regulates.
- 2) That a letter be sent from the Health Scrutiny Committee to University Hospitals Leicester, the Magistrates' Court and relevant officers in Leicester City Council requesting that action be taken to deter people smoking outside main entrances to their premises.

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