

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FORUM

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 5, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 15 March 2011

Chair:

Councillor Hugh Dunsmuir

Councillors Present:

Eileen Baxendale, Jim Handibode, Lesley McDonald, Denis McKenna, James Malloy, John Murray, Jim Wardhaugh, Sheena Wardhaugh

Attending:**Community Resources**

C Barr, Change and Diversity Officer; L Rhind, Personnel Manager

Corporate Resources

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

Social Work Resources

H Stevenson, Executive Director; M Dowling, Planning and Performance Manager; E Ritchie, Personnel Adviser

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 14 September 2010 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Diversity Monitoring Group Remit

A report dated 15 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Corporate Resources) was submitted on the revised remit and title change from the Multi Agency Racist Incident Monitoring Group (MARIM) to the Diversity Monitoring Group.

MARIM Groups had been in existence in Scotland for nearly 20 years and had both a strategic and tactical role. In January 2009, a sub-group of the MARIM had been established to consider expanding the Group's remit in light of changes to legislation. The Equality Act 2010 and The Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Bill, which received Royal Assent on 8 July 2010, had extended hate crime legislation to cover all equality strands.

A review of the amended legislation and the activities of other MARIM groups nationally had led to the development of a new remit for the group and the revised title of Diversity Monitoring Group.

The Group's revised objectives and operation and reporting lines were detailed in the report.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

Councillors Malloy and McDonald entered the meeting during consideration of the above item of business

4 Equality Act 2010 Implications

A report dated 8 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Corporate Resources) was submitted advising of the:-

- ◆ implementation of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications for the Council
- ◆ Council's response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Public Sector Equality Duty Draft Regulations and Order

With effect from 5 April 2011, the public sector duties for race, disability and gender would be replaced by the Equality Act 2010 which would introduce a single public sector equality duty, "the general duty". This would cover age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity.

The new public sector equality duty stated that the public authority must:-

- ◆ "eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that was prohibited by or under this Act
- ◆ advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- ◆ foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it"

Contractors who carried out public functions, such as care provision, would also require to have due regard to the general duty.

The specific duties for the Equality Act were detailed in the report and the main implications for the Council were as follows:-

- ◆ the requirement to develop and collate equalities related data for the new protected characteristics. Measures had already been put in place with regards to recruitment and employee monitoring, however, further work would be required in relation to service uptake monitoring
- ◆ a review of the Single Equality Scheme, the Equality and Diversity Strategy and their associated plans would be required to ensure outcomes were developed with the involvement of community and employee groups
- ◆ reporting on outcome progress and an agreed life-cycle for outcomes would be required. Outcomes would remain in a Single Equality Scheme and would be linked with the Single Outcome Agreement and Connect, the Council Plan

The Council's response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Public Sector Equality Duty Draft Regulations and Order was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

5 Employee Forums

A report dated 15 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Corporate Resources) was submitted on the development of the various employee forums within the Council.

The purpose of the employee forums was to help employees balance their work and home lives. They allowed employees to share experiences, find solutions to common problems and also offered the opportunity for employees to raise awareness of their needs which helped the Council improve its working practices and policies.

In January 2010, a survey had been conducted on existing and proposed forums. Over 1,677 responses were received and the results were detailed in the report.

As a result of the survey, the following actions had been taken:-

- ◆ the Working Parents and Carers Forum had been re-established
- ◆ a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Forum had been established
- ◆ the Disability and Working Parents' and Carers' Forums were being held in the Cambuslang/Rutherglen, Clydesdale, East Kilbride and Hamilton areas
- ◆ the format for advertising had been standardised in order to raise the profile of the forums

It was also intended to introduce an intranet page for the employee forums which would allow employees to obtain information and participate in forums remotely.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

6 Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity - Community Resources

A report dated 24 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Community Resources) was submitted on the work being undertaken by Community Resources to meet the commitments of the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Equality and Diversity Strategy.

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

- ◆ equality impact assessments
- ◆ recruitment
- ◆ Delivering a Fairer Future
- ◆ training and development
- ◆ supporting front-line staff
- ◆ service delivery
- ◆ areas for improvement

The Change and Development Officer gave a presentation on accessibility to Council premises.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2009 (Paragraph 6)]

7 Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity - Social Work Resources

A report dated 23 November 2010 by the Executive Director (Social Work Resources) was submitted on the work being undertaken by Social Work Resources to meet the commitments of the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Equality and Diversity Strategy.

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

- ◆ equality impact assessments
- ◆ Internal Participation and Involvement Strategy
- ◆ recruitment
- ◆ support for front-line employees
- ◆ training and development
- ◆ service delivery
- ◆ performance management and reporting
- ◆ access to information
- ◆ highlights and areas for improvement

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

8 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.