

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FORUM

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 22 November 2023

Chair:

Councillor Mo Razzaq

Councillors Present:

Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Cal Johnston-Dempsey, Councillor Mark McGeever (Depute)

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Monique McAdams, Councillor Kirsten Robb, Councillor Bert Thomson

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

S Jessup, Administration Assistant; E-A McGonigle, Administration Officer; E Maxwell, HR Business Adviser

Housing and Technical Resources

A Desport, Project Adviser

Also Attending:

Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND)

D Gilius, Scotland Junior Regional Manager

Trades Unions' Representatives Present:

M Kennedy, National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT); T Slaven, Chair of the Joint Consultative Forum; K Wallace, Unite the Union

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Equal Opportunities Forum held on 13 September 2023 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Forum decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Islamophobia – Causes and Cures

A presentation was given on Islamophobia: Causes and Cures and the work of the Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) by D Gilius, Scotland Junior Regional Manager, MEND.

MEND was a not-for-profit organisation which aimed to tackle Islamophobia and encouraged political, civic and social engagement within British Muslim communities. The presentation provided detailed information on the following key areas:-

- ◆ definitions, including the legal definition, of Islamophobia
- ◆ the theory and proof of Islamophobia which highlighted:-
 - ◆ the things that people saw, such as hate crimes and physical attacks
 - ◆ the things that people did not see such as discrimination, stereotypes, exclusion and marginalisation

- ◆ causes of Islamophobia which included:-
 - ◆ negativity in the media
 - ◆ lack of legislative protection
 - ◆ structural barriers which prevented Muslim participation in civic society
- ◆ cures of Islamophobia which included:-
 - ◆ reporting Islamophobia
 - ◆ raising awareness
 - ◆ creating partnerships
 - ◆ running campaigns
 - ◆ engaging with stakeholders
- ◆ what successful change looked like, including the achievements of MEND to date

D Gilius, having responded to members' questions, was thanked for his informative presentation.

The Forum decided: that the presentation be noted.

In terms of Standing Order No 14, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 3.06pm for a 9 minute period. The meeting reconvened at 3.15pm

4 Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity – Housing and Technical Resources

A report dated 10 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted:-

- ◆ providing an overview of progress made in relation to mainstreaming equalities within Housing and Technical Resources during 2022/2023
- ◆ highlighting the key actions being progressed during 2023/2024

The Resource Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group (EDCG) was responsible for ensuring progress had been made in relation to the Equality and Diversity work plan and supported a consistent approach to mainstreaming equality and diversity across the Resource.

Details were provided on key areas of progress by the Resource during 2022/2023 under the following headings:-

- ◆ Home+ Affordable Housing Supply Programme
- ◆ Adaptions Programme
- ◆ Accessibility
- ◆ Equality Impact Assessment and the Fairer Scotland Duty
- ◆ Housing and Homelessness – through the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)
- ◆ Refugee Resettlement Programme
- ◆ Asylum Dispersal
- ◆ Gypsy/Travellers
- ◆ Sheltered Housing Tenants
- ◆ Support to Care Experienced Children and Young People
- ◆ Support to Victims of Domestic Abuse
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Autism Strategy
- ◆ Digital Inclusion
- ◆ Translation and Interpretation Services
- ◆ Gaelic Language Plan
- ◆ Consultation, engagement and customer feedback
- ◆ Complaints – none recorded within the equalities category during the period
- ◆ Employee Learning and Development

Details were also provided on national and local policy developments that the Resource had contributed to during 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. The Resource Equality and Diversity Coordinating Group (EDCG) would continue to oversee the work in relation to mainstreaming across the Resource during 2023/2024 and the key priorities were fully detailed at section 10.2 of the report.

The Project Adviser responded to members' questions and comments on various aspects of the report.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 21 November 2022 (Paragraph 5)]

5 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.