

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FORUM

Minutes of meeting held via MS Teams and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 13 September 2023

Chair:

Councillor Mo Razzaq

Councillors Present:

Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Gavin Keatt (*substitute for Councillor Monique McAdams*), Councillor Mark McGeever (Depute), Councillor Kirsten Robb, Councillor Bert Thomson

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Cal Johnston-Dempsey, Councillor Monique McAdams

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

A Bell, Team Leader, Consultation, Organisational Development and Equality; C Calder, Manager, Seniors Together; P Creechan, Development Officer; E-A McGonigle, Administration Officer; E McPake, HR Business Manager; L Wyllie, Administration Assistant

Also Attending:

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

E Borowski, Director

Trades Unions' Representatives Present:

M Kennedy, NASUWT; T Slaven, Chair of the Joint Consultative Forum

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

The Depute Chair, in the absence of the Chair, took the Chair for items 1 and 2

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Equal Opportunities Forum held on 14 June 2023 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Being Jewish in Scotland: The Work of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

A presentation was given on Being Jewish in Scotland and the work of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) by E Borowski, Director of the SCoJeC.

SCoJeC was established in 1999 in response to devolution with the principal aim of providing the Jewish Community of Scotland with a single, democratically accountable voice in dealing with the Scottish Parliament and Government, other communities, statutory bodies and official bodies. SCoJeC was the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland and advanced the public understanding of the Jewish religion, culture and community by:-

- ◆ providing information and assistance to educational, health and welfare organisations

- ◆ representing the Jewish community in Scotland to government and other statutory and official bodies
- ◆ liaising with Ministers, MSPs, churches, Trades Unions and others on matters affecting the Jewish community
- ◆ providing a support network for smaller communities and individuals who lived outwith any Jewish community
- ◆ holding events throughout Scotland and providing speakers and educational resources for schools
- ◆ assisting organisations within the Scottish Jewish community to comply with various regulatory requirements
- ◆ promoting dialogue and understanding between the Jewish community and other communities in Scotland

The presentation highlighted the following:-

- ◆ the number of Jewish people in Scotland and where they were located
- ◆ data from the 2011 and 2001 censuses and the fact that:-
 - ◆ the number of people with a particular characteristic could not accurately be quantified by a census as it would only count the numbers who responded
 - ◆ census figures could depress numbers as many Jewish people did not want to respond to a state authority
 - ◆ the wording of the religion question in the 2011 census could have discouraged some people from ticking “Jewish”
- ◆ devolved matters and details of the Jewish Manifesto for Scotland
- ◆ examples of SCoJeC:-
 - ◆ representing, supporting and connecting with the community
 - ◆ connecting with other organisations and cross-party groups
- ◆ the concept of localism
- ◆ antisemitism – the definition and recent examples in Scotland

E Borowski, having responded to members’ questions, was thanked for his informative presentation.

The Chair suggested that further dialogue would be useful and suggested that the Team Leader, Consultation, Organisational Development and Equality liaise with E Borowski to keep the channels of communication open. The Chair added that, going forward, he planned to invite different communities to come forward to celebrate one of their holidays in the Council Headquarters in order to allow an open dialogue with elected members and Council officers.

The Forum decided: that the presentation be noted.

Councillors Ferguson and Razzaq joined the meeting during this item of business

In terms of Standing Order No 14, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 2.57pm for a 5 minute period. The meeting reconvened at 3.02pm without the attendance of Councillor Keatt

4 Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity – Finance and Corporate Resources

A report dated 1 August 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on work being undertaken by Finance and Corporate Resources to meet the commitments within the South Lanarkshire Working For You Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2021 to 2025.

Details were provided on the strategic and operational activities being undertaken or planned by the Resource in relation to the following:-

- ◆ supporting equalities
- ◆ mainstreaming equalities
- ◆ Administration and Legal Services
- ◆ Communications and Strategy
- ◆ consultation, involvement and engagement
- ◆ partnerships including:-
 - ◆ Seniors Together in South Lanarkshire
 - ◆ Men's Shed Development and Mobile Men's Shed Project
 - ◆ Successfully Re-engaged
 - ◆ Staying Connected
 - ◆ Older, Wiser, Stronger Campaign
 - ◆ South Lanarkshire Disability Partnership (incorporating the South Lanarkshire Access Panel)
- ◆ performance measurement
- ◆ employment
- ◆ employee development and vocational training programmes
- ◆ communication/support
- ◆ Finance and Information Technology Services
- ◆ British Sign Language (BSL) activities

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Forum decided: that the work being undertaken by Finance and Corporate Resources in terms of mainstreaming equalities be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 23 February 2022 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Seniors Together – Fitbit Project Report

P Creechan, Development Officer, Finance and Corporate Resources gave a presentation on the Seniors Together Fitbit project.

A small group of 25 Seniors Together members had been recruited to the Fitbit project with the aim of increasing their mobility after becoming inactive during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants were equipped with a Fitbit to monitor their activity.

Detailed information was provided on the following:-

- ◆ the expected outcomes of the project
- ◆ a series of group walks that had taken place over the summer in South Lanarkshire parks and the benefits that had resulted from those
- ◆ improvements demonstrated which were measured under the following 3 categories:-
 - ◆ steps
 - ◆ total km walked
 - ◆ active minutes
- ◆ actual outcomes of the project

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the presentation and P Creechan was thanked for his informative presentation.

The Forum decided: that the presentation be noted.

6 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.