

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FORUM

Minutes of meeting held in the Corporate Dining Room, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 6 September 2011

Chair:

Councillor Hugh Dunsmuir

Councillors Present:

Jim Handibode, Lesley McDonald, John Murray, Jim Wardhaugh

Councillors' Apologies:

Eileen Baxendale, Denis McKenna, James Malloy, Sheena Wardhaugh

Attending:

Enterprise Resources

K Bain, Personnel and Improvement Manager

Finance and Corporate Resources

S Abbott, Administration Assistant; G Bhatti, Employee Development and Diversity Manager; S Cameron, Diversity Adviser (Equalities); S McLeod, Administration Officer

Housing and Technical Resources

P Murphy, Head of Support Services

Also Attending:

Strathclyde Police

G Neil, Police Liaison Officer; G Stirling, Divisional Counter Terrorism and Security Adviser

Order of Business

It was agreed that item 6 be dealt with prior to item 3 on the agenda.

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 7 June 2011 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

Item 6 was dealt with at this point in the meeting

3 Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity - Enterprise Resources

A report dated 23 August 2011 by the Executive Director (Enterprise Resources) was submitted on the work being undertaken by Enterprise Resources to meet the commitments in the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Equality and Diversity Strategy.

The Personnel and Improvement Manager highlighted the following areas covered within the report:-

- ◆ mainstreaming equal opportunities
- ◆ employability initiatives
- ◆ area based initiatives
- ◆ Equalities Impact Assessments
- ◆ Disability Discrimination Act audits
- ◆ performance monitoring
- ◆ employment and training
- ◆ communication
- ◆ future action

The Enterprise Resources' Equality and Diversity Action Plan was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Forum decided:

- (1) that the report be noted; and
- (2) that the Enterprise Resources' Equality and Diversity Action Plan be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 June 2010 (Paragraph 4)]

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

A report dated 18 August 2011 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the work being undertaken by Housing and Technical Resources to meet the commitments in the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Equality and Diversity Strategy.

The Head of Support Services highlighted the following areas covered within the report:-

- ◆ Equalities Impact Assessments
- ◆ employment
- ◆ training and development
- ◆ access to information and services
- ◆ delivering services
- ◆ service monitoring
- ◆ performance management and reporting
- ◆ areas for improvement and priorities for the year ahead

The Housing and Technical Resources' Equality and Diversity Action Plan was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Forum decided:

- (1) that the report be noted; and
- (2) that the Housing and Technical Resources' Equality and Diversity Action Plan be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 June 2010 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Blue Badge Reform

A report dated 16 August 2011 by the Executive Director (Corporate Resources) was submitted on the national Blue Badge reform and the introduction of the Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS).

The Blue Badge Scheme provided a concession to severely disabled people to park where particular restrictions might otherwise be applied. The Scottish Government had conducted a consultation on the review and reform of the Blue Badge Scheme and had set out a number of proposals which were detailed in the report. As part of the national reform, the BBIS had been created and would carry out various administrative functions relating to the Scheme. The new Service would be available to all local authorities in Scotland, England and Wales from January 2012, and would include:-

- ◆ the secure printing, personalisation and distribution of a new Blue Badge design
- ◆ a central database of issued Blue Badges
- ◆ an on-line application form
- ◆ an initial enquiry support service to handle enquiries from members of the public

The introduction of the BBIS would provide a national standard of application and assessment for all potential Blue Badge holders and would help to reduce fraudulent use of Blue Badges, something which had previously hindered the Scheme.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 16 March 2010 (Paragraph 4)]

6 Contest Strategy

A report dated 22 August 2011 by the Executive Director (Corporate Resources) was submitted on the national counter terrorism 'Contest' Strategy.

As part of its commitment to tackling terrorism, the UK government had developed the 'Contest' Strategy, which was being rolled out across the country in partnership with police authorities.

The 'Contest' Strategy was organised around the following 4 principal workstreams:-

- ◆ Pursue – to stop terrorist attacks
- ◆ Prevent – to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
- ◆ Protect – to strengthen our protection against terrorist attack
- ◆ Prepare – where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact

In terms of 'Prevent', the Council had been working with Strathclyde Police to deliver Work to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) workshops to employees who worked with vulnerable members of our communities who might be susceptible to radicalisation. The workshops enabled participants to recognise the signs when someone was being radicalised and provided them with pointers on how to intervene and divert their behaviour before it escalated.

The Divisional Counter Terrorism and Security Adviser gave a presentation which provided an overview of the 'Contest' Strategy and the delivery of WRAP training.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

7 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.