

Appointments - Equality and Diversity Service Review

City of Edinburgh Council

26 June 2003

Purpose of report

1. To appoint members to an Advisory Committee to carry out a review of the Council's Equality service

Details

- 2 On 17 June 2003, the Executive considered the attached report by the Director of Corporate Services on the proposal to review the Council's Equality Service.
- 3 The Executive agreed:
 - 1) To agree to undertake an Equalities Service review
 - 2) To agree the content and staged approach as detailed in paragraphs 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 of the Directors report.
 - 3) To approve Option (I) contained in paragraph 2.7 of the Director's report as the preferred method of undertaking the review based on the Youth Services Review Model ie. to hold a public hearing and pre-policy examination of issues followed by research, consultation and the development of proposals for the Executive.
 - 4) To appoint an Advisory Committee in terms of Standing Order 37(3) to carry out the review and to report back with detailed conclusions and recommendations.
 - 5) That membership of the Advisory Committee be five elected members comprising three Labour members and one member from each of the Opposition Groups.
 - 6) To note that membership of the Advisory Committee would be appointed at the Council on 26 June 2003.

Recommendation

4. That the Council appoint the members of the Advisory Committee.

Donald Anderson
Leader

Appendices	Appendix 1 – report no. E/46/03-04/CS by the Director of Corporate Services
Contact/tel	Henry Scullion, Committee Services Tel: 529 4283 Fax: 529 7607 e-mail: henry.scullion@edinburgh.gov.uk
Wards affected	None
Background Papers	None

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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SERVICE REVIEW

Executive of the Council

17th June 2003

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report outlines the content and approach to a comprehensive review of the Council's Equality Service. The review is proposed in the light of the experience of operating the service since the establishment of the Council, new legislative requirements, and a wider approach to engagement and participation with equalities communities in the city.

2 Details

- 2.1 The Council's Equalities service was established in 1996, initially in what was then the Department of Strategic Policy. It has remained as a central focus in the Council in the Department of Corporate Services, meeting both internal organisational development needs, and the support and development of equalities action in the city.

- 2.2 A number of key influences make it appropriate now to review the content of the service, and how it is delivered, including:-

- ◆ significant legislative change in the race relations and disability fields (the Race Relations Amendment Act and the Disability Discrimination Act);
- ◆ the advent of community planning and the new Local Government in Scotland Act requiring inclusive approaches to service development;
- ◆ the experience so far of developing the "equalities mainstreaming" agenda and the production of key documents such as the Race Equality Scheme;
- ◆ recent difficulties in engaging with equalities groups, notably (but not exclusively) in the race equality field;
- ◆ resource limits, affecting all of the above.

- 2.3 It is important to recognise that both the new legislation, and the service delivery and engagement issues noted above, present significant challenges. Such issues underline the worth of opening out to a full review of the service, and addressing all of the new pressures which emerge in a robust and comprehensive manner.

Aims and Objectives of the Review

- 2.4 In accepting that there are difficulties to overcome, and that a new approach is required, it is also proposed that a comprehensive aim be adopted for the review, to re-affirm the Council as a leading authority in Scotland in this policy field. An appropriate aim is to:-

“Become an organisation which values diversity and difference and develops excellent services which are responsive to the needs of all (equalities) communities in the city”.

- 2.5 Relevant objectives can be developed in the following specific areas:-

- (i) review the progress of mainstreaming equalities in service departments, and refocus the core equalities service;
- (ii) audit and change services to ensure their responsiveness to the needs of equalities groups, including access issues;
- (iii) re-assess the engagement and consultation processes/structures required to connect successfully with equalities groups;
- (iv) develop a funding strategy for grant aid support for voluntary bodies working on diversity issues;
- (v) within the review of advice services ensure the efficacy of advice services for equalities communities;
- (vi) examine and change corporate processes to meet the employment and other monitoring requirements for equalities issues;
- (vii) develop partnership working within community planning structures, to ensure the integration of equalities interests; and
- (viii) design new initiatives to replace equalities activities which are assessed as less effective.

Conduct of the Review

2.6 The range of the review is such that its progress will require resource support, and a timetable lasting over several months. To some extent progress will depend also on ensuring effective consultation with equalities interests and an investment in an inclusive process. There is also the question of priorities, and if major issues are to be addressed first, an appropriate staged approach would be to deal, in the following order, with:-

Race Equality;
Woman's Issues;
Disability;
LGBT Communities;
Older People.

2.7 In conducting the review, a number of models suggest themselves, based on experience of review work in the Council within the new decision making structures. Options include:-

- (i) a public hearing and pre-policy examination of issues, followed by research, consultation and the development of proposals for the Executive (the Youth Services Review Model);
- (ii) the establishment of the review as a new core activity for an established Scrutiny Panel; and,
- (iii) an external commission given to a committee of experts, (the closest previous example would be the Lord Provost's Commission on Social Inclusion.

2.8 While the pros and cons of the three approaches can be debated, some key matters are seen as:-

- (i) deciding on a credible approach to the review;
- (ii) consulting and engaging effectively from the start;
- (iii) resourcing the work effectively;
- (iv) leading the process to ensure openness and freedom from bias.

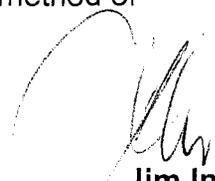
2.9 Of the options identified in 2.7 for the conduct of the review, the first (the hearing approach) offers the scope to fully examine the Council's own service activity, and to take into account the views of service users and community interests, and is viewed as the cost effective option while also meeting the key points in 2.8 above. It is presumed that, if this approach was adopted, each topic would be taken as a separate aspect of equalities activity, in the order set out in paragraph 2.6.

2.10 Following agreement to the preferred approach to the review, a further report will be brought forward detailing the review programme, and identifying consultation arrangements.

3 Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:-

- (i) agrees to the undertaking of an equalities service review;
- (ii) agrees to the content and staged approach outlined in paragraphs 2.4 – 2.6;
- (iii) determines, from the options in 2.7 above, the preferred method of undertaking the review.


Jim Inch
Director of Corporate Services

05/06/03

Appendices

Contact/tel/Email David Jack, 12 St Giles Street, Edinburgh
Tel: 0131 469 3846 E mail: david.jack@edinburgh.gov.uk

Wards affected City wide

Background
Papers

Agenda item:

Report title: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SERVICE REVIEW

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, the contents of this report have been noted by the appropriate Executive Member.

Without prejudice to the integrity of the report, and the recommendations contained within it, the Executive Member expresses his/her own views as follows:

Signed:
Cllr Ian Perry



Date: 5 June 2003

For information – Standing Order 57(1) states:

“Heads of Department will prepare reports, with professional advice and recommendations, on matters requiring decisions by the Executive:

- a report seeking decisions on matters of corporate strategy, corporate policy and corporate projects will be submitted direct to the Executive
- a report seeking decisions on matters relating to the special responsibilities allocated to an individual member of the Executive will be submitted, in the first instance, to that member. The member will add his or her own recommendation to it before submission to the Executive. Where the Executive member disagrees with the advice and the recommendation of the officers, the Executive member will also state his or her reasons.”