

Aberdeen Equalities Participation Network

First meeting, February 18th 2021

Introductions/Welcome

Dave (GREC) welcomed everyone to the meeting. All attending introduced themselves and, where relevant, their organisation or community group. Many participants welcomed the opportunity to come together and explore what this new Network could be, particularly given the recent limitations on such opportunities.

Aberdeen City Council Equality Outcomes

Faiza (Aberdeen City Council) provided an overview of the process of setting the council's priorities for equality ("Equality Outcomes") for the period 2021-25 and shared the draft outcomes, inviting comment and questions from participants.

Several participants raised concerns with the Council's approach to community engagement around the new Equality Outcomes, which was mainly delivered mainly by GREC via surveys and focus groups with partner organisations. These participants felt that more needs to be done to ensure as many groups as possible can participate as some have been not been reached. Dave suggested there is always room for improvement and that although we have tried to reach as many groups and communities as possible, it has not been a perfect exercise and we should always try to improve.

Agreed: that the new Network should play a role in supporting the Council enhance its approach to community engagement with equality groups.

Other participants suggested that having time to read and digest the materials before feeding back would be helpful. **Action: Faiza** to share written materials for participants to feed back.

Developing the Equalities Participation Network

Dave (GREC) provided some suggestions as to what the new Network is about: to work in partnership with Aberdeen City Council on a range of issues where diverse community involvement will support progress; a place for people (as individuals or organisational representatives) to come together and share perspectives & challenges, and develop solutions; a place to establish short and perhaps longer term projects aimed at advancing equality.

As well as supporting the development of an effective community engagement approach to equalities, members also identified the following as potential objectives or roles for the network:

- Sharing information on services and opportunities on offer, e.g. via an organisational or community spotlight section at each meeting
- Learning and sharing experience, e.g. through formal or informal training or workshops
- A space to identify priorities for advancing equality and developing an action plan.

There were various discussions around practicalities, including timing of meetings and sharing email addresses. **Action: Dave** to create and share a survey aimed at addressing the practicalities as well

as forming up an agreement on the key aims and activities of the group. It was broadly agreed that a late March meeting would be welcomed.