

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: Youth and Equalities Committee	Subject: North Lanarkshire Council Employee Equality Forum	
From: Head of Education (Skills, Lifelong Learning and Youth Employment)		
Date: 11 JANUARY 2017	Ref: LMCM/BP/AC	

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the role and work of the Council's Employee Equality Forum.

**2. BACKGROUND**

At the Youth and Equalities Committee meeting held on 28 April 2016 members considered a report on the current and future equality and human rights strategic priorities for North Lanarkshire Council. This report also contained an update on the progress of the Employee Equality Forum (EEF) and approved a recommendation by the Corporate Equalities Working Group to afford the EEF an opportunity to make a presentation to a future meeting of the Youth and Equalities Committee on its work.

**3. CONSIDERATIONS**

**The Employee Equality Forum**

In 2014 the Council's Corporate Management Team endorsed a proposal from the Corporate Equalities Working Group to establish a new Employee Equality Forum. The main aim of the forum was to function as a collective, co-ordinated resource to enable employees with protected characteristics to influence organisational strategies, policies and procedures for promoting equality, and tackle discrimination. The forum's overarching purpose is to make an effective contribution towards promoting equality and supporting the development of equality policies and practices in employment.

Terms of reference for the EEF are attached as appendix 1 to this report for the information of members.

To ensure the benefits of the Council having such a forum are understood and valued it is important that the forum is able to communicate effectively about its work and worth within the Council.

The purpose of the accompanying presentation from the EEF is to provide members with the opportunity to hear first-hand about the work of the forum to date and how this work contributes to the Council's strategic priorities and equality duties.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Youth and Equalities Committee is invited to:

- (i) note the rationale underpinning the arrangements for representatives from North Lanarkshire Council's Employee Equality Forum to attend Committee on 9th February 2017;
- (ii) note the content of this report; and
- (iii) hear the presentation by members of the Employee Equality Forum.



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**North Lanarkshire Council****Employee Equality Forum****Terms of Reference**

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The North Lanarkshire Council Employee Equality Forum has been put in place by the Council as a collective, co-ordinated resource to enable employees with protected characteristics to influence organisational strategies, policies and procedures for promoting equality, and tackling discrimination.

**Purpose**

The key purpose of the Forum is to make an effective contribution towards promoting equality and supporting the development of equality policies and practices in employment.

**Core Functions**

- To collectively work with the Council towards promoting equality and the elimination of discrimination.
- To provide an overview of equality issues and, in partnership with Council Officers, to identify and address amendments required to policies, practices, procedures and strategies.
- To develop mechanisms and communications channels to provide feedback about issues affecting employees with protected characteristics.
- To advocate for a more inclusive and holistic organisational culture that gains strength from its diversity.
- To collectively raise awareness and challenge inequality and highlight actions that can be taken.
- To foster an environment of mutual trust with the Council where group members have the professional support and space to communicate freely about equality issues.
- To work with the Council to ensure, as appropriate, the issues and strategies proposed by the Forum are built into the mainstream work carried out by the Council.

**Approach**

- The Forum will meet on a quarterly basis.
- The Forum will choose a Chairperson.
- The Forum will choose a Secretary who will be responsible for all EEF correspondence.
- All issues raised will be treated in the strictest of confidence.
- The Forum will operate in a manner consistent with the Council's Organisational Values.
- The Forum will set-up task and finish groups, where appropriate, to carry out discrete pieces of work as requested by management e.g. responding to consultation exercises on employment policies or contributing to the development of strategies

- Time to attend meetings of the EEF must be approved from line managers and subject to the exigencies of the service.

### **Liaison and Support**

- Links between the Forum and the Council will be through liaison with Corporate HR Services
- Admin support i.e. issue of calling notices, minutes, papers and booking of facilities will be provided by Learning and Leisure Service Directorate Support Team