

# 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

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## **1 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

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## **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.

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## **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*

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

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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)]*

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## **5 Urgent Business**

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There were no items of urgent business.