

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FORUM

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 5, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 16 March 2010

Chair:

Councillor Hugh Dunsmuir

Councillors Present:

Eileen Baxendale, Lesley McDonald, John Murray, Jim Wardhaugh, Sheena Wardhaugh

Councillors' Apologies:

Jim Handibode, James Malloy, Denis McKenna

Attending:

Corporate Resources

R McIlwain, Executive Director; M Armstrong, Administration Officer; G Bhatti, Employee Development and Diversity Manager, S Cameron, Diversity Adviser (Equalities); S McLeod, Administration Officer; K McVeigh, Head of Personnel Services

Education Resources

A Batchelor, Head of Education (Inclusion)

Social Work Resources

B Hutchinson, Personnel Services Manager

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 8 December 2009 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Equality Impact Assessment - Update

A report dated 3 March 2010 by the Executive Director (Corporate Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ progress made in undertaking equality and human rights impact assessments (EqIA)
- ◆ the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) project entitled "Counting the Costs"

To date, 400 equality and human rights impact assessments had been carried out or were being progressed. A total of 87 assessments had been carried out in relation to the 2010/2011 efficiency savings proposals and had been quality assured and published on the Council website. Of the assessments carried out, 70% had concluded that there was no adverse impact on any part of the community or workforce covered by equalities legislation. 30% of the assessments had concluded that there was, or might be, an adverse impact and action plans had been put in place to either gather more relevant information or to make appropriate changes to the strategy, policy or function.

The EHRC's "Counting the Cost" project would examine local authority funding decisions in Scotland relating to the 3 public sector equality duties. This would involve a retrospective analysis of decisions made in financial years 2006/2007, 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 and the level of importance given to equality issues during the decision making process would be examined together with the impact that decisions had on relevant equality groups. The particular focus in South Lanarkshire would be on decisions related to the Gender Equality Duty.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

4 "Be fair - or be fined" Blue Badge Parking Campaign

A report dated 3 March 2010 by the Executive Director (Corporate Resources) was submitted on the "Be fair – or be fined" Blue Badge Parking Campaign to tackle misuse of disabled persons' parking spaces and blue badges.

The Disabled Persons' Parking (Scotland) Bill became law on 1 October 2009 and made all disabled persons' parking spaces legally enforceable whether on-street or off-street. Key points contained in the Bill and the arrangements that had been made to identify and regulate the parking spaces within the public and private sectors were detailed in the report.

The "Be fair – or be fined" Campaign followed on from the "Be fair" Campaign held in November 2008 and would provide increased focus on the:-

- ◆ problem of abuse of disabled persons' parking spaces and the distress and limitations this placed on people who were subsequently unable to use them
- ◆ issues surrounding the misuse and abuse of blue badges

The Campaign would begin on 22 March 2010 and would include:-

- ◆ articles in the press and the South Lanarkshire Reporter
- ◆ posters and leaflets being distributed to all Council facilities, supermarkets and National Health Service establishments
- ◆ billboard posters being displayed in key locations in the community
- ◆ highlighting the Campaign message on the back of "pay and display" parking tickets from July until December 2010

South Lanarkshire Disability Partnership and Access Panel, Strathclyde Police and the Procurator Fiscal's office were supporting the campaign. The cost of the Campaign, including advertising and publicity materials, would be met from existing resources.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

5 Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity - Education Resources

A report dated 1 March 2010 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the work being undertaken by Education Resources to meet the commitments in the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and related statutory duties.

The Head of Education (Inclusion) highlighted the following areas covered within the report:-

- ◆ Equalities Impact Assessments
- ◆ employment
- ◆ delivering services

- ◆ access to information
- ◆ progress and areas for improvement

A Holocaust Commemoration recital was performed by pupils from Cairns and St Cadoc's Primary Schools and Trinity High School.

The Forum decided:

- (1) that the report be noted; and
- (2) that the pupils from Cairns and St Cadoc's Primary Schools and Trinity High School be congratulated on their performances.

6 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.