



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CABINET

Held: MONDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2008 at 1.00 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Willmott- Chair
Councillor Osman - Vice-Chair

Councillor Aqbany	Councillor Cooke
Councillor Dempster	Councillor Draycott
Councillor Kitterick	Councillor Wann

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Coley – Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor Follett– Leader of the Green Group
Councillor Mugglestone – Leader of the Conservative Group

* * * * *

136. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bhatti and Connelly.

137. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or declare that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them. No such declarations were made.

138. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED;

that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting, held on 17 November 2008, be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 131, title should read:

“Constitution – Part 4F – Finance Procedure Rules, Part 4G – Contract Procedure Rules, Part 4H – Land and Property Transaction Rules.”

139. MATTERS REFERRED FROM COMMITTEES

Meeting of the Audit Committee on 5 November 2008

Counter-Fraud Update Report

The above Committee agreed that Cabinet be asked to consider asking the Corporate Director of Housing to write to all Housing Benefit claimants each year to remind them of any changes in circumstances, and to sign that they received the reminder.

Cabinet noted that Housing Benefit claimants were already being notified of this by letter.

RESOLVED:

that it be noted that Housing Benefit claimants are notified by letter of the need to declare changes in circumstances.

Meeting of the Audit Committee on 5 November 2008

Internal Audit Strategy

The above Committee agreed that Cabinet be requested to consider allocating additional resources to the Audit Service within the budget process.

Members of Cabinet stated that they would give this consideration at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet agrees to take into consideration the request of the Audit Committee to allocate additional resources to the Audit Service within the budget process.

140. REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY COHESION AND SAFETY TASK GROUP - COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY

In the absence of Councillor Hall, Councillor Osman presented a report from the Community Cohesion and Safety Task Group, that charted the way forward for community cohesion in Leicester for the next five years.

Councillor Osman proposed an amendment to a recommendation from the Task Group, that an annual meeting of each Ward Community Meeting should be dedicated to considering community cohesion issues. He proposed that community cohesion issues should be promoted and embedded throughout the work of Community Meetings.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet approves the recommendations set out in the Community Cohesion and Safety Task Group report together with the revisions set out below:

- 1) Approves a further recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group and amended by Cabinet relating to section D on page 9 of the report, which deals with the Community Cohesion Fund. The recommendation is “that in decision-making, added weight is given to projects that contribute to the sustainability of community cohesion and make clear that projects should have no expectation of receiving mainstream funding at their end;”
- 2) Revises Recommendation 8 to read “that ward community meetings seek to promote and embed good community relations throughout their work;”
- 3) Approves Cabinet’s inclusion of a new recommendation to read “that inequalities across the city be addressed as part of community cohesion.”

141. PROPOSALS FOR REVIEWING THE CHILDREN'S FUND PROVISION THROUGH THE AREA BASED GRANT

Councillor Dempster submitted a report that outlined the options for using the spend from the Area Based Grant (ABG) currently committed to the Children’s Fund (CF) in order to meet ABG targets and comply with the Authority’s procurement rules.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet approves the following:

- 1) That option 2, detailed in Paragraph 4.2 of the report, be selected for taking this work forward and that the contract with AFC be ended on 31st March 2009. It is believed that this will offer the greatest opportunity for combining procurement processes and contributing to the Local Area Agreement indicator NI 179 Value for Money. A review of the projects previously funded through the CF would be carried out in order to inform future decisions about which would continue to receive funding through the Authority for 2009/10.
- 2) That more detailed work is to be undertaken in this financial year to look at improving efficiency in terms of procurement and contract management practices. Proposals for the projects’ funding would be brought before Children and Young People’s Directorate at a future date but it is anticipated currently that the majority of the projects be offered a one year funding agreement for 2009/10.

142. PRIMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Councillor Dempster submitted a report that advised Members of the Government's Primary Capital Programme, to summarise and seek approval for the Council's Business Case, which would allow access to the funding and to set out proposals for the first two years of the programme.

RESOLVED;

That Cabinet:

- 1) endorses the Primary Strategy for Change, summarized in the report; and
- 2) authorises the school projects recommended for the first two years to go forward for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme.

143. THE NATIONAL CHALLENGE AND ACADEMIES

Councillor Dempster submitted a report that advised Members of the context, current position and necessary action in respect of the five National Challenge schools in the context of the Transforming Leicester's Learning Plan, including the potential for an Academy solution.

Councillor Dempster recommended that Cabinet approve the recommendations in the report and the additional recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the current position with regard to the National Challenge schools;
- 2) Accepts the recommendation that an Academy solution for three colleges, Babington, Fullhurst and Riverside, should be fully explored with potential sponsors;
- 3) Re-endorses the principles for partnership working, originally agreed by Council in 2003;
- 4) Authorises officers to work with potential Academy sponsors, who meet the criteria set by the Council, to further explore and test the proposition that an Academy would be the most appropriate solution for each of the three colleges identified in (2) above. Prepare Expressions of Interest for each college for consideration and authorisation by Cabinet before submission to DCSF; and
- 5) Notes the future steps and likely timescale if an Academy solution is confirmed.
- 6) Agrees that an officer/Member reference group, during the consultation process, be set up and led by the Chair and Vice-

Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board;

- 7) Agrees that officers be asked to draw up a 'Plan B' to cater for the eventuality that sponsors that fit the agreed criteria cannot be found, or in the event of insufficient support from the stakeholders as described in the report.

144. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 08/09 & 09/10: IN-HOUSE ELDERLY PERSONS' HOMES (EPHS)

Councillor Cooke submitted a report that described the proposed use of the provisional capital allocation to Elderly Persons' Homes (EPHs) in each of the 2008/09 and 2009/10 budgets, earmarked at £250,000 per year.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the required standards of regulated provision and the importance of maintaining these for the benefit of residents;
- 2) Agrees the capital allocations for 2008/09 (£56,082) as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- 3) Agrees a capital allocation for 2009/10 of £60,000 for digital switchover, noting any further requirements will be brought forward for consideration by Cabinet.

145. ASSESSING COMMUNITY COHESION - YOUNG PEOPLE

Councillor Osman submitted a report that presented the main findings of a project to assess community cohesion amongst a selected sample of young people in the city.

Cabinet thanked De Montfort University and Council officers for the work they had done in preparing the report.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the overall encouraging findings, certain challenges and implications as detailed in paras.4.7 to para. 4.50 of the report;
- 2) Agrees that future research and consultation is embedded into the residents' survey.
- 3) Requests the Children & Young People's Services to take into account the findings within the Children & Young People's Plan (2009).
- 4) Commissions the Mainstream Moderation Forum to consider

the findings within their work programme and the Community Cohesion Executive to consider the findings in their action plan to develop the community cohesion strategy. This will include:

- a) Acknowledging that the socio-economic well-being of young people and their communities is a pre-requisite for cohesion:
 - Recognise that investment in the neighbourhood leads to a stronger sense of pride, belonging and neighbourliness.
 - Take into account the lack of financial capital many young people have.
 - Note that despite investing into regenerating neighbourhoods, young people might not be able to take full advantage of the services.
 - Acknowledge the perceived competition for resources and educational opportunities especially felt by young white people from deprived areas.
- b) Cohesion work should continue to build on the strong sense of belonging to Leicester. This work should celebrate the positive findings of this research by:
 - Ensuring that the 'One Leicester' Strategy builds on young people's experiences and reflects their needs.
 - Engage young people in shaping the future direction of this strategy.
 - Ensure that the 'One Leicester' Strategy whilst nurturing a strong sense of belonging to Leicester also encourages young people to look beyond Leicester.
- c) Strategies must continue to strengthen connection and co-operation between young people and their communities who might otherwise not have the opportunity to interact i.e.
 - Strengthen initiatives for creating bridges between different areas (postcodes), neighbourhoods, schools, colleges and communities of identity and interests thus enhancing bridging social capital.
 - Develop a programme of intergenerational work.
 - Strengthen integrated youth services within the city bringing together the different institutions and organisations, which work with young people, including voluntary sector providers.
 - Develop ways of communication and dissemination of information to and between communities that is relevant and accessible to young people.
 - Explore and implement ways to counter institutionalised and intergenerational stereotypes and distrust of young people especially in the more

- deprived areas of Leicester.
 - Counteract the dominant view of young people as problems and build on the positive findings of this research.
 - Arrange activities where young people from different communities and neighbourhoods can celebrate their pride in the city.
 - Celebrate with young people the different dimensions of diversity and explore the positive outcomes of it as highlighted by the young people themselves in this research.
- d) Continue to invest in structures and routes to enable young people to influence the decisions that affect them i.e.
- Build and explore further on the positive findings of this research in how young people feel that they can influence decisions by working together.
 - Develop processes for young people who traditionally do not engage especially young people who identify as NEET.
 - Address the need for young people from all diverse backgrounds have a say in local and citywide decision-making.

146. REVISED NEW ARRIVALS STRATEGY FOR LEICESTER 2008

Councillor Osman submitted a report that sought the support of Cabinet for the revised objectives in the City's New Arrivals Strategy and the proposed addendum to the strategy.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet:

- 1) Endorses the revised objectives for the Leicester New Arrival Strategy set out in Paragraph 3.4 of the report;
- 2) Endorses the proposed revised shortened version of the New Arrivals Strategy and the new definition for new arrivals (Appendix 2 of the report).

147. SUB REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Kitterick submitted a report that updated Cabinet and sought the necessary Cabinet approvals to take forward work in relation to the Leadership Board for the sub-region, emda sub-regional funding programme, Multi Area Agreement (MAA) and Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Development Company (EDC).

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet gives approval for:

- 1) the City Council to enter into an agreement with the County Council for the establishment of a Leadership Board and supporting structures;
- 2) the preparation of an agreement with the County Council to allow Leicester City Council to act as host organisation for the support of the Leadership Board and its supporting structures ('the Leadership activity') and as the accountable body for the receipt of sub regional programme grant;
- 3) the preparation of a Declaration of Grant for Economic Development with emda;
- 4) delegation to the Head of Legal Services in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Regeneration and Transport to finalise the above agreements;
- 5) in principle, delegation of powers to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader to implement the decisions of the Leadership Board the precise functional terms of which to be determined alongside the final wording of the agreements;
- 6) delegation of powers to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader for the Leicester and Leicestershire Multi Area Agreement (MAA) to be approved for final submission to Government; and
- 7) progress on the establishment of the EDC to be noted.

148. CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY - ONE COUNCIL ONE CONTACT APRIL 2008 TO OCTOBER 2008 UPDATE

Councillor Draycott submitted a report that gave the first six monthly update of progress against the Customer Access Strategy.

The successes of the strategy were highlighted, and it was noted that the strategy would result in improved services and better opportunities for feedback from residents. The work done by officers on the strategy was also noted.

It was noted that the Performance and Value for Money Select Committee had considered the Equality Impact Assessment for the strategy, and that comments regarding this would be addressed by officers.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the progress in the last period (paragraph 3.2 of

the report);

- 2) Welcomes the improved complaints management reporting arrangements and supports the proposed public 'we want to hear from you' campaign;
- 3) Supports plans to launch a DigiTV service by April 2009 (paragraph 4.3 of the report);
- 4) Agrees to vire £9,500 each to the Adults and Housing, and Regeneration and Culture Departments, a total of £19,000, from the 2009/10 funding provided to improve the council's customer access arrangements. This funding would be to support the increased administration required by the more rigorous complaints management arrangements. This will pay for a part time complaints administrator for each department.

149. PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR QUARTER TWO

Councillor Draycott submitted a report that presented a summary of performance against the priorities set out in One Leicester for the second quarter of 2008/09.

It was noted that there were indications that the current economic situation was beginning to have an effect in certain areas, and that it was anticipated that the level of impact would become clearer in future reports.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet:

- 1) Notes performance for the second quarter (Sections 5 & 6 of the report and appendices 1 & 2);
- 2) Notes the future work that will be undertaken to improve performance reporting.

150. ECO-MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT SCHEME (EMAS) REVISED ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY, REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS TARGETS 2007/08, PROPOSED ACTION FOR 2008/09

Councillor Wann submitted a report that recommended amendments to the corporate Environmental Policy to align with One Leicester, and provided Cabinet with information on the Council's annual environmental progress through the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).

It was noted that more schools had joined the scheme, but that others were to be encouraged to sign up to it.

RESOLVED;

that Cabinet:

- 1) Agrees the text for the amended Environmental Policy (appendix 6 of the report);
- 2) Notes progress towards the EMAS targets during 2007/08 (see appendix 1);
- 3) Agrees new targets and amendments to existing corporate targets (see appendix 4);
- 4) Agrees the implementation of the proposed 2008/09 action programme (see appendix 3);
- 5) Agrees the draft text for the 11th EMAS Public Statement (see appendix 2);
- 6) Agrees the management review of EMAS (appendix 5).

151. INFORMATION RIGHTS - A CORPORATE APPROACH TO MEETING REQUIREMENTS

Councillor Willmott submitted a report that informed Cabinet of the Council's handling of the increasing number of access to information requests and sought approval to proposed changes to related policy documents to meet statutory deadlines.

Councillor Coley queried the intention to refuse all Freedom of Information (FOIA) requests that would cost more than £450 to investigate, expressing concern that this may be used to avoid disclosing some information. In response, it was reported that there was an increasing number of such requests, and that they were hindering the Council's ability to deal with all FOIA requests. In such cases, it was often possible to work with the person requesting the information to adapt their request to make it more specific. Such negotiations were being done, as it was not the Council's intention to block access to information, and such an approach would enable more people to receive information.

RESOLVED:

that Cabinet:

- 1) Agrees as Council policy the revised Access to Information Policy (Paragraph 3.18 and Appendix A of the report) to take immediate effect;
- 2) Agrees the proposed changes to the Council's Access to Information Charging Policy (3.22 and Appendix B) to take immediate effect;
- 3) Adopts the Information Commissioner's model Publication

Scheme, as adapted and encourage the pro-active publication of non-personal information on the Council's web site (Paragraphs 3.25, 3.29 and Appendix C) with effect from 01st January 2009;

- 4) Agrees the use of the Publication Scheme as the Information Asset Register with effect from 01st January 2009 and the Council considering applications for the commercial re-use of its information (Paragraphs 3.33 and 3.34) to take immediate effect;
- 5) Delegates power to the Monitoring Officer to approve any essential, future operational, non-policy related changes to these documents in consultation with the Cabinet Lead member (Paragraphs 3.18, 3.22 and 3.28) with immediate effect.

152. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 1.39pm.

