



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 15 JANUARY 2015 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Dawood (Chair)  
Councillor Senior (Vice Chair)

Councillor Chaplin	Councillor Newcombe
Councillor Cooke	Councillor Porter
Councillor Grant	Councillor Singh
Councillor Kitterick	Councillor Waddington

Also Present:

Sir Peter Soulsby - City Mayor  
Councillor Palmer - Deputy City Mayor

Youth Council Representatives:

Arshad Daud  
Nikhl Gondalia  
Brahmpreet Kaur Guati

\* \* \* \* \*

**73. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Osman, Westley, and Willmott.

**74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Senior declared an Other Disclosable Interest in items 10 and 11 of the published Agenda "Draft General Fund Budget 2015/16 to 2016/17" and "Draft Capital Programme 2015/16", as her partner was employed by the Council.

Councillor Porter declared an Other Disclosable Interest in item 12 of the published Agenda "City Council Golf Courses – Call-in of Decision", as he was involved in campaigns for the retention of open spaces.

Councillor Clarke declared an Other Disclosable Interest in items 10 and 11 of the published Agenda “Draft General Fund Budget 2015/16 to 2016/17” and “Draft Capital Programme 2015/16”, as a member of his family was employed by the Council.

Councillor Newcombe declared an Other Disclosable Interest in items 10 and 11 of the published Agenda “Draft General Fund Budget 2015/16 to 2016/17” and “Draft Capital Programme 2015/16”, as members of his family were employed by the Council.

In accordance with the Council’s Code of Conduct, the above interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillors judgement of the public interest.

The Councillors were not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting.

## **75. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting and informed the Committee that in the interests of the members of public present for the item concerning the Call-in of the City Golf Courses decision, he would reorder the agenda accordingly.

## **76. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 27 November 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

## **77. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING**

There were no updates on actions agreed at the previous meeting.

## **78. PETITIONS**

There were no petitions.

## **79. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT**

The Monitoring Officer presented a report which updated members on the monitoring of outstanding petitions.

The Committee was informed of further progress since the publication of the report as follows:

- In respect of petition 15/05/2014 (Vulcan Road) the pro-forma had been prepared and the Lead Executive Member would be briefed in the near future.
- In respect of petition 16/10/2014 (Trees, Park Hill Avenue) the proposal had been subject of a bid to the Aylestone Ward Community Meeting Budget and that the bid had been approved. A pro-forma would now be prepared.

Councillor Waddington, as lead petitioner, asked for clarification of the funding in respect of petition 16/09/2014 (Rally Park) as the detail had been omitted from the report. It was confirmed that the works were to be funded by the use of S.106 planning contributions.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the report and current outstanding petitions be noted and;
- 2) that petitions 18/09/2014, 17/04/2014, 09/05/2014, 30/07/2014, 16/09/2014, 29/09/2014, 10/10/2014 and 29/10/2014 marked as 'Petition Process Complete' be removed.

## **80. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

In accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10 (1) Part 4E of the Council's Constitution, the Chair informed the Committee that the Monitoring Officer had received a Statement of Case from Mr Martin Cobb in relation to the closure of Western Park Golf Course.

The Chair informed the Committee that he would hear the Statement of Case but that there would be no debate as the issue was to be discussed at the reordered agenda item that followed; "City Council Golf Courses – Call-in of Decision".

At this point Mr Cobb thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the meeting and read his Statement of Case (as appended).

## **81. CITY COUNCIL GOLF COURSES - CALL IN OF DECISION**

The Monitoring Officer reported that the decision by the City Mayor on City Council Golf Courses had been called-in, and was referred to the Committee for consideration under Council Procedure Rule 12 (f), Part 4D of the Council's Constitution:

The decision had been called-in for the following reasons:

- “The decision to close Western Park Golf Course will have a detrimental impact on golfers in West Leicester and on the city’s sport and outdoor leisure provision. This is a request to call in the decision to scrutiny.”; and
- “That the decision is based upon an incomplete consultation(s) and subjective evidence. The decision is significant and requires the scrutiny and consideration of the Full Council.”

The Chair explained that the call-in had been referred to this meeting in view of the Committee’s overarching brief and that there were no other relevant Scrutiny Commissions taking place prior to the Council meeting on 22 January 2015.

The Chair clarified that two separate call-ins had been received; one proposed by Councillor Barton and the other proposed by Councillor Porter. The Committee noted the advice of the Monitoring Officer in this respect that whilst there had been two call-ins, the matter would be treated as one process under Rule 12, as the call-ins related to the same decision.

Councillor Barton addressed the Committee and introduced her call-in as proposer.

Councillor Porter addressed the Committee and introduced his call-in as proposer.

The City Mayor responded to the points made in the Statement of Case by Mr Cobb and to the issues raised in the call-in notices.

In discussing the call-in notices and having regard to the points raised in the Statement of Case, the Committee noted the following points:

- Although accepting that the numbers of users of the Council’s golf courses had diminished, it was considered that more could have been done to engage with Club members and users to assist with their wish to continue the use and allow the Western Park course to remain open. The City Mayor responded that the Club had been invited to put forward a case for the sustainable future of the course and had provided their representations on this. In addition, two other proposals had been received and that, following public consultation and detailed analysis of the facts and requests for follow up information, he had considered that no alternative had been put forward which was sufficiently robust or well advanced to be regarded as a feasible or viable option.
- It was suggested however that greater engagement with the club, including dissemination of relevant financial information concerning the costs of running the course and facilities could have been undertaken.
- There was a need to ensure that all equalities data arising from the consultation had been taken into account in making the decision. The

lack of information concerning the impact on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people was highlighted in this regard. It was reported that advice had been sought concerning the equalities impact assessment throughout the process.

- Greater consideration of the Health and Wellbeing implications of the closure should have been taken into account, having regard to the pressures on health services and the benefits of golf as a leisure activity.
- The representatives of the Young People's Council commented that the decision had a greater impact on the health and leisure opportunities for younger people, as they were less likely to be able to transfer to alternative courses.

The Committee acknowledged the City Mayor's responses to the concerns raised.

Councillor Porter MOVED and Councillor Grant SECONDED:

"That the decision to close Western Park Golf Course be delayed until May 2015 to allow further engagement with users and the Club membership, with a view to a business plan being established to allow for the continued use and for the course to remain open."

The Committee received advice that unless the call-ins were withdrawn the matter would proceed for submission at Full Council.

On the basis of this advice the Motion was withdrawn.

RESOLVED:

that the issues raised in the debate, and that the call-in would be considered at Full Council on 22 January 2015, be noted.

**The meeting was adjourned at 7.05 pm and was reconvened at 7.15 pm.**

## **82. PROCUREMENT BRIEFING**

The Committee received a presentation concerning how decisions on the procurement of goods, services and contracts were taken at the Council.

A note from the City Barrister was submitted which commented on Member involvement in the procurement exercise.

The Committee expressed concern at the content of the City Barrister's note, particularly at its comments concerning casework and involvement in scrutinising bids during the procurement exercise.

Concern was also expressed at the views concerning the rights to access

information and the restrictions on members' rights.

Having regard to the issues of concern raised, it was suggested that the matter be referred to Standards Committee to allow for the concerns of Members to be answered by the City Barrister and to report back to this Committee on its outcomes.

RESOLVED:

that the matter be referred to Standards Committee and a follow up report be submitted to this Committee in due course.

### **83. DRAFT GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2015/16 TO 2016/17**

The Director of Finance submitted a draft of a report which was to be submitted to Full Council on 25 February 2015 to consider the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2015/16 to 2016/17. It was reported that the budget plan covered the same period as the Government's national spending plans and identified the subsequent impact.

Minute extracts from the following Commission meetings were circulated and noted:

- Housing Scrutiny Commission – 10 December 2014
- Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission – 6 January 2015
- Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission – 8 January 2015

The City Mayor was invited to comment on the report and he referred to the need to continue to undertake spending reviews in accordance with the approach summarised in the report.

In considering the report the Committee made the following points:

- It was requested that monitoring information should be submitted to Housing Scrutiny Commission before any further cuts to the homelessness budget were made.
- In respect of the issues highlighted within the minute circulated from the meeting of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission, members considered that a danger existed in identifying targets for savings from care packages, as this might imply that financial factors affected assessments. The preference was to describe the review work in narrative form without a savings target. The City Mayor commented that, given the dire financial situation, every service was being pressed to find savings, and adult social care was such a large part of the budget that it could not be excluded. It was therefore right to set targets for reviews, to help ensure that the department focused on the need to make the

savings. This did not imply that individual packages would be top-sliced: they would be assessed in line with the Council's legal duties.

- The need to ensure that adequate provision existed for school transport within the Childrens, Young People and Schools' allocations was expressed, as it was reported that parents were facing financial difficulties in enabling children to get to school where allocated places were more than 2 miles from home.
- In response to a question, the City Mayor commented on the reasons why it was appropriate to make a contribution from the revenue budget for the capital programme.

RESOLVED:

that the points raised in the debate, and the recommendations to be considered at Full Council, be noted.

#### **84. DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which was to be submitted to Full Council on 22 January 2015 to approve the Capital Programme for 2015/16.

The City Mayor was invited to comment on the report and he made reference to the proposed continued investment in the range of services across the whole of the city, as described in the report.

The Committee referred to the proposed improvements and refurbishment of Town Hall Square and requested that details of the scheme and its cost be submitted to the appropriate Commission.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the proposed Capital Programme be noted for onward submission and consideration at Full Council on 22 January 2015; and
- 2) that details of the proposed improvement and refurbishment scheme at Town Hall Square and its cost be submitted to the Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission.

#### **85. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR**

Members of the Committee were invited to raise questions to the City Mayor.

The following questions were raised:

**Allendale Road Pharmacy**

Councillor Grant asked the City Mayor, together with the Deputy City Mayor, to resist the proposals of NHS England in withdrawing the dispensing facilities at the Allendale Road Chemist. It was considered that the a dispensing chemist was essential to the viability of the Allendale Road and Francis Street shopping area, and was vital to the elderly population in the area.

The City Mayor and Deputy City Mayor replied that they were aware of the situation affecting this and other chemists and that they would be consult NHS partners to emphasise the importance of maintaining the facilities.

### **Clarendon Park– Residents Parking**

Councillor Grant referred to the need to consider the residents of Clarendon Park and Queens Road in respect of parking restrictions, particularly due to the decision concerning the Queens Road Post Office.

The City Mayor commented that he had felt it was appropriate to defer the decision to consider the wider area and that it was understandable that residents would want to further discuss parking availability in the area.

### **Snibston Museum Collection**

Councillor Clarke asked that the City Mayor considers the future of exhibits from the Snibston Museum collection, having regard to the decision to downgrade the attraction.

The City Mayor confirmed that many items in the collection were relevant to Leicester and its industrial heritage and that their importance should be recognised and the exhibits retained. He stated that without wishing to intervene in the decision to downgrade the attraction, he would hold discussions concerning the future of the relevant items.

### **Terrorist Attacks in Paris**

Councillor Waddington commented on the appropriateness of the acts of condolence following the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and asked that the Committee's appreciation be forwarded to those concerned in the arrangements.

The City Mayor and Deputy City Mayor commented on the profound distressing effect of the tragic acts and stated that the events and the motivation behind them were deplored.

### **St Marys Allotments**

Councillor Porter asked whether the City Mayor was aware of any development proposals for the former St Marys Allotments site.

The City Mayor confirmed that indicative proposals had been suggested over a significant timescale but that no detailed plans had been considered.

### **Western Park Golf Course**



Councillor Porter asked whether the City Mayor was aware of any development proposals for the Western Park Golf Course.

The City Mayor commented that no discussions on the future of the site had taken place.

**86. SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS' WORK PROGRAMMES**

RESOLVED:

that the item be deferred.

**87. CORPORATE PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

RESOLVED:

that the item be deferred.

**88. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED:

that the item be deferred.

**89. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.