

**REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE 16 FEBRUARY 2010**

**SUBJECT: "DIVERSITY DAY" COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE**

**BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The Communities Committee is asked to note the success of an exercise to engage with partner groups within Moray to identify issues experienced by them which are of relevance to the Council and its services.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section H(12) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to formulating, supervising the implementation of and review as necessary the policies and practices of the Council in relation to its arrangements for promoting, fostering and maintaining equal opportunities.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **The Communities Committee is asked to note the following issues identified by members of the Equalities Forum:-**

- **Access**
- **Communication**
- **Transport**
- **Employment**
- **Emotional Support**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Forum acts as an advisory and consultative body to the Community Planning Partnership.
- 3.2 The Forum was established in May 2008 to meet requirements arising from equalities legislation to involve and consult members from different equality groups; give equality groups the opportunity to raise issues of concern and to ensure that our services are meeting the needs of the community.
- 3.3 A key issue raised by the Forum was that Community Planning Partner agencies often have difficulty engaging and dealing with minority groups. Following reports to the Community Engagement Group in January 2009 letters were sent to partner agencies to investigate what training they provided and their willingness to participate in further training or awareness raising.
- 3.4 Consequently, at the Equalities Forum meeting in August 2009 the Forum and partner agencies agreed that the Forum would host a day for the different

groups which are specific to Moray to inform partner agencies of issues affecting them.

#### **4. REPORT**

- 4.1 The information day which took place subsequently in December 2009 was well attended and praised as a success. Eight of the Equality Forum members delivered short presentations highlighting issues they faced in Moray. Common themes emerged throughout the presentations. This provided vital information to focus the Council to eliminate discrimination and promote equalities in the provision of it's services. A summary of the event outcomes is attached (**Appendix 1**).
- 4.2 In order for the Council to address the issues arising from this event, it is proposed that issues relevant to the Council are included within the Action Plan for the Single Equality Scheme.
- 4.3 Possible Council actions could be to:-
- Ensure all staff receives the Council's Equality and Diversity training.
  - Provide work experience opportunities
  - Continue discussions with HITRANS to identify and deal with transport issues
- 4.4 In addition, the Equalities Forum will invite Community Planning partner agencies to Forum meetings to discuss how issues can be tackled by them. It is vital that partners also support the Forum to address these issues in order for Community Planning Partners to improve access to services and service delivery. A report will be submitted to the Community Planning Board to ensure this is happening.

#### **5 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan**

The Council has made a commitment to develop a culture, which encourages both equal opportunities and the observance of equal opportunities. It will also seek to improve access to services by all sectors of the community.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

The Council has a legal duty to consult with equality groups and involve equality groups in improving services. The risk of not meeting our duties is prosecution for non-compliance.

**(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

There may be additional financial implications arising from the Single Equality Scheme in order to implement actions.

**(d) Consultations**

The Council's Equality & Diversity Corporate Advisory Forum has been consulted on this report.

**6 CONCLUSION**

**5.1 The Communities Committee is asked to note the success of the exercise to engage with and identify issues experienced by members of the Equalities Forum.**

Author of Report: Fiona Simpson, Equal Opportunities Officer

Background Papers: Reports to Community Engagement Group – 22.01.09 & 23.04.09.

Equality Forum minute – 27.11.09

Ref: