



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE
EXTRACT

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

Held: THURSDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2005 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

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

Councillor Hunt

Councillor Karim

Councillor Kitterick

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35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are 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 1992 applies to them.

Councillors Willmott and Hunt declared personal interests in Report B1, "Performing Arts Centre" as they were board members of the East Midlands Development Agency.

43. PROTOCOL FOR ORGANISATION AND STAFFING CHANGE

The Town Clerk submitted a report informing the Committee of the progress made to date on the introduction of a revised Protocol on organisation and staffing change.

The Chair welcomed Dave Mitchell from Unison to speak on this issue, he made points as follows:-

- He noted the Protocol was still a work in progress but noted that consultation had improved since August.
- He felt that there were still some fundamental issues to be addressed.
- He recognised that the protocol couldn't prescribe for all eventualities but he wished to avoid the problems faced as part of the Lifelong Learning Review.
- He said that he supported the issue of members being involved in appeals.
- He said that that UNISON were happy to take the level of involvement in reviews as suggested by the Robson Rhodes report, but requested that a breaking protocol be inserted.

- He noted the current Trade Union position was that they would take no part in any reviews without a protocol being in place.
- He noted there wasn't such a protocol in place for the current children's / adults services reviews, but he expected that an agreement could be reached.

The Committee then considered the issue of the level of involvement of Councillors in staff reviews. It was generally felt that Members should decide whether they should be involved in a staffing review. It was suggested that a default position should be that Members had to actively opt out of a review. It was felt that the report didn't address this issue. Members also thought that the failure to engage Members in the Lifelong Learning Review was one of its key failings. Another suggestion made was that all reviews be considered by Members prior to them commencing. They could then decide on the level of involvement that was appropriate. It was also suggested that there could be a level of delegation, which would automatically triggered the involvement of Members, built in to the protocol.

The Service Director, Human Resources commented that the protocol was meant as guidance for officers. He said that the report sought to make clearer about the roles and the responsibilities for officers and Members. It also tried to make it clear about what decisions needed to be taken prior to the review. He noted that there were already clear roles for members which should be taken in to account in any review. He did say it was a difficult issue about what level members were involved in industrial relations matters.

Members of the Committee made further comments with regard to how Councillors would be involved in reviews. They felt that they didn't feel officers were able to tell them when they should be involved. Even if the review only affected a small number of staff members those staff could have a big effect. Members also felt that they could often view things differently to officers.

The Chair in summary stated that further consideration needed to be given to this issue. He recommended that the trigger for a review needed to be defined. He said that Councillors needed to be advised on what was manageable in terms of member involvement. He noted there were different views between managers and Councillors about services were run and there needed to be a 'safety valve' which ensured that Councillors were involved in staffing reviews wherever they thought necessary.

RESOLVED:

that the views of the Committee be noted.