
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD 18 NOVEMBER 2004

COS.173/04 DEVELOPMENT OF RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

With reference to Minute COS.133/04, the Head of Strategic and Performance Services presented Report SP.42/04 summarising progress in furthering Equalities work in the Council since the last meeting of the Committee.

In presenting the report, The Head of Strategic and Performance Services emphasised that equality and diversity are issues for Carlisle and that the findings in the Citizens Panel and hate crime statistics illustrate that this is the case. There is a legal obligation on the Council to actively promote race equality in Carlisle and also to ensure that all staff are trained in equalities issues. There is an issue of awareness raising and progress has been made in arranging training for Senior Managers and Senior Members, which would include the Executive, Group Leaders and Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen. There would also be a requirement for training front line staff and this is being progressed.

Progress on the development of a Race Equality Scheme and on Impact Assessment work was outlined. An initial impact assessment exercise had been undertaken for the Draft Licensing Policy. This had raised a number of issues and highlighted the fact that thorough training would be required before impact assessments could be rolled out to the rest of the Authority. An Action Plan would be developed and submitted to the next meeting of the Committee, detailing the work that the Council must do to achieve Level 1 of the Commission for Racial Equality standard.

The Policy and Performance Manager commented that the Achieving Cumbrian Excellence Programme was holding a Learning from Good Practice event on "The Diversity Challenge" on 2nd December 2004 at the County Offices, Kendal. A number of staff and two Members were booked to attend from the City Council, but more spaces were available for Members and she encouraged them to contact her for more details.

In considering progress of the development of a Race Equality Scheme, Members made the following comments and observations:

- (a) In response to the Member's question, The Head of Strategic and Performance Services provided clarification of the definitions of hate crime where race would be a motive in the crime as deemed by the victim, the police or a witness. She added that the police were concerned that a number of minority groups are not reporting or may not have the confidence to come forward and report hate crime.
- (b) Carlisle appeared to be way above other Cumbrian districts for hate crime statistics. It may be that Carlisle has a much larger ethnic population per head than some of

the District Authorities in the Cumbrian area.

- (c) What monitoring arrangements would there be for specific targets?

The Head of Strategic and Performance Services advised that the Action Plan which will be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee will include specific monitoring arrangements. The Cumbria Attitude Survey should also be available for the next meeting of the Committee and this will provide some useful information.

- (d) A Member queried whether the increase in the number of reported incidents of hate crime in Carlisle between July 2003 and June 2004, as compared with July 2002 and June 2003 could be related to the increase in late night drinking establishments.

The Head of Strategic and Performance Services advised that the Police did not think this was the case, but were of the view that hate crime may have always been at a high level, but that the Police are now better equipped to deal with and identify it and there have been improvements in the recording of hate crime.

- (e) In the development of a Race Equality Scheme, there would need to be links with the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership.

- (f) Within Carlisle, Gypsies and Travellers may be a particular issue, as they are defined as a specific ethnic group and there needs to be a cultural change in attitudes of some people in Carlisle towards this ethnic group.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Policy & Performance Manager provide Members with details of the Achieving Cumbrian Excellence Programme event on the Diversity Challenge on 2nd December 2004 at Kendal.

- (2) That the progress in furthering Equalities work in the Council be noted and a further report be submitted to the Committee in the New Year.

- (3) That the Head of Strategic and Performance Services would write to the Executive Members, Group Leaders and Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees inviting them to an Equalities Issues training event on 27 January 2005.