

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 11 MARCH 2002

REPORT ON: AMALGAMATION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND THE EQUALITY ACTION COMMITTEE

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 180-2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the amalgamation of the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Committee and the Equality Action Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

2.1 the Committee agrees to the amalgamation of the Neighbourhood Resources and Development and Equality Action Committees.

2.2 it be remitted to the Director of Support Services to draft, implement and circulate the necessary changes to Standing Orders to reflect the merger of the two Committees.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The staffing, resources and grant folios of the Equality Action Team are currently located within the budget of the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department.

3.2 It is proposed that the present situation is continued.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The proposals are in line with the key themes of improving access to skills, knowledge and information, and to empowering all sections of the community to participate in decision making.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The amalgamation of the Committees will enable equality action issues to be addressed more regularly.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 The Equality Action Committee was established by Dundee City Council in 1996. The terms of reference within the Scheme of Administration for the Equality Action Committee are indicated below.

- To ensure that in all aspects of the Council's work, the rights, welfare and interests of women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, the elderly and the young are given primary consideration.
- To encourage and promote the development of a range of consultative forums within the community with whom the Council can liaise on the development, implementation and monitoring of its equal opportunities strategies.
- To consider applications and proposals for grants and subscriptions.
- Subject to the provision of relevant legislation, to undertake campaigns on issues affecting all those groups referred to at paragraph 2 above.

6.2 Operationally, the Equality Action officer has operated within the line management of the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Committee, and the Equality Action Committee meetings are scheduled to take place four times a year.

7.0 OPERATION

7.1 Since 1996, there have been four cancellations of Equality Action Committees as there had been no available agenda, and there have been 19 meetings held in the six years. The initial meetings had a relatively high number of items and the overall average of agenda items was between four and five. However, in the last four years, the average has dropped to approximately two to three items per agenda meeting because of lack of business. Urgent items have occasionally been submitted direct to Neighbourhood Resources and Development Committee.

7.2 The Personnel and Management Services Committee has a specific responsibility in regard to Equal Opportunities in employment as illustrated below.

- To ensure that in all aspects of the Council's work no employee receives less favourable treatment because of race, colour, ethnic or natural origins, gender, disability, age, sexual identify, ethical or religious beliefs, trade union activity, based at schools, long term unemployment, being HIV positive, and because they have AIDS.

7.3 In order to monitor Equal Opportunities implications within Council policy, a section of every report submitted to Committee has an Equal Opportunities Implications section to identify what themes and policy changes, if any, within the report have a major impact upon Equal Opportunities.

8.0 FINANCE

8.1 The Equality Action Convener's position carries a responsibility allowance of £5,041 per annum in 2001/2002. If the Equality Action Convener's position was subsumed within the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Convener's position then this would potentially allow a saving to be made for Dundee City Council.

9.0 PROPOSAL

It is felt that, in light of the experience since 1996, the work of the Equality Action Committee should be amalgamated with the agenda of the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Committee. This would give a more regular profile to the Equality Action items and, therefore, assist in the mainstreaming of the Committee's work.

10.0 CONCLUSION

10.1 The terms of reference for the Equality Action Committee can be subsumed within the terms of reference for Neighbourhood Resources and Development Committee with no significant difficulties as the line management is currently within that department. It would also allow any items that are addressed towards Equality Action to be included on the monthly agenda rather than to wait until a quarterly meeting. This would also allow an opportunity to raise the profile of equal opportunities on a more regular basis.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 The Directors of Support Services, Neighbourhood Resources and Development, Personnel and Management Services, and Corporate Planning have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Tayside Racial Equality Council and the chairpersons of the Equality Action Task Groups have also been consulted.

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

Chief Executive..... **Date**

21 February 2002