

## **Being Heard and Taking Action:**

### **Glasgow Equality Forum experiences representing our members on public sector committees**

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## **Who we are**

Glasgow Equality Forum (GEF) brings together representatives of voluntary sector equality networks in Glasgow to encourage better cooperation and cross-sector engagement on equality issues. We provide strategic and policy expertise, and through our members we provide access to wider viewpoints, including opportunities to engage with grassroots community organisations. Forum members provide advice and support on effective community engagement. We also provide capacity building support for our members.

Full members are voluntary sector equality networks operating in Glasgow:

Glasgow LGBTI Voluntary Sector Network

Glasgow Disability Alliance

Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network (co-ordinated by Wise Women)

Glasgow Voluntary Sector Race Equality Network (co-ordinated by CRER)

Associate members are equality organisation who represent people with protected characteristics where there is no equality network:

Faith in Community Scotland

WSREC

Interfaith Glasgow

Scottish Refugee Council.

GEF is fully funded by Glasgow City Council.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

GEF sit on a variety of committees and groups within Glasgow Community Planning Partnership (GCPP), Glasgow City Council (GCC) and Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health and Social Care Partnership (GGC HSCP). This representative function fits in with one of our funded outputs, namely to *“support individual CPP organisations to embed equality in their work and ensure that equalities issues of concern to GEF are understood within public sector decision making”*.

As a small organisation with one part time member of staff, this work has increased into a significant and growing time commitment. In February 2020, GEF members instructed the Manager to carry out a review of the effectiveness of our representation work. This review was tasked with determining:

- How have GEF reps contributed to committees?
- What issues have they raised within committees?
- What impact has our participation had upon decision-making?
- Are some meetings more effective for us/ better at listening to equalities issues than others? Which relationships are not working as well as they could, and why?

By attempting to answer these questions, our members would then be able to assess which committees it would be most beneficial to concentrate on, and how best we could focus our future work to maximise positive outcomes for people with protected characteristics living in Glasgow.

The initial audience for this report was GEF members, but having carried out the research, we consider there are valuable insights and learning for our public sector and third sector colleagues.

So the scope of the report has grown from its initial focus to also make some attempt to

- Highlight the challenges and barriers experienced by equalities reps
- Offer suggestions as to how these barriers could be overcome.

## **Methodology**

GEF originally allocated around 70 hours of time to this project. As soon as we started, we discovered the potential breadth of the research was huge. We decided to focus our research on three committees:

- Glasgow City Council Wellbeing, Empowerment, Communities and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee (WECCE)
- GCPP Executive Group
- GGC Integrated Joint Board Public Engagement Committee.

We considered this to be a broad sample representing one GCC Committee, one GCCP group, and one Integrated Joint Board Committee<sup>1</sup>.

The research was carried out by GEF's Manager in the following way

- Survey of GEF members
- Survey of committee members/ stakeholders
- Interview with other GEF reps
- Reviewing all "GEF Manager Updates" (shared with members quarterly)

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<sup>1</sup> For ease of reading, all will be referred to as Committees throughout the report.

- Reviewing email input GEF members gave before and after committee meetings relating to agenda items
- Reviewing minutes of GEF meetings and subgroups to note relevant discussion
- Reading the minutes and papers of the three committee from 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2019- 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, and answering the following questions using an Excel spreadsheet
  - what was the input from GEF members before meeting?
  - What was GEF input at meeting?
  - What was follow up after meeting?
  - Has anything changed because of our input?
  - What meeting decided to do?
  - If we didn't input, why?
  - Was the matter of interest to more than one equality group, or predominately of interest to one (for example disabled people, LGBT+ communities etc?)

It is worth noting that many agenda items either do not require specialist equalities input, are not within the expertise of GEF members or are not a focus of their work. For example, GCC's General Purposes Committee have carried out extensive work on Gambling Harms. Whilst there are undoubtedly equalities considerations within this work, the GEF rep would not seek to make comments at a committee unless asked to by our members or if there were procedural steps missing that could have a detrimental impact on equality groups, for example no available Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). In this situation, we disseminate information and events invitations to our members who can participate if they wish.

## **Lockdown and Covid**

This research has taken place almost entirely within the period of lockdown.

In Spring 2020, GCPP brought together a range of partners to meet as Glasgow Social Recovery Taskforce (SRT). GEF and several of our members attend the SRT. The work of the SRT Taskforce is out-with the scope of the report.

## **Acronyms and definitions**

Acronyms and shorthand for names and policies can be a barrier to participation and understanding of public sector organisations and structures. It is assumed that that audience for this report have a working knowledge of structures and organisations in Glasgow. Throughout the report, names will be written in full firstly, with a note of their abbreviation, and referred to by their abbreviation thereafter.

“Council officer” will be used to refer to any employee working for a community planning partner organisation.

## **Chapter 2: GEF Committee representation**

GEF is represented at the following committees:

### **Glasgow City Council**

- Wellbeing, Empowerment, Communities and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee (WECCE). Meets 6 weekly.
- General Purposes Policy Committee. Meets 6 weekly.

### **Glasgow Community Planning Partnership**

- Executive Group. Meets 6 weekly.
- Strategic Partnership. Meets 4 times a year.
- Social Recovery Taskforce. Meets 6 weekly.
- Equality Working Group (co-chair). 4- 6 meetings per year.

### **Greater Glasgow and Clyde Integrated Joint Board/ Health and Social Care Partnership**

- Participation and Engagement Committee. Meets quarterly.
- Equality Working Group. Meets 6 times a year.

### **Glasgow Third Sector Interface Network-** Meets 6-8 times a year.

Lorraine Barrie, GEF Manager, is the representative on all committees noted above except for the General Purposes Committee, where Harriette Campbell from Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network (GWVSN) and the African Caribbean Women's Association represents GEF. This role was shared with Kate Henderson, Equalities Officer at Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector until December 2019.

## **What does our representative role involve?**

The following sets out the usual process carried out by the GEF Manager for each committee meeting:

- GEF Manager receives meeting papers via email, 7 days prior to the meeting (HSCP papers up to 14 days in advance). Papers usually include the agenda, minutes of the previous meeting and any papers (such as presentations or reports) that will be referred to during the meeting.
- She then shares these papers via email with the GEF membership mailing list and the LGBT+ Voluntary Sector Network, highlighting any issues of relevance. Members are asked to submit any comments or questions via email prior to the meeting.
- If comments or questions are received, they are raised within the committee meeting, and sometimes emailed in advance to the relevant council officer.
- In addition, she also comments more generally on equalities matters, for example commenting on the content of the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), or on areas where a service or policy change may particularly affect people with protected characteristics.
- GEF Manager is then responsible for carrying out or delegating any actions agreed at committee.
- GEF Manager types up notes from committee, detailing what was said and highlighting any other comments or agenda items that may be of interest. Ordinarily the notes are collated into a quarterly “GEF Managers Update” report that is circulated to members.
- At GEF meetings, members can discuss matters arising at committees in more detail. This is especially important when issues have been

highlighted as a matter of concern for more than one equality network, for example GCPP Community Plan consultation and implementation, Glasgow Community Fund development, Glasgow City Council Equality Outcomes or GGC HCSP Sexual Health Strategy Review.

- For ongoing work such as the HSCP Engagement and Participation Strategy, a subgroup of between 3 and 5 members formed to discuss the policy in more detail, hold meetings with relevant council officers and determine the best course of action.

The process is slightly different with the General Purposes Committee, where Harriette Campbell receives papers directly and attends Committee to make comments. GEF Manager's forwards members' questions and comments to Harriette, who then reports back to the next GEF meeting.

Whilst this is time consuming, we consider these steps are required to properly fulfil our representative function. Without this work, our members would be prevented from feeding in their viewpoints and concerns. Furthermore, they would be unaware of proposed service changes, policies subject to review, or opportunities to participate on consultation and engagement activity.

## Chapter 3

### **Glasgow City Council Wellbeing, Empowerment, Communities and Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee (WECCE)**

GEF were asked to join this new policy committee as a co-opted member in August 2018<sup>2</sup>. The WECCE Committee is chaired by Baillie Annette Christie and has a very full work programme with many aspects of interest to GEF members including

- Primary Care Improvement Plan
- Participation Requests and Asset Transfer
- Hearing of public petitions
- Community Action Plan update
- HSCP Strategic Plan
- Third Sector Concordat
- Glasgow Community Fund.<sup>3</sup>

Like other co-opted members, GEF's rep has been reappointed annually. There are currently two other co-opted member representing Glasgow Third Sector Interface Network and Community Councils, with a vacancy for a youth representative.

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<sup>2</sup> Terms of Reference for policy committees here:  
<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4535&p=0>

<sup>3</sup> Current workplan available here:  
<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDNDXDNNTNTZ3>

## Chapter 4

### GCPP Structures

GEF were invited to become members of GCPP Executive Group and Strategic Partnership as a direct result of our response to the CPP Governance Review in 2018.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, GEF were invited to send representatives to all Area Partnership meetings. We had to refuse as neither GEF nor our members had the staff capacity to attend of so many meetings.

### GCPP Executive Group

This is a Senior Officers group with a focus on delivery of the Community Plan and Locality Plans. We understand the GEF rep is the only member who does not represent a community planning partner.

At the February 6<sup>th</sup> 2019 meeting, it was stated that the Executive Group is *“acting as the Programme Board for the Glasgow Community Plan and Community Action Plan.”*

This group hears reports and presentations on the City Transformation “High Level Plan” which denotes activities and timelines for delivery of Community Action Plans, with work coded according to a traffic light system. The Community Plan 2017-20 ended on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.<sup>5</sup>

During the research period, all the presentations and papers heard related to priority areas of the Community Plan or the 10 locality plans that drive work in

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<sup>4</sup> [GEF's Response in full](#)

<sup>5</sup> The deadline for commencement of a new Community Plan was postponed due to the pandemic and lockdown. The Social Recovery Taskforce took over responsibility for development of the new Community Plan.

the former Thriving Places areas, plus Govanhill. The following reports were heard throughout 2019

- 6th February: Property and Employment Assets
- 20th March: Childcare and Economic Growth
- 12th June: Locality Planning
- 28th August: Transport, Making Best Use of Our Assets and Culture Change
- 9th October: Fairer More Equal Glasgow
- 27th November: Resilient Communities

As a new member to this Committee, one of the big surprises was the prevalence of papers being recommended “for noting” - this is when a completed or agreed upon piece of work is presented to the group. This often means that the decision-making, negotiations, and pertinent discussions have taken place elsewhere prior to the meeting.

This finding was replicated within the agendas of the Strategic Partnership. In the 4 meetings of Strategic Partnership in 2019, there were 27 substantive items in total<sup>6</sup>. In 26 out of 27 of these agenda items, the main recommendation was that the paper was “noted”<sup>7</sup>.

The expectation of partners around the table is that the Committee is for sharing information and identifying potential partnership working, and that those decisions would take place off table.

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<sup>6</sup> excluding items entitled “minutes” and “date of next meeting”.

<sup>7</sup> In 13, the only action was “to be noted”. Examples of the other 13 recommendations included “note the report and endorse”, “note the report, and instruct Exec Group to lead the work” “note and consider next steps”.

## Chapter 5

### Integrated Joint Board Public Engagement Committee

GEF was invited to deliver a presentation to the November 2018 meeting and was subsequently invited to be the Equality Advisor on Committee.

The purpose of committee is

*“The IJB Public Engagement Committee will enable Glasgow’s citizens and local Third and Independent sector organisations to have a direct route of engagement and role in the policy and service development process in relation to health and social care integrated services by raising matters of concern. It will as part of this role, approve and keep under review the IJB’s Participation and Engagement Strategy”.*<sup>8</sup>

One of the challenges representing our members at PE Committee is the breadth of policies considered there. For example, on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019 - the first meeting the GEF rep attended - the Committee heard the following papers

Impact of Children’s Services Transformation Programme

Impact of Older People’s Transformation Change Programme

North West Locality Activities

GGC HSCP Strategic Plan engagement plan.

The breadth of information being presented is such that it is not possible for us to do a deep dive into every area of work. Accordingly, some areas of importance where strategic gains could be made for equality groups are missed.

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix 2, [Glasgow City Council \(hscp.scot\)](http://glasgowcitycouncil.hscp.scot)

## Chapter 6

### Findings

#### 1. GEF representation is seen as positive by public sector colleagues and stakeholders

In our stakeholder survey, we asked “Do you think the GEF representative has brought perspectives to committee that would not otherwise have been heard?” 69% of respondents said yes, 8% said no and 23% said not sure.

Respondents commented:

- *“GEF have provided important feedback on EQIAs on grant funds.”*
- *“Reps have always made proactive contributions that outline the equality perspective on topics that are being discussed and provide constructive challenges to policy makers.”*
- *“GEF member has shared examples of relevant research and provided input from GEF annual conference etc.”*
- *“On committees it is very important to have multiple voices raising equalities issues e.g. barriers to accessing healthcare, barriers to participation, the need for official information in different languages etc... a lone voice is rarely listened to, so you need a few voices to say the same thing before it gets acknowledged.”*

The WECCE 2019 Annual Report stated that *“Co-optees provide valuable input, and have fed back to their respective networks.”*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Para 8.2 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019

In our stakeholder survey, some respondents stated that it would be valuable for GEF to carry out additional work

- *“It might be worthwhile for GEF to present short written briefs for committee members that outline the equality aspects of specific topics being discussed and how decisions might impact -positively or negatively - on people with protected characteristics, especially those items that are of major importance. This would enhance the verbal contribution made by reps.”*
- *“Recently attempts were made to seek feedback from GEF on an area of work (review of participation and engagement strategy) but presumably due to workload pressures this was not forthcoming. GEF needs to be properly resourced to enable impactful contribution. Ongoing and defined role should be made clear. Involvement in monitoring and progressing the actions of the review of engagement strategy, particularly in relation to EQIA”.*

## **2. For GEF members, our committee representation**

- a) Increased awareness of upcoming policy developments and service changes,**
- b) Improved their understanding of decision-making processes.**

100% of GEF members survey respondents said they were better informed about the work of Glasgow City Council through GEF's updates. Asked the same question about the work of GGC HSCP, 87.5% said yes and 12.5% said they were not sure. Comments included

- *“GEF updates allow us to quickly sift through an abundance of information and find the key issues and points we need to consider and respond to. The GCC website is so difficult to navigate and inaccessible, therefore it is so valuable to have someone dedicated to making sure the right information reaches the right people on time. The necessary summaries and key points enable us to make effective use of our limited time.”*
- *“I always appreciate the sheer breadth of knowledge in the Forum - funding, strategy, relational and help navigating the different layers of the City apparatus”.*

At the CPP Executive Group, GEF members were able to contribute to consultations they might not have known about otherwise, for example the Strathclyde Passenger Transport’s Strategic Transport Projects Review and GGC HSCP’s Consultation on Glasgow’s Family Support Strategy<sup>10</sup>.

Representation at the Public Engagement Committee has led to increased awareness and understanding of GCC HSCP Transformation Programmes, including the Maximising Independence Strategy. Being invited to attend IJB Development Sessions has allowed our rep to gain insights into the direction of travel and increased understanding about internal structures.

Attending the WECCE Committee and GCPP Executive Group gave our members a valuable opportunity to horizon scan for opportunities to feed in equalities perspectives to proposed service and policy changes, whilst giving an improved awareness of policy context across the wide range of work carried out by community planning partners.

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<sup>10</sup> as part of [Glasgow’s Integrated Children’s Services Plan 2017-20](#).

Over the research period, it was notable that the rep often shared detailed information to members *after* attending meetings. The detail of the information given in presentations allowed the rep to see relevant issues more clearly than from reading the papers alone.

One significant benefit of our membership is that GEF members now have access to consultations we may not have known about otherwise. Such as the Strategic Transport Projects Review and the Strategic Police consultation.

Members reported that being represented on committees has contributed to increased representation for our members in other spaces. Examples cited include GDA being invited to participate in the Maximising Independence Participation Workstream, and the number of Social Recovery Taskforce workstreams focussed on equalities.

Our representation has allowed us to build positive relationships with council officers and elected members, which is beneficial both at committee and in other strategic work.

### **3. Committee representation is a starting point, rather than an end point, in making positive changes for equality groups**

Making a comment at committee does not lead to an immediate change. Our research shows that GEF's input at committees is the first step in a long process of dialogue and discussion. A regular pattern could be described as follows:

- GEF rep makes a comment at committee;
- The outcomes of making the point is that further discussions need to take place between GEF and the relevant council officers, and this is recorded in the minutes as an action;

- A meeting (in person, telephone or via video conferencing) takes place where further discussion takes place, equality viewpoints are listened to, and further context given. In the main, these are constructive and positive discussions;
- The council officer/s then agree to speak with colleagues about securing concrete actions flowing from our discussion;
- Further discussions take place or the issue is not progressed further due to lack of capacity.

On some occasions, GEF members form a sub-group of interested members, who attend further meetings with council officers to progress discussions with a view to making change. One example of this is around GGC HSCP's Engagement and Participation Strategy.

Accordingly, each comment that is made at committee requires follow up work which has a time commitment. The more comments we make, the more work flows from this. GEF take our role as representative seriously, but the more we perform the function of conduit of information between committees and our members, the more time this takes and the less substantive work we can do.

It is worth repeating that GEF employ one part time member of staff who is attempting to provide equalities expertise within an increasing complex committee structure (since commencement of Social Recovery Taskforce). Our stakeholders, who work with large public sector organisations with large staff teams, perhaps do not fully understand the extent of work that is required. In our stakeholder survey, we asked "*are you aware of any work happening outside of committee as a result of GEF's participation?*" 31% said yes, 38% said no and 31% said not sure.

#### **4. How decisions are made is different from what we expected- committees structures are often a final stage in decision-making and it is too late for our input**

Our experience speaks to the non-linear way change is effected, and how decisions are made before and not during the meetings we attend. We had assumed that by participating within committee structures and making points at meetings that our input could be acted upon, but this is often not the way committees function. The committee is either the final stage in a lengthy development and consultation process, or a place where annual progress reports are heard. For example, in the vast majority of papers heard at GCPP Executive Group and Strategic Partnership, papers are “for noting”.

Our participation within committee has led our members to seek out where decision-making really takes place, in order that their viewpoints and expertise can be shared at a time when it can have an impact and be of most benefit to council officers.

#### **5. Being a committee rep did not lead to the structural or policy changes GEF members are looking for**

This is one of the key findings that most disappointed us. Evidence from a range of policy areas demonstrated that being a committee rep did not lead to an increase in positive changes to policies or services for matters of importance to our members. Whilst being invited to the table increases your voice, it does not automatically make an impact in terms of decision making.

There are pieces of work we do with the public sector where members report they feel they made a difference to the outcome. A recent example is with GCC’s consultation on their Equality Outcomes 2021-25. Council officers made

early contact with GEF, invited comments, and asked how they could help our members to input, and provided subsequent drafts for our comments. In this work, GEF members feel listened to, and the council officer has expressed how helpful our members input was. These outcomes have the potential to be impactful and make positive changes, for example the inclusion of measures around improving BME young people's experiences of education. This work happened out-with the remit of a committee but shows how positive change can happen when we are involved at the right time.

Although outwith the scope of this report, it is worth noting that GEF members are chair or co-chair of a number of workstreams within the Social Recovery Taskforce. While it is early days, we are hopeful that their focus on equality groups will carry through into the new Community Plan and bring about the positive changes we wish to see.

## **6. Representation needs to happen “upstream” to have greater effect.**

Responses to our stakeholder survey strongly suggested that including equalities input at an earlier stage would be more influential:

*“Including GEF at early stage of certain pieces of work or on discussions about upcoming areas of work would enable them to have more proactive influence. Ask for an occasional report on GEF activity as it relates to engagement. Examples of best practice. Involvement and input to meetings is limited and seems too reactive at the moment. Needs to be more than just ticking a box.”*

*“Where possible, GEF’s members should aim to become members of more committees/partnership structures. The scale of structures in the city is immense, and for individuals to represent so many people is an impossible task but taking that first step is key.”*

*“It is acknowledged that for GEF to be impactful at committees and as part of the ongoing relationship with GCHSCP they must be involved in relevant areas of work at the correct point in time. If not until it’s too late there is not much scope for them to provide the type of equalities advice and expertise needed”.*

We are not represented where policies are being developed and are not involved from an early stage where new strategies and policies are being developed. Finding out about policies at a stage where they are being presented for endorsement by Committee means we have almost no chance to influence their outcome.

A further consequence is that we are going into committees unaware of previous discussions, strategic drivers, policy considerations and budget constraints. It puts the rep in a tricky position to comment adversely on a new policy or strategy, knowing that council officers have worked behind the scenes for many months- it is beneficial for everyone to hear feedback from a “critical friend” at the earliest stage.

Other important considerations raised by our members are about the lack of equalities input in important work such as City Deal, Economic Recovery Taskforce or capital projects. These are areas where big gains could be made that would contribute towards GCC’s Equality Outcomes.

## **7. The equality network infrastructure needs to be properly funded to do this work justice**

GEF are not adequately resourced to meaningfully comment and follow up on all the issues we are asked to comment on within our committee role. The administrative role alone is time consuming. We have found a particular difficulty is having time to follow up after a committee meeting. Where there may be potential to do partnership work, we currently lack the capacity take this forward.

A second important barrier to effective representation is the lack of capacity within our members. The equalities network infrastructure is underfunded for the important strategic role they perform. There is an expectation that GEF will bring perspectives from a range of protected characteristic groups, but these networks often do not have capacity to feed in their perspectives- their staff are all fully committed to delivering the work they are funded to do. One comment from our stakeholder survey reflects this:

*“Comments from GEF have on occasion been limited to reflecting views given to them in advance of the meeting by Glasgow Disability Alliance rather than a wider representation of marginalised groups.”*

This capacity issue is compounded for our associate members such as Faith in Community Scotland, Amina MWRC and WSREC – these groups simply do not have staff resource to read all the committee papers GEF circulate and then feed in their views. They are also unlikely to be able to complete Glasgow surveys and consultations as often as they would like.

This issue has been particularly stark for Glasgow LGBT+ Voluntary Sector Network. Whilst their members are invited to sit on groups such as the Social Recovery Taskforce, they are simply unable to attend. Their perspectives are then lost to all partners around the table, their needs are not taken into account in future planning, and their exclusion is therefore compounded.

## **8. Power dynamics are a real barrier for equality groups**

Equality groups have been given a voice within committee structures, but this has not changed power dynamics. Within the committee system, there is little accountability for council officers to follow up on the concerns of equality groups. There is a lack of equality representation, and wider transparency, around financial decision-making within agendas such as Glasgow Economic Taskforce and City Deal. Equality voices are not heard around these tables, nor are opportunities to feed-in shared with the third sector more widely.

Our role as equalities reps is to raise the voices of people who are often not heard, to bring expertise that community planning partners do not have and improve services and policies for the benefit of people with protected characteristics. The lack of levers of powers and accountability mechanisms mean our input can be cited as evidence of the participation of equality groups, without any change being achieved for the groups we represent.

At the HSCP Equality Working Group meeting in February 2020, there was an agenda item on power. This led to a wide-ranging discussion on how power dynamics could change, with one health improvement worker stating that *“racism is a public health issue”*. It is really encouraging to hear health professionals raising equalities concerns - the challenge is bringing these nuanced perspectives into decision-making and strategic spaces.

## Chapter 7

### A way forward

When this research was completed, GEF members sat down and had long discussions about how we could be more impactful in our role representing equality groups. GEF members noted that there was important strategic work being developed in other committees that we had no connection to. The breadth of thematic areas of work covered by each committee, the lack of our involvement at an early stage and our limited staff resource led our members to explore how we could increase our influence in matters of importance.

Despite the time commitment and the seriousness with which GEF reps undertook their role, members overwhelmingly felt we were pressed into being reactive to the agendas and time scales of our public sector partners. Our members wanted to talk about how GEF could speak up on issues that did not come up at the committees we attended, and how we could develop stronger working relationships “upstream”. Members expressed we could often only examine committee reports on a surface level- to represent our members properly required a deeper dive into the issues that mattered most.

We received feedback that members wanted to know if policies, practices and service changes actually impacted on equality groups beyond what was written at the outset. As a small organisation, how could we make best use of our strategic role to have an impact on matters of importance?

These questions led us to think about how we could concentrate our efforts on the thematic or policy areas that could make the most difference and deepen the impact of our participation.

This led to us look at the work of other organisations, particularly to the work of Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR). Based in Belfast, PPR have pioneered work supporting communities to develop human indicators and benchmarks. PPR's methodology has been cited as a best practice example of how communities can claim their rights:

*“These indicators are basically measurements – they are measured by the group over a period of time, usually a year. This shows:*

- *are things getting better on the ground in this community?*
- *are the government progressively realising rights as required by human rights law?*

*Because time is not neutral when change is required by the most vulnerable, the groups also set targets for change or benchmarks. These benchmarks allow the group to identify the acceptable rate of change/progressive realisation of the right for them”<sup>11</sup>*

While GEF's focus is on equality law rather than human rights, we wondered whether adopting an approach like this could help us move in the direction of measuring impact and change – could we use this model to direct our focus to the issues our members say are most important, rather than be driven by the varied and vast business that come before committees?

There is something interesting too in the possibility of a shift in power dynamic- would we achieve more change if we stated what was most important and what we expected, rather than working reactively?

Subsequently, we carried out consultation about what matters most to our members. They voted for, then refined a list of indicators that they felt could have greatest impact.

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<sup>11</sup> [About Us | PPR | No-one Left Behind \(nlb.ie\)](#)

While GEF shall continue representing our members at committee, we wish to invite a small working group of councillors and council officers to come together to help us formulate workable and effective indicators, that can be monitored and reported on annually:

1. Employment rates for disabled and BME people increases, across GCPP (with expectation of year-on-year increases).
2. Increased evidence that human rights and equality budgeting tools are used in financial decision-making.
3. Increased evidence that EQIAs are co-produced with GEF and equality networks.
4. Increased evidence of co-production with GEF and equality networks in policy and strategy development.
5. Increased use of local equality data and research in service and policy development and delivery.
6. Increased number of equalities targets within mainstream work such as
  - a) GCPP new Community Plan locality plans (Thriving Places)
  - b) Community Plan workstreams (particularly those not lead by equality groups)
  - c) Place based approaches.
7. That an increasing number of people with lived experience and groups who represent them are invited to join strategic planning and decision-making groups. For example
  - a) all levels of the Integrated Joint Board, Strategic Planning Groups and Transformation Programme Boards
  - b) Decision-making committees at GCC.

8. Increase in the number of equality organisations that are workstream leads and are contracted to carry out paid work within the IJB (for example Disabled People's Organisations where policies disproportionately affect disabled people).
9. Increase in sustainability of funding for all Glasgow voluntary sector equality networks.

As far as we know, this is the first time the indicators and benchmark model has been adapted to work with equality legislation rather than human rights. We consider this to be a novel and innovative approach- if successful, GEF could report on whether change had been achieved and give facts and figures to back that up. Many of these indicators are aims that are common to GCC, GCPP and GEF, so making progress would be of benefit to everyone, not least the people of Glasgow who we all represent.

We have recently shared this report with council officers across GCC, GCPP and GGC HSCP who have responsibility for equalities, data gathering or monitoring Equality Outcomes. We wish to bring them together in a working group with volunteers from this committee and GEF members to finalise measurable and workable indicators and benchmarks, which will be measured from April 2022-March 2023.

We ask councillors:

1. To note the contents of this report and support this direction of travel.
2. That councillors volunteer to be part of a subgroup (with relevant council officers and GEF members) to
  - a) refine and finalise these indicators
  - b) establish where in GCC these indicators should be embedded.

3. Agree that GCPP Equality Working Group takes responsibility for this ongoing work.
4. Hear a progress report in April 2023.

GEF would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to our survey and to the council officers who have supported us to bring this report to committee.

Lorraine Barrie, GEF Manager

[lorraine@crer.org.uk](mailto:lorraine@crer.org.uk)