



**Glasgow City Council**

**Wellbeing, Engagement, Community and  
Citizen Empowerment Committee**

**Report by Director of Community Empowerment Services and  
Equalities**

**Contact: Judith Hunter Ext: 39876**

**Item 3**

11th November 2021

**Equalities Work within Community Empowerment Services**

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide the Committee with an update on the equalities related work within Community Empowerment Services

To provide an opportunity for committee members to give feedback on the work

To recommend links between the new citywide Community Engagement group and the committee

**Recommendations:**

To note the content of the report

To receive future reports on the new citywide community engagement group

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes  No  consulted: Yes  No

## **1. The Community Planning Partnership Equalities Working Group (EQWG)**

1.1 Since the last time of reporting to this committee, it should be noted that this group had a hiatus during 2020 as a result of the pandemic and only regrouped at the end of the year. The group is currently co-chaired by the Director of Community Empowerment and Equalities and the Development Manager of Glasgow Equality Forum. During the last eighteen months, there have been changes in personnel among some of the partners and a shift in focus towards social recovery work.

1.2 The meetings of the group are still being held online and initially, were more about catching up on a missed year of partnership working and identifying urgent business of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) that needed an equalities input. However, over the last two meetings, it was agreed to review the core purpose of the group and think about areas where genuine joint working could have a greater impact.

1.3 Following discussion at the meeting in September 2021, several areas for development were identified:

- Greater focus on and connection with the core business of the CPP. This is the main purpose of the group according to the terms of reference, but in practice, it can be difficult to implement. The group has been involved in processes such as Equality Impact Assessment of the Glasgow Communities Fund, or the Community Plan, but it can feel tacked on at the end of planning, rather than as a crucial element of initial planning within the workstreams. The group would like to see a clearer understanding of the role that equalities should play at the CPP Executive/Strategic Partnership level and it was suggested that a paper be taken to the CPP to this effect.
- This would ideally include agreement that all CPP partners understand there would be a 'trigger point', at which they must bring an update on their current shared workloads to this group, to sense check for equalities and demonstrate the engagement of equalities groups in their planning and development processes. This would also be a way of offering support to partners who weren't sure of their public duties or how to go about bringing those voices to their work.
- Training has been a desired partnership outcome for some years and has been impacted by a lack of access to training resources within some of the partners, including the Council. Despite this, in the spirit of greater joint working and pooling of resources, the group would like to keep this as a priority for further investigation.
- Developing a group that empowers equalities across the city. There is much to learn from one another for example, the HSCP recently undertook the TIDES self-assessment on equalities work, which provided some real learning. It was agreed to look at a similar assessment for the group. Another role of the group could be having an overarching sense of equalities work across the city, especially from external sources of funding e.g. EHRC awards recently. How can those organisations that were funded connect to public sector work to ensure best outcomes for vulnerable communities?
- Joined up community engagement that focuses on people with protected characteristics alongside the mainstream. Many of the member of the EQWG,

especially within the Third Sector, are the experts at engaging with communities of interest. With a renewed interest in developing a citywide engagement approach (see below), it was agreed that this should be an ongoing focus of the group.

The next steps for the group will be to discuss these work areas further at the CPP Executive Group and to start developing a joint workplan.

## **2. BME Task Group**

2.1 The BME task group was set up for the key purpose of bringing the voice of BME communities in Glasgow into the work of the Council and typically meets four times a year. This 'voice' is heard via the membership in the group of Third Sector organisations, both local and national and all representing different BME communities across the city, including that of refugees and asylum seekers.

2.2 The Group is chaired by Bailie Annette Christie and supported by Community Empowerment Services. The BME Task Group in turn, reports to Community Planning Partnership Structures, including the Social Recovery Taskforce, where it is the lead for the BME workstream. The Group has several additional work themes, such as digital inclusion, education, health and wellbeing, poverty and community/democratic engagement.

2.3 The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER), for example, has been a valuable stakeholder in raising awareness and mobilising action in relation to education in the following areas:

- ensuring that teachers, through continuous professional development and the provision of adequate resources, are fully equipped and confident in supporting learning and teaching for all Curriculum for Excellence capacities and levels;
- mandatory recording and analysis of racist incidents in Scotland's schools;
- ensure gathering and analysis of data on racial disparities within all progress reporting on the National Performance Framework

2.4 The Task Group started again at the end of 2020 when it was agreed that the group would be the lead for the BME strand of the Social Recovery Taskforce. In March 2021, a consultation session was held, where a much wider range of organisations came to talk about their experiences of supporting communities through the pandemic. The regular Group members are predominantly citywide organisations or beyond, but this session was open to a more diverse mix via the BME Voluntary Sector Network, and they were smaller, community led organisations, predominantly run by New Scots and reflecting the changing demographic of the BME population in Glasgow.

2.5 Due to the declining attendance of some of the original members of the group, it was agreed to open the main membership to the wider organisations in future. Recent presentations to the group focused on some of the issues that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The Health and Social Care Partnership have started a process of engagement with BME organisations in Glasgow to look at how children and young

people's mental health has been affected by the pandemic. There is also interest among partners in developing more of a partnership with BME communities around poverty and child poverty.

2.6 In short, the group needs to undergo a period of change and development with new members and a renewed commitment to genuine partnership working to achieve change. It has been a challenging eighteen months, particularly for third sector and community organisations. The challenge for the Council will be in how to support and maintain meaningful engagement with the organisations who support Glasgow's BME communities, when those organisations are often struggling with funding and capacity. The council recognizes the value that this sector provides and acknowledges the difficulties they face, which directly impacts on their ability to support communities.

### **3. Black Lives Matters/Slavery Group**

3.1 In line with the [motion approved by the Council in September 2020](#); the council committed to look at the key areas identified as a result of the Black Lives Matters (BLM) activism across the world and in Glasgow. This included a commitment to:

*Recognise the historic legacy of chattel slavery based on the exploitation of Enslaved Africans by committing to a legitimate democratic process and civic conversation regarding the statues and street names that commemorate prominent figures associated with slavery through the tobacco, sugar and cotton trades.*

The BLM/Slavery Legacy Cross Party Working Group has been convened to look at how Glasgow addresses the legacy of Slavery in the city through the civic conversation and by examining the approaches of other authorities who have progressed this work. The Group reports to the City Administration Committee with updates to WECCE.

3.2 As well as elected members from across the political parties, the group contains several experts: academics who have studied the impact of slavery and colonialism, community representatives, BME organisations and those working on slavery legacy within Glasgow Museums.

3.3 At recent meetings, the group considered expert advice from other local authorities who have already started on work to address the issues that arose from the legacy of slavery such as Bristol and Liverpool. It was noted that in both of those cases, a long period of community engagement was a crucial part of the process, with both using approaches targeted to the BME community, as well as with wider citizens. Bristol committed initially to actions relating to the controversial Edward Colston statue that was toppled last summer. Liverpool committed to several educational plaques in streets related to slavery history.

3.4 The Group is currently considering what is realistically achievable in the initial phase before the Council pauses in March for the elections in May, and what will be longer term ambitions. The University of Glasgow has been commissioned to complete an audit of street names associated with the slave trade which will be ready

by spring 2022. In the meantime, Glasgow Life have carried out a consultation (targeted more at partners with some knowledge of the subject) around the desire for a slavery related museum or permanent exhibition and this has relevance for the group.

3.5 Discussion at the group has also raised questions about how much citizens understand of the city's role in the transatlantic slave trade and highlighted the need for education among those not currently or recently at school. The initial stage of this project may include a digital strategy to raise awareness, and conversation cafes aimed at Glasgow's BME communities and beyond. Further updates will be provided to the WECCE Committee as and when available.

#### **4. Supporting the Council Equality Outcomes**

4.1 The Principal Officer for Equalities continues to support colleagues within Strategic Policy and Planning with the development of the GCC Equality Outcomes for 2021-25 where possible and relevant. This will include working together with partners to shape and strengthen the equalities elements of the refresh of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan – Glasgow's Community Action Plan.

4.2 The timing of the refresh of the Community Action Plan means that outcomes and indicators can be more closely aligned to the new Council Equality Outcomes, as it will for other public sector partners. Given the challenges of the last year, the council has committed to a more flexible way setting of equality outcomes, recognising that they will need to change and grow as the city slowly recovers from the pandemic. Community Empowerment Services remains committed to this process and to ensuring that equalities are embedded in the new Community Action Plan.

#### **5. Community Engagement and Equalities**

5.1 The development of a more coordinated approach to community engagement has been a key work stream in the last year. The Principal Officer for Equalities also manages community engagement and development officers, including those who support community councils. In the first lockdown, this group of officers (and other CES staff) worked on emergency food provision for the shielded group and became a more cohesive team. With the inclusion of the locality planning officer, this has now become the Communities team within Community Empowerment Services. While each member has their own workload, there is an intention to work more closely with each other and with partners on community engagement projects.

5.2 In the last year, staff from Community Empowerment Services have been working closely with Glasgow Life, Glasgow Kelvin College and Glasgow Centre for Population Health on delivering a community engagement exercise for the Social Recovery Taskforce. Community Connectors from Thriving Places and HSCP staff were also involved and this project engaged with some of the most vulnerable in our city and young people.

5.3 The findings were reported to the SRT in September, and amongst the illustration of the varying challenges of life under the pandemic, the findings also showed that citizens wanted to have more say in the services that affect them. The report asked that more partners develop services using genuine co-production approaches, and this will be recommended as part of the Community Action Plan.

5.4 The working group that carried out the project is now planning to expand to interested members of the SRT with a remit for community engagement and are planning an initial meeting in November. The group aims to co-ordinate and improve community engagement practice across the city and create proactive working partnerships. The group are hoping to report to the Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership (which in turn reports to the CPP) and are currently drafting a terms of reference for the group.

5.5 It is impossible to separate issues of inequality and power from good community engagement practice; therefore, equalities will be an essential element of this work and mainstreamed throughout. It is recommended that once this group is established formally, that more regular updates are provided to the WECCE Committee so that community engagement is more closely linked to the business of the Committee.

## 2 Policy and Resource Implications

**Resource Implications:** Not at this time

*Financial:*

*Legal:*

*Personnel:*

*Procurement:*

**Council Strategic Plan:** A well governed city that listens and responds

Outcomes:

- The council has open and transparent decision making.
- Citizens are more involved in local and citywide decision making.
- We listen to citizens and respond.
- We take account of equality issues and the impact of poverty in our decision making.

Strategic Plan Numbers 94, 95, 96 and 98

**Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.* Yes, it supports the development of the outcomes

*What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?* Positive

*Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.*

### **Climate Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:* N/A

*What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?*

*Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?*

### **Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:** N/A

## **3 Recommendations**

To note the content of the report

To receive future reports on the new citywide community engagement group