

Diversity and Equality Steering Group

Note of DESG meeting
Held in Committee Rm 2
CnES, Sandwick Rd
On 13 December 2013 at 11 am

PRESENT

Lena Morrison - CnES
John Murray – Police Scotland
Gordon Macleod – Police Scotland
Gayle Findlay – OHCPP
Mandy Macleod - Crossreach
Gordon Thomas – Lewis Access Panel
Elizabeth Macdonald – Harris Access Panel
Lucy Macdonald – Harris Access Panel

APOLOGIES

Isobel Mackenzie – CnES (Housing)

Welcome and Introductions

Lena Morrison (LM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Minute of Meeting of 6 September 2013

The minute of the meeting of 6 September 2013 was approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

Policing Priorities – Equality and Diversity Priorities in the Western Isles

Chief Inspector, Gordon Macleod, attended to update the group on the policing priorities for the authority area and identify any issues which the group feel need to be addressed.

CI Macleod advised whilst there had always been a Policing Plan, there are now ward plans covering 9 areas across the authority. The ward plans are accessible via the Police Scotland website and can be accessed by simply entering a postcode. Ward plans from some of the areas were shared with the group.

Police Scotland have identified 7 high priority areas as follows:-

- Reduce Violence, disorder and anti-social behaviour
- Protect the Public
- Increase road safety & reduce road crime
- Tackle serious organised crime & terrorism
- Effectively police major events & threats
- Maintain high levels of public confidence in policing
- Deliver our equality & diversity outcomes

Previous consultation exercises identified policing priorities for ward areas which are very similar across the authority area. Locally PS are keen to give all communities the opportunity to contribute to the ward plans, the Community Policing Team tries to attend every

**Availability of Ward Police Plans in 'Easy Read' format.
JM (PS)**

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community council meeting and tries to identify trends within the communities.

Speeding is one issue which was common across all local plans. Officers will be targeting drink driving over the festive period, particularly the morning after offenders. The first week of the campaign has passed with no offences. CI Macleod also gave examples of how local issues have been tackled to maintain the priority of 'keeping people safe'.

The group had the opportunity to ask questions of CI Macleod regarding areas of concern either within their ward area or associated with an equality characteristic. Discussion took place regarding the policing of disabled parking bays; the retention of traffic wardens; speeding; and general concerns of the group. CI Macleod advised of various initiatives/projects in place to tackle some of the concerns raised and how concerns should be reported.

CI Macleod summarised the key successes for WI policing since the transfer to Police Scotland and confirmed there was an ongoing commitment to policing across the islands, staffing levels are healthy with a good team in place.

An outstanding question regarding the availability of the Policing ward plans in 'easy read' format would be followed up.

In Crisis? – A Survival Guide

Gayle Findlay advised that a need for a local guide has been identified by the Welfare Reform and Poverty Action Group. A 'Survival Guide' has been developed by Stirling Citizens Advice Bureau who have given permission for it to be reproduced for the authority. The Survival Guide had been circulated in advance of the meeting to obtain views and feedback regarding the relevance of this information, what else could be included from a local perspective.

Generally the feedback is that it is a good document which is very informative, using plain language. The group would like to see a draft of the local version with an opportunity to comment before a final version is agreed. It was requested that the guide be available as a downloadable version as well as hard copy and that it be distributed as widely as possible (schools, libraries, GP's, sports centres, job centre, partners websites, etc).

The Welfare Reform group will be responsible for keeping the guide up to date with changes to legislation and local guidance as appropriate.

Accessible and Easy Read Information – Welfare Rights

The Poverty Action and Welfare Reform group had received a letter, via CnES, from Disability Agenda Scotland gauging the availability and demand for accessible information regarding welfare rights issues and offering assistance in the preparation of such information if it did not exist. Gayle Findlay conducted some research to through the partners of the Poverty Action Group to ascertain what information was available locally and it was disappointing to find a lack of information in general but also a limited signposting to information.

Lucy Macdonald (HDAP) conducted online searches for information and found some key guidance and resources which are published on the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD) website

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Partners Update

Health Promotion

Mary Maclean provided an update of the Shared Roots project. A couple of informal meetings have taken place with learners from the Learning Shop which aimed to identify health needs within the community.

Poverty Awareness training was delivered to the CPP Officers group by Poverty Alliance Glasgow. The issues surrounding poverty still require to be explored further regarding local impact – there is still a general perception that there is no such thing as poverty on the island.

MM also updated the group on the work of the Poverty Action Group (PAG) which is a sub group of the CPP poverty officers group. Three poverty awareness courses have taken place – front line staff who are visiting peoples homes have been trained to look for signs of poverty within the household and how to address it with the individual and signpost to appropriate services. It is hoped to deliver workshops out in the community which would break some of the myths such as ‘everybody is on benefits’ and ‘the benefit system is abused’ and break down cultural barriers for those who do wish to acknowledge that they need support and assistance at difficult times.

Fas Fallan provided funding to the local food bank which is operated through the Trussell Trust. There are weekly referrals to the food bank which evidences the demand for the for this initiative within the authority area

DW also confirmed that ‘Disability Lewis’ no longer exists, the work of the group had gone very quiet so it was agreed to disestablish the group. Money which was held by the group was distributed to other organisations and the Disability Lewis bank account has been closed.

Learning Disability Collaborative Programme

Kathryn Maciver updated the group on the launch of the Learning Disability Strategy (currently being independently evaluated). Community events are planned throughout the authority area which aim to highlight information and services available locally for people with Learning Disabilities.

Services are still being developed and policies put in place to support the strategy. Essentially, the strategy is about gathering the knowledge of what the care delivery and extended needs of individuals are. The objective is to empower people to be able to make their own choices about the health services the can access.

MS Society

Donnie White advise the group that the local MS Society had previously run courses which support individuals with neurological conditions to self manage their conditions. There was an effort to run

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another course but there was only one applicant so it was not practical to run the course. Rachel, the MS nurse, has valuable information which can be distributed to individuals

NHSWI

TK Shasakshari advised that a programme of replacing emergency signage is ongoing. There is new signage in place throughout the hospital and this is continuing in GP Surgeries.

The NHSWI Equality Outcome report has been completed and the monitoring report is waiting to be signed off.

Lewis Access Panel

Gordon Thomas advised that Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) had recently held a partnership meeting in Uist. All the authority Access Panels were in attendance. The event was successful and it is hoped that the Panels can work together again in the future.

The Calmac consultations regarding the new ferry and pier terminal are ongoing and the access panels feel that they are being listened to and their comments are being taken on board.

Harris Disability Access Panel

LMD advised the work undertaken by HDAP was similar to the Lewis Access Panel, in addition the HDAP have been working with Calum Russell regarding access issues at the hospital

Date of Next Meeting 13 December 2013

Meeting Closed