

NOTES OF MEETING

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCRUTINY PANEL 14TH FEBRUARY 2011

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Seaton)
Councillors Edwards, Newton and Ranson

APOLOGIES: Councillors Gay and Green

D. Dalby, Head of Democratic Services, R. Beaumont, Project Manager and H. Noori, Equality Officer attended the meeting to assist the Panel.

I. DRAFT REPORT

A copy of the draft report was submitted for the consideration of the Panel.

The Chair made reference to the comments submitted by Councillor Gay. In his absence he had stated that the report was an excellent summary of the recommendations. He would not like to see any recommendations watered down, only strengthened. In respect of Councillor profiling, he considered that it was a difficult subject with people feeling it was a breach of privacy. However, Councillors should be requested or strongly encouraged to complete the information.

The following comments were made by members of the Panel:

- (i) It was a thorough report, easy to read, with no jargon used.
- (ii) There was one additional recommendation that could be included in the report to support the recommendation of the establishment of an Equality and Diversity Monitoring Group. The Senior Management Team be recommended to consider establishing an Officer Working Group to mirror the work of the Member Monitoring Group, to drive improvements and performance in respect of equality and diversity. In order to undertake that role, Officers should be of a senior level to be able to take decisions and other officers involved to support the work at department level to ensure the work was embedded across departments.
- (iii) The Panel had undertaken valuable work and it was a positive step that Equality and Diversity was being discussed again.

In response to issues raised and questions, R. Beaumont stated:

- (a) Prior to the Senior Management Review she had requested volunteers for officers to be involved in a working group. The majority of those volunteers were subsequently part of the review and it was considered prudent to hold

back until the review had been completed. Once that had happened, officers would be offered training prior to the establishment of such a Group.

- (b) It was helpful to have officers volunteering to be part of a working group, as to succeed the group would require commitment to drive matters forward, for them to be enthusiastic and take back that enthusiasm to their departments. However, should there not be sufficient volunteers there would be a need to direct officers to be involved.

The Head of Democratic Services made reference to the RIEP funded Equality and Diversity training discussed at an earlier meeting. Leicestershire County Council had arranged dates for the training without consultation, consequently some dates clashed with meetings at Charnwood. Officers would negotiate with LCC to rearrange the training; however, it was likely to take place in July rather than June 2011.

AGREED that an additional recommendation be included in the Panel report as follows:

‘that the Senior Management Team consider the establishment of an Officer Group to mirror the work undertaken by the Councillor Monitoring Group at Officer level’.