

EQUALITY WORKING GROUP MEETING

5TH MARCH 2008

AGREED MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Lisa McElherron, NICVA
Bob Collins, Equality Commission
Maeve McLaughlin, Local Government
Siobhan O'Donoghue, Migrant Rights Centre, Ireland
Pamela Dooley, UNISON
Jim Deery, Ashton Community Trust (Voluntary & Community)
Jim Jewhurst, DEL
Dale Heaney, OFMDFM
Andrew Minnis, SEUPB
Damian Fitzpatrick, DETI
Melanie Morrow, NISRA
Peter Millen, DFP
Anne Baker, Secretariat

1. Introduction

The DFP representative opened the meeting by thanking Jim Deery and the Ashton Community Trust for their hospitality.

Apologies were noted from Mealla Bratton and Lynsey Moore.

2. Appointment of Chair

The DFP representative noted that the role of the Chair would be to drive the work of the group and report to the Monitoring Committee. Nominations were invited for Chair and Deputy Chair. After some discussion Bob Collins agreed to be Chair with Lisa McElherron as Deputy.

3. Update and action points from last meeting

The DFP representative tabled a list of Action Points which arose at the last meeting. The Secretariat had issued links to relevant documentation as agreed; the EU publication from Del was included in the folder tabled at the meeting.

The OFMDFM representative reported that there was no mention in the Good Friday Agreement of joint N/S Section 75 legislation being introduced.

The DETI representative reported that a full EQIA had not been carried out on the Competitiveness Programme due to the nature of the indicative activities. A screening exercise was carried out which determined that there was no adverse impact on equality of opportunity or good relations. The expenditure under the Programme will be under Invest NI, NITB and DETI schemes which have already undergone an EQIA. Therefore to carry out an EQIA on the Programme would be a duplication of work. However as the Programme states, it is for the Working Group to decide if a full EQIA should be carried out. The DETI representative agreed to forward details of the equality screening of the programme to the secretariat for circulation to members. The matter can be discussed further at the next meeting.

Action: DETI/Secretariat

The Chair noted that if an EQIA was deemed necessary it should commence as soon as possible. The secretariat will collate responses from members on the DETI information and pass them to the Chair.

Action: Secretariat

The SEUPB representative asked if there were any further copies of the Equality Guidance booklet as they wished to have a supply for their Steering Committee. DFP to forward further copies.

Action: Secretariat

4. Terms of Reference

The DFP representative informed the group that any comments received from members had been incorporated into the TOR which was tabled at the meeting. The TOR, once agreed by the working group, will be presented to the Monitoring Committee in April for approval.

The Group discussed the TOR further and several amendments were requested. The Secretariat will make the amendments and circulate to members for comments and approval to enable the TOR to be presented to the April Monitoring Committee meeting for approval.

One issue which arose was whether the 'Lifetime Opportunities' policy had been formally adopted by the Executive. The Secretariat will check.

Action: Secretariat

The DFP representative tabled an indicative budget for the Working Group. This will be subject to the Work Plan of the group and will be met from Technical Assistance from the C & E Programmes.

5. Equality Guidance Note

The DFP representative noted that the review of the Equality Guidance Note was the first item on the role of the working group in the TOR. The Guidance note had been circulated to members to consider in advance of the meeting and comments were invited.

The Chair stated that it was necessary to include reference to Equality in Procurement in the guidance note and to ensure a reference is made that sub-contractors are required to meet equality requirements. The Chair to forward the Procurement Guidance to the Secretariat for circulation to the Working group.

Action: Chair/Secretariat

Further points were also discussed and will be considered by DFP who will report back to the Group.

Action: DFP

6. AOB

None raised

7. Date of next meeting

The Chair suggested that the group should meet before the next Monitoring Committee meeting to devise a Work Plan which can be put forward to the Committee.

The Secretariat will assess availability during early April and advise of the date and location.

TABLE OF ACTION POINTS

ISSUE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Update and action points from last meeting	Details of screening of ERDF Programme to be sent to Secretariat for circulation to members	DETI/Secretariat
	Secretariat will collate responses from members on the DETI information and pass them to the Chair	Secretariat
	Copies of Equality Guidance booklet to be sent to SEUPB	Secretariat
Terms of Reference	To check status of 'Lifetime Opportunities' policy	Secretariat
Equality Guidance note	The Chair to forward the Procurement Guidance to the Secretariat for circulation to the Working group.	Chair/Secretariat
	Points discussed and will be considered by DFP who will report back to the Group	DFP