

Falkirk Council

Title: Central Scotland Regional Equality Council

Meeting: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 18 August 2016

Submitted by: Director of Corporate and Housing Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the work of the Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC) to address the key challenges facing the organisation.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee notes the progress made by Central Scotland Regional Equality Council in terms of the stability of the organisation, work to address critical financial issues and agreement with the Council regarding the focus of its work for the coming year.**

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting in March 2016, the Committee considered a Following the Public Pound report on the CSREC. Following discussion, Committee agreed that an update report would be presented on the key challenges facing the organisation.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 The report presented in March was retrospective and the organisation had with the appointment of the new manager made significant progress over the last year. If his appointment continued then it was anticipated that this good progress would be sustained.
- 4.2 Since the report in March, which mainly focussed on activities in 2015, CSREC has made good progress in addressing a variety of issues. It has reached agreement with the Council regarding its obligations with regards to pensions. The Council reduced the original amount from £117 000 to £47 000 and allowed payment to over a period of 7 years. This means the financial position of the organisation is significantly more favourable than that previously reported. The manager and Board sought advice during

negotiations from a range of sources including their accountants, CVS Falkirk and District and also from SCVO's Director of Finance.

- 4.3 Additionally CSREC has engaged with a number of Council services in supporting them to achieve their equality outcomes. For example working with Corporate and Housing and Children's Services in hosting a community reassurance event as well as continuing to support all services in the ongoing development of the multi agency approach to hate crimes etc.
- 4.4 The Councils monitoring officer is the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement and she has met the chair of the Board, directors of the Board and manager on three occasions over the last six months. This has provided the necessary assurance that the organisation is more stable and thriving. To support Board Members a programme of training has been undertaken including training on funding, roles and responsibilities of board members and of course equality training. In addition the Board is seeking to refresh the membership of the board to achieve greater diversity and gender balance.
- 4.5 To this end a joint working agreement (JWA) between the Council and the CSREC has been drafted which focuses the work of the organisation on particular equality outcome of reducing hate crime and in particular race based hate crime. While the resources awarded to the CSREC by the Council amount to approx. £15,000 per annum including property costs, the bulk of the organisation's funding comes from other sources. This allows the organisation to focus on other areas of equality activities. It is hoped that a more proportionate JWA with the Council will result in more realistic outcomes for the resources the Council awarded and will support the organisation going forward.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 This report has been shared with the Chair and manager of the CSREC.

6. Implications

Financial

- 6.1 None

Resources

- 6.2 None

Legal

- 6.3 None.

Risk

- 6.4 The risk to the Council in awarding this money has been reduced due to the organisation being on a more stable financial footing. In addition the continuation of the current manager means the organisation has greater stability and focus going forward. It is anticipated that in the next annual report on CSREC the risk rating will have reduced from high to medium.

Equalities

- 6.5 This group and funding helps achieve significant equalities outcomes including section 149 (3) Equalities Act 2010 – including foster good relations between persons who share relevant characteristics and persons who do not.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.6 None.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The CSREC has made significant progress in addressing issues outlined in last year's report. Its focus is increasingly on the service it provides to the community and supporting partners to engage appropriately with relevant groups.

Director of Corporate and Housing Services

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Date: 5 August 2016

APPENDICES

None

List of Background Papers:

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- Joint Working Agreement – CSREC and Falkirk Council 2016-17.