

Figure 7.2 Report layout:
Leicester City Council.

expressed in one paragraph. The executive summary, however, may extend to several pages depending on the length of the report. It may summarize each section and end with a paragraph on cost, phasing and other details of implementation.

The report may take a number of forms. Figure 7.1 shows one possible structure. In addition to the substantive matter in the various sections, information has to be given to the reader so that he or she can find a way round that information. For this purpose a short introduction describing the format of the report and indicating the content of each section is most useful. The report should also contain the usual list of figures, bibliography, sources of information, appendices and index.

CASE STUDY: LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

If the report is written for a local authority by officers working for that authority there will be documents which give guidance about the style and content of reports. Leicester City Council, for example, has a *Report Writer's Guide*, and a *Guide to Plain English*. This latter booklet is produced by the Policy Unit of the Chief Executive's Office and gives advice on 'how to express yourself clearly and simply and how to avoid **jargon** and **officialese**'.⁶ The first document gives practical information about content, the requirements of reports prepared for particular committees and references to Codes of Practice, Standing Orders, or Financial Regulations. This, or a similar document prepared by another local authority, is essential reading for those working in the field of urban design in the public sector.

Figure 7.2 gives a list of contents for a typical report presented to a committee of a local authority. The advice given in Leicester is to keep the report short: 'The Elected Members are busy people who, in most cases, have to perform their Council duties in addition to their everyday jobs. As their time is precious, they appreciate receiving committee

1	Summary
2	Recommendations (sections 1 and 2 may be combined)
3	Equal Opportunities Implications
4	Policy Implications
5	Details of Consultations
6	Background Papers
7	Report
8	Director of Personnel and Management Services' Comments
9	Director of Computer Services' Comments
10	Cycling Implications
11	Environmental Implications
12	Reason for Referral to Policy and Resources Sub-Committee*
13	City Treasurer's Comments*
14	Reason for Treating the Report as Confidential**

* Only required for reports which have financial implications.

** Only required for reports recommended for consideration in private in accordance with the *Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985*.

7.2

reports which are short, clear and concise.' Report writers are further advised: 'to make the fullest possible use of plans/diagrams where these are appropriate. These can often explain issues more easily than words'. The aim at Leicester is to keep the report to no more than five double-sided pages. Anything larger than that is presented as a short covering report and the full text attached as an appendix.

Reports in Leicester start with a summary and recommendations, the key to understanding the main content. Other sections which are of particular significance are: the policy implications; support for the ideas from other officers after consultation; the