



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: MONDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2017 at 6:00 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Singh (Chair)
Councillor Govind (Vice Chair)

Councillor Cleaver
Councillor Cutkelvin

Councillor Gugnani
Councillor Khote

Councillor Dr Moore
Councillor Unsworth

Also present:

Sir Peter Soulsby
Councillor Piara Singh Clair
Councillor Adam Clarke
Councillor Sarah Russell
Councillor Kirk Master
Councillor Danny Myers

City Mayor
Deputy City Mayor
Deputy City Mayor
Deputy City Mayor
Assistant City Mayor
Assistant City Mayor

Youth Council Representatives

Brahmpreet Gulati
Katie Walker

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43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cank who was unable to attend as she was Chairing a meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission..

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

45. DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 TO 2019/2020

The Chair stated that as well as making representations on the draft capital programme at this meeting, Members had up to 28 November 2017 to submit further comments. These would be fed into the Council meeting on 30 November 2017, when the draft programme would be considered.

The City Mayor introduced the report and thanked the Chair for setting up the meeting and inviting members from the executive to attend. Thanks were also given to the Director of Finance and the Head of Finance; the City Mayor emphasised the very considerable amount of work that went into preparing the capital programme. During his introduction, the City Mayor made a number of points, including the following:

- The capital programme was not about council running costs; those fell within the revenue budget. Because of the very significant reductions in government grant, the revenue budget was being reduced substantially within the period 2010 to 2020. Cuts will amount to some £150m per year by 2020.
- The capital budget is reliant on government grant and proceeds from the sale of council assets (capital receipts). The council needed to exercise caution and could not budget to spend capital receipts until those assets had been sold.
- In spite of the budget pressures, the council was investing in the city. It was important that there were high profile capital schemes in the city centre, but even more important that there was money in the capital budget to carry out the necessary schemes in the neighbourhoods to enable people to live, work and shop there.
- There was a new allocation of £60m in the capital programme towards creating 1000 additional primary school places and 3400 extra secondary school places.
- Work around the Economic Action Plan was continuing to attract new investment from other sources, and had created 5000 new jobs and 900 apprenticeships. Investment was also continuing on the Connecting Leicester programme. Some investment was attracting funding from other sources such as the European Union.
- The capital budget included an extra £2m for highways maintenance and repairs. There was also extra money for the Disabled Facilities Grant for adaptations, to enable people to remain in their own homes.
- £100k had been provided for city centre play facilities; there were increasing numbers of people with children living in the city centre and it was recognised that there were fewer opportunities in the city, than in the neighbourhoods for children to play outside. Suggestions for a suitable location for a conventional outdoor play area were welcome and Councillor

Dr Moore suggested a good location might be near to the new market square.

- There were plans for improvements at De Montfort Hall which would increase revenue and enable the venue to be less dependent on the Council's revenue support in the future.
- There was funding in the capital budget to enable continuing investment in homes for children in care, to enable those children to feel they were living in a proper home environment.
- There was £1.4m in the capital budget to relocate the Sexual Health Clinic. At the moment, the Council were paying a substantial rent in a location that was not the most appropriate.
- £9m had been set aside in previous programmes for extra care accommodation for the elderly. The investment had been put on hold awaiting clarity from the government about rent caps, but now that the government had said that previously proposed changes would not happen, it was hoped that investment could soon be made.

At the invitation of the Chair, Members raised comments and queries which included the following:

- Councillor Cleaver welcomed the investment in adult social care and the news that the work on the extra care accommodation could soon go ahead. With the investment for adaptations on people's homes and money for housing repairs, it could be seen that the Council were looking after the most vulnerable people in the City.
- Councillor Cleaver asked for more information on the minor transport schemes at Dover Street car park, Granby Street and St Margaret's Bus Station as outlined in section 7.3 (e) of the report. The Director of Finance responded that further information would be sent to her. Councillor Clarke, Deputy City Mayor added that the investment at St Margaret's Bus Station was part of a range of improvements to bus services in the city.
- In response to a question relating to CCTV, the City Mayor explained that some of the equipment that the Council and the Police used was very old. He wanted to talk to the Police about the equipment, where best to locate it and how it could be monitored. It was noted that there were also mobile CCTV unit now available for those occasions where CCTV was needed on a temporary basis.
- Councillor Dr Moore said that she had received a number of comments from members of the Children, Young People and Schools (CYPS) Scrutiny Commission. One concern was that insufficient time had been given to consider the draft capital programme. The City Mayor responded that the draft programme had been discussed at their Group Meeting and the different Scrutiny Commissions had been given an opportunity to meet. He had not received any comments from Members.

- It was noted that £0.5m had been provided for works to children's services buildings (other than schools) and Members heard that this was not for any specific projects but had been set aside for works should the need arise.

Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor, CYPS was asked whether some of that money could be used for Adventure Playgrounds and she responded that those playgrounds were a voluntary sector provision and the voluntary sector were able to attract funding streams that were not available to the Council. The vast majority of Adventure Playgrounds had been extremely successful in attracting funding from other sources. However, the Council continued to pay for some of the ongoing revenue costs for most of the Adventure Playgrounds.

- In response to a question from Councillor Dr Moore, it was confirmed that the creation of 5000 jobs as a result of the Economic Action Plan (EAP) and working with business was wider than the jobs created by Leicester to Work. The City Mayor added that the EAP had directly created some jobs and the improvements made in the city centre had attracted private investment which had created employment.

Councillor Dr Moore requested the figures for unemployment during the period of the EAP and it was questioned whether those people who were unemployed had the skills to take on the newly created jobs and whether those new jobs were filled by people outside of Leicester. The Director of Finance responded that the type of jobs created was measured. Information relating to this would be sent to Councillor Dr Moore.

- In response to a question about investment in schools, the Deputy City Mayor, CYPS stated that the investment was being put into schools across the city. The Council were working with 46 schools and looking at expansion plans to create additional school places in primary and secondary schools. There was a risk around calculating future needs for school provision and a very complex process when planning for permanent schools expansions.
- It was noted that there was money in the capital programme for festive decorations. Concerns were expressed that some people would not be able to enjoy them, as the decorations were mostly concentrated in the city centre. Councillor Unsworth asked whether there could be other smaller displays in the outer estates. The meeting heard that in some wards, Christmas decorations and trees had been funded by the community meeting budget and Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor responded that officers would be happy to provide advice on how this could be done. Councillor Unsworth commented that in his ward, money from the community meeting budget tended to focus on providing hot Christmas dinners.
- It was noted that £40k was being provided to enhance security at Arts and Museum premises and the need for security and the importance of protection for valuable assets and artefacts was emphasised.

- It was noted that £300k had been set aside for a freestanding generator at City Hall and a Member expressed surprise that this had not been available before. The City Mayor explained that this was just one of a number of provisions in the city that contributed towards emergency cover, but this generator would be a dedicated resource at City Hall in the event of a power failure.
- Brahmpreet from the Youth Council referred to para 6.10 and the Children's Homes Improvement Programme, and asked that children and young people be involved in those improvements. The Deputy City Mayor, CYPS confirmed that young people from the youth council and the homes were being consulted and involved in the improvement programme.
- Bhampreet sought clarification on para 8.3 of the report which stated that £0.5m had been provided to support the aims and outcomes of spending services. The Deputy City Mayor responded that this should refer to spending *reviews* (not services): some facilities would require capital investment in order to be able to provide all that the Council wanted to offer, and what people had asked for.
- Katie from the Youth Council asked about the effect that additional students would have on a schools capacity to offer emotional support to their students, particularly in view of the fact that GCSEs were becoming increasingly challenging. The Deputy City Mayor responded that schools, when looking to expand, were not just taking into account the need for additional rooms and extra space in corridors, but were also trying to factor in issues such as online counselling and the extra pastoral support that might be needed. The Deputy City Mayor said that she could not promise that this would be delivered in every case, but it was something that schools were trying to factor in.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close and said that a report in the Leicester Mercury had stated that Leicester was one of the best places to live in the United Kingdom. This had been confirmed by Price Waterhouse after taking into account key indicators such as jobs, wages, housing provision and health. Price Waterhouse had also looked at growth and reported that Leicester had outstripped places such as Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham and London. The Chair commented that this demonstrated the success of Leicester's capital programme.

The Chair asked Members to agree the proposals in the Draft Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2019/20.

AGREED:

that the Overview Select Committee agree the proposals in the Draft Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2019/20

Action	By
For more information on the minor transport schemes at Dover Street car park, Granby Street and St Margaret's Bus Station be sent to Councillor Cleaver	The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation.
For details of the types of jobs that had been created by the Economic Action Plan (EAP) and the details of unemployment during the period of the EAP to be sent to Councillor Dr Moore	The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment

46. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.