

# Equality of Opportunity Committee

EOC(2) 04-05 (p4)e

<b>Date:</b>	12 May 2005
<b>Venue:</b>	National Assembly for Wales, Committee Rooms 3 and 4
<b>Time:</b>	09.30
<b>Title:</b>	Mainstreaming Equality - progress on implementing report recommendations for the Assembly Parliamentary Service

## Purpose

**1. Following consideration of responses to this Committee's 'Mainstreaming Equality' report at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March, this paper provides an update on progress with implementing recommendations 16, 17, 18 and 27 as they relate to the Assembly Parliamentary Service.**

## Recommendation

**2. Members are invited to consider and comment on the information contained in this report.**

## Progress with implementation

**Recommendation 27 - that a simple checklist of questions should be prepared for Subject Committees to use. This checklist should be drawn up in consultation with the Equality of Opportunity Committee's Standing Invitees.**

**3. The Committee's intention was that such a checklist would assist Committees in preparing their annual reports and their forward work programmes. The Standing Invitees to the Committee made presentations to the Panel of Chairs and staff of the Members Research and Committee Service to provide a further explanation of what would be expected from adopting this recommendation. The Standing Invitees provided a suggested list of questions, which is attached at Annex 1.**

- **Members are invited to comment on and possibly add to the list at Annex 1.**

**Recommendation 16 – that the guidance on Committee papers and Ministerial submissions should be revised to make consideration of the implications for equality of opportunity a requirement.**

**4. It is suggested that current guidance is changed (changes shown in bold) to state that: " The Assembly has duties under the Government of Wales Act to co-operate with local government, business and the voluntary sector and to discharge its functions with due regard to the principles of equality of opportunity and sustainable development."**

***"Committees [may] will wish to see explicit consideration of the implications for these strategic issues. When drafting papers you should consider the implications [(if any)] of these cross cutting issues from the outset and also whether there are any implications for other committees."***

***5. It is suggested that the current requirement is not sufficiently precise to ensure that equality issues (or indeed other cross cutting issues) are given sufficiently high profile in Ministerial and Committee papers. The Welsh European Funding Office Equality Unit has prepared desk instructions to assist authors in considering equal opportunities implications and how these can be addressed. For each programme monitoring paper produced they require the following questions to be answered, with a request for supporting evidence and suggestions for improvement for each answer given:***

- ***Could any recommendations for actions have adverse impacts on equality of opportunity for any group, eg disabled people?***
- ***Can the impact be justified?***
- ***Can additional or other action reduce the impact?***
- ***Have arrangements been made to monitor and review the impact of any action or recommendation made?***
- ***Does the paper contain any examples of good practice relating to equality of opportunity?***
  
- ***It is suggested that each Committee Paper should include responses to a list of questions similar to that given above. Do Members agree and do they wish to comment on the suitability of this list of questions for Welsh Assembly Government papers to Committees?***

***Recommendations 17 and 18 - that the Assembly's consultation guidance is reviewed to ensure that it is firmly based on equality of opportunity principles and addresses the need to engage the diversity of the public in***

***Wales. In conducting consultation, the Assembly should seek to engage as wide a range of individuals and organisations as possible.***

***6. The Mainstreaming Report recognises that limited guidance was available at the outset of its review and that situation has improved, but guidance is not being consistently applied. The Task and Finish Group that has been established to examine the implementation of the Committee's recommendations in the National Assembly will be looking at this issue. The Committee's Standing Invitees are of course represented on that group and it may be appropriate if they were to comment on the propriety of the revised guidance in addressing equality issues. A copy of this revised guidance and "good practice on producing access information" guidelines is attached at Annexes 2 and 3.***

***7. Members are invited to examine this document and comment on any weaknesses that are identified. In particular they are asked to identify whether or not the requirement that consultation is responsive to the particular requirements of different minority groups is adequately covered and that sufficient emphasis is placed on the need for lateral thinking in addressing the needs of different groups and cultures.***

***8. Within the Assembly Parliamentary Service, widespread consultations are carried out on a regular basis. Members' Research and Committee Services has reviewed its list of consultees with the Equality Policy Unit, to ensure that all relevant organisations representing the equality strands are included in consultation. The list is attached at Annex 4. It is intended that this list is used as the basis for future exercises.***

- Members are invited to comment on the revised consultation guidance at Annex 2, and to note the consultee list at annex 4.***

## **Action**

***9. Members are invited to:***

- comment on and possibly add to the list at Annex 1.***
- agree an approach to guidance on providing Welsh Assembly Government papers to Committees (para's 4 and 5 above)***
- to comment on the revised consultation guidance at Annex 2, and to note the consultee list at annex 4.***

***Members' Research and Committee Services***