



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Held: TUESDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2011 at 7:00pm

P.R.E.S.E.N.T.

Councillor Grant– Chair

Councillor Aqbany	Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Coley (for Cllr Suleman)	
Councillor Johnson (for Cllr Scuplak)	Councillor Kitterick (for Cllr Clair)
Councillor Newcombe	Councillor Potter (for Cllr Joshi)

Also In Attendance

Councillor Naylor	Cabinet Lead Member for Health and Community Safety
Councillor Scuplak	Thurncourt Ward Councillor

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152. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bhavsar and Suleman.

153. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

As this meeting re-convened from the one held on 3 February 2011, the Chair asked Members to declare any interests in addition to those raised at the previous meeting.

There were no new declarations of interest.

**154. MATTER REFERRED FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Board was asked to consider the comments of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on the proposed removal of dedicated school bus services.

Officers confirmed that they were working closely with the Roman Catholic Diocese to mitigate the effects of withdrawing the bus services for pupils. In particular, it was reported that the Cabinet Lead Member for Children, Schools

and Young People had recently met with the head-teacher of English Martyrs to consider how the changes would affect the school.

The Board were informed that three primary and two secondary schools would be affected by the proposals, and that the services affected were scheduled to cease at the end of the current school year in July 2011.

Members generally supported the proposals and were of the view that it was unfair to provide free bus travel for pupils who attended particular faith schools, and not to those who attended other state schools. It was felt that in many cases, pupils of ordinary state schools had to travel similar distances to those who attended faith schools without the provision of such services. However, Members were keen for the new proposals to be properly communicated to all those affected by the withdrawal of the particular services.

Officers circulated a document which provided detail of the reductions to supported bus services. This document highlighted potential implications for existing service users. It was confirmed that the total annual saving achieved from these proposals would be £566,000.

Following a point raised by a Youth Council representative, officers confirmed that during discussions with the Catholic Diocese, consideration would be given to how the service withdrawals could affect pupils preparing for GCSE examinations.

Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Grant, moved that the Cabinet Lead Member be asked to consider separately special individual cases where the effects of bus service withdrawal would impose significant hardship on individuals. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals of service reductions to supported bus services be generally supported but that special individual cases where the effects of bus service withdrawal would impose significant hardship on individuals be considered separately by the Cabinet Lead Member.

155. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12 TO 2013/14

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report that requested the Board to consider a budget for 2011/12 to 2013/14 and to make its comments to Cabinet.

The Chief Finance Officer pointed out that this report supplemented the presentation that he gave at the previous meeting. In terms of additional information, Members were informed that the Police Authority was to meet next week to set their tax for next year. The fire authority had set a nil tax increase. Clarification had been received about the likely charging of some of the carbon reduction levy to schools, and an increase in national insurance costs from 12/13 was now expected. Capping rules for 11/12 had now been announced. It

was also made clear that since the presentation at the previous meeting, a number of previously proposed savings had been removed, and that this would be covered in part by an extension of designated paid parking areas, and by cancelling publication subscriptions.

The Chief Finance Officer also reported that, largely due to the loss of £9m in grants for Children's Services, the proposed use of existing Council reserves was much higher than it was when proposals were released for consultation. This had been anticipated.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

156. ADULT SOCIAL CARE DIVISIONAL BUDGET STATEMENT

Following consideration of this budget statement at the Special Meeting on 3 February 2011, the Board was asked to re-consider the Adult Social Care Divisional Budget Statement, which included additional information as requested by the Board.

The Strategic Director, Adults and Communities, introduced the revised document and stated that information was included to address the points raised by Members at the initial budget scrutiny meeting and that detailed proformas that related to all budget reduction proposals had now been issued.

Concern was raised in relation to the Council's plans for Extra Care in light of the removal of Central Government grants after the next financial year. The Director of Commissioning explained that several options for extra care provision were being considered, which included the use of sheltered units, implementing tele-care and working closely with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and private landlords to develop the service further. Members were of the view that increased provision of extra care was required, especially in terms of buildings to operate services from.

In response to concerns raised around the possible closure of the Douglas Bader Centre, officers explained that no formal consultation with service users had taken place to date, but that the Council had raised awareness of its intention to commence such a consultation in March 2011. It was also made clear that the consultation was about stopping the direct provision of day care services by the Council as opposed to closing a building. In relation to the proposed consultation, Members questioned how engagement would take place with those who had a disability such as dementia which prevented them from making representations. The Director of Care Services confirmed that the Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living (LCIL) worked with such individuals to enable their views to be presented and they were being engaged in the consultation process. Further to this, the Director of Care Management referred to the use of individual budgets, which were seen as one potential outcome arising from community assessments. As part of such assessments, officers considered potential risks for service users, and worked with both users

and carers to ascertain the particular support plan required.

The Board agreed to arrange a site visit to the LCIL to find out more about the work of the organisation, particularly in relation to the consultative work which it performed.

General concern was raised around the overall pace of implementing the personalisation agenda in Leicester. Several Members felt that there was a reliance on private companies delivering services in the future, and were concerned that this may not fully materialise, and that this could pose significant adverse affects on service users. The Strategic Director, Adults and Community acknowledged the concerns which Members had in relation to services being run for profit making reasons by private companies, but stressed that rigorous contract management requirements were established when working with the private sector. Furthermore, she informed the Board that there was proposed an increase of £80,000 funding within the voluntary and community sectors in 2011/12.

In response to concerns raised around increased costs in some services, the Head of Finance said that although, overall, net savings of £3.8m had been identified there were some areas where units costs had increased. This was particularly the case in residential care as those with lower needs would be located in other settings and extra care where there would be an increased proportion of higher needs service users.

In reply to queries from Members regarding the rise in cost of the Mobile Meals service, the Strategic Director, Adults and Communities, acknowledged that these had risen, but that the service was still heavily subsidised by the Council. She also confirmed that a full review of the service was to take place to identify other models, such as alternative retail options or community opportunities. This review would include consultation with existing clients to ensure their views were incorporated into the process. It was agreed that the Board would receive further information with regards to the Mobile Meals review in due course.

Following a request for further information in relation to integrating reablement services with the NHS, the Strategic Director confirmed that the Council would have access to several streams of reablement funding, which would be ring-fenced for years two and three. It was confirmed that a plan on this would be jointly submitted along with the NHS.

Councillor Kitterick, seconded by Councillor Coley moved that whilst recognising the need for a change in the personalisation process, the Board are concerned at the pace of change being proposed. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That officers be asked to arrange a site visit for Members to the Leicester Centre for Integrated Living (LCIL) to find out

more about the work of the organisation.

- (2) That further information with regards to the review of the Mobile Meals Service be provided to the Board in due course; and
- (3) That whilst recognising the need for a change in the personalisation process, the Board is concerned at the pace of change being proposed

157. HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT (SUPPORTING PEOPLE) DIVISIONAL BUDGET STATEMENT

Following consideration of this budget statement at the Special Meeting on 3 February 2011, the Board was asked to re-consider the Housing Related Support (Supporting People) Divisional Budget Statement, which included additional information as requested by the Board.

The Director, Housing Strategy and Options introduced the revised document and explained that several developments had occurred since the initial budget scrutiny meeting. One of which was the proposal to no longer reduce the budget of the care and repair service. In respect of further proposed reductions, the Director of Commissioning explained that reductions to two of the children's contracts would be covered by monies from the Care Matters funding to part cover the deficit. It was confirmed that some providers had already confirmed that they could meet the 15% reduction for 2011/12 without reducing the level of service provided.

Members thanked officers for considering the comments raised at the initial meeting and for supplying the additional information which was requested.

It was questioned whether any Supporting Tenant and Residents (STAR) offices were scheduled to close, and it was pointed out that in some areas, STAR operated from Housing Offices which were planned for closure. In response, the Director, Housing Strategy and Options confirmed that STAR staff were usually based in offices separate to housing offices and stated that most of their work took place in the homes of service users. The Director, Housing Strategy and Options agreed to find out further information in relation to the possible effects that any housing office closure would have on the STAR team.

Further concern was expressed in relation to the reduction in STAR service expenditure. The Director, Housing Strategy and Options, confirmed that there were presently six STAR teams with approximately twelve members of staff each. It was confirmed that two to three posts per team were likely to be reconfigured as part of the proposed reduction, and that respective team leaders would be responsible for such reconfiguration. She also informed Members that the reductions would lead to 225 service users no longer receiving assistance from STAR, but that it was expected that such individuals

would be those with lower-level needs. In response to the last point made, Members were keen for any service user affected to be suitably redirected to alternative services if possible.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Director, Housing Strategy and Options, be asked to find out further information in relation to the possible effects that any housing office closure would have on the STAR team; and
- (2) That, in considering the draft budget plans for the Housing related Support Divisional Statement, Cabinet be requested to take account of the comments recorded above.

158. SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES DIVISIONAL BUDGET STATEMENT

Following consideration of the budget statement at the Special Meeting on 3 February 2011, the Board was asked to re-consider the Safer and Stronger Communities Divisional Budget Statement, which included additional information as requested by the Board.

The Head of the Youth Offending Service explained that the budget papers had been amended to reflect further information that was requested by the Board, but that further information was still awaited from Central Government. He noted that this could still alter the budget projections as the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) received 80% and 97% of their budgets respectively from Central Government.

Members heard that since the last meeting, the overall level of reduction was not as high as initially anticipated. In respect of the DAAT, the reduction in Government grant would be 5%, but that it was still proposed to reconfigure a maximum of three posts. The YOS were to receive a 12.5% reduction in funding, and that within this area, 10 posts were placed as at risk, which equated to 10% of the services' workforce.

In terms of the Community Safety Team, the Head of the Youth Offending Service stated that an additional resource of £75,000 had been redirected to the service. As a result, only two posts within this area would now need to be reconfigured.

In respect of commissioning arrangements for the DAAT, it was explained that a tendering process was to commence with a view of implementing new contracts in July. The Head of the Youth Offending Service reported that this exercise had been difficult in view of not receiving all of the necessary budgetary information from Central Government. In relation to the YOS, the Board heard that a number of services were likely to be decommissioned and it was confirmed that several were currently at risk.

Officers were thanked for supplying clearer information in relation to the extent of the budget reductions within the Safer and Stronger Communities Division. Despite the outlook being better than originally anticipated, members were generally of the view that the reductions proposed were likely to significantly affect many service users. In particular, concerns were expressed in relation to the extent of the reductions within the YOS, and the consequential affect on many of the most vulnerable young people in Leicester. The Head of the Youth Offending Service stated that he shared the concerns of Members and reported that all of the services within the division were the subject of discussions in relation to early intervention grants, and that the outcome of these discussions would help to signify future service delivery.

Councillor Naylor, Cabinet Lead Member for Health and Community Safety, was in attendance and acknowledged that the reductions were difficult to propose, but felt that the budget would still enable services to move forward. He was particularly thankful for the additional resources placed within Community Safety, and felt that this would help to bridge the gap in service provision.

RESOLVED:

That, in considering the draft budget plans for the Safer and Stronger Communities Division, Cabinet be requested to take account of the comments recorded above.

159. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7:55pm.