



**REPORT TO: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CORPORATE ADVISORY
FORUM ON 24 JANUARY 2014**

**SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: Overview of recent activities on
equal opportunities**

BY: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OFFICER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Equality and Diversity Corporate Advisory Forum of current activities around equal opportunities within the Moray Council in addition to activities on the forum's agenda.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 With the raised profile of equal opportunities within the Moray Council, there has been an increase in the number of activities in which the Equal Opportunities Officer is involved. Whilst it will be impossible to discuss all of these at the meetings, it is important that the forum stays informed of and retains an overview of developments regarding equal opportunities within Moray.
- 2.2 Overview of activities:
- **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill consultation.** The Bill aims to strengthen the involvement of community groups in local decision making and includes a new way for communities to take on public sector land and buildings; opportunities for communities to be more involved in shaping and delivering better outcomes locally; greater transparency in the management and disposal of the Common Good; improved powers for local authorities to recover the costs of dealing with dangerous and defective buildings; measures to streamline and extend the rural community right to buy; new duties to strengthen Community Planning; updated and simplified legislation on allotments; new powers for local authorities to create local business rate relief schemes. The complexity of the Bill is reflected in the 75 questions attached to the consultation. John Ferguson has co-ordinated the response on behalf of the Moray Council. Closing date is 24 January 2014.
 - **Review of sustainable leisure in Moray.** There is a consultation currently underway, the results of which will be fed back to the area

based review group. An equality impact assessment will be part of the overall review.

- **Reviews of taxi licensing and public entertainment licensing.** Two consultations are currently underway in relation to these issues.
- **Community Asset Transfer.** Advice has been given on inclusion of equal opportunities in the overall policy and guidance. Further advice on individual applications will be given and support will be available to community groups to ensure compliance with Equality Legislation. An application from the 3 Harbours Association will be put to Policy and Resources Committee on 21 January 2014.
- **Community Engagement Group.** A subgroup of this consisting of John Ferguson, Martine Scott and Equal Opportunities Officer are developing a handbook for community engagement.
- **Incident reporting.** There has been a marked increase in incident reporting over the last few months, predominantly from the schools. Until December 2012 there were no reports for almost a year. Between January and August of 2013 there were 4 incidences. The last quarter of 2013 saw 11 incidences. So far, two more incidences have been reported during January 2014.
- **Moray Equalities Forum.** The forum is involved in various consultations, including those on the budget proposals. There have been several meetings during 2013, most of which have been poorly attended. It was proposed at the last meeting that the forum takes a more active approach of engaging with other community groups. This is described in further detail under item 5.
- **FOIs.** There have been a number of FOI requests following the decision regarding the libraries.
- **Advise on EIAs.** During 2013, 538 committee reports were checked for compliance with duty to carry out equality impact assessments. In 125 (23%) reports impacts (positive or negative) were identified and, where appropriate, mitigating actions were put in place. Compliance with the public sector equality duties was 100%. In 2012 there were 519 reports in total, 69 (13%) identified impacts. Compliance was 85%. The focus of the EIA scrutiny will during 2014 shift to the extent to which mitigating actions and action plans are being followed up. A full report on EIA for 2013 will be submitted to the Communities Committee in March 2014 as part of the update report on compliance with the public sector equality duties.

3. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- (a) **Council / Community Planning Priorities**
- (b) **Policy and Legal**
- (c) **Financial implications**

(d) Risk Implications

(e) Staffing Implications

(f) Property

(g) Equalities

(h) Consultations

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 The Equality and Diversity Corporate Advisory Forum is asked to note the activities undertaken to promote equal opportunities within the Moray Council.

Author of Report:
Background Papers:
Ref:

Signature: _____ Date : _____

Designation: _____ Name: _____