

Swindon Borough Council

Equality Advisory Group - Terms of Reference

1. Status

In order to provide a clear foundation within Swindon Borough Council's Constitution, the Equality Advisory Group (EAG) shall be a Cabinet Member Advisory Group in accordance with Article 7.07 of the Constitution.

As a Cabinet Member Advisory Group, EAG is not a meeting in public and has no decision-making powers.

2. Aims

The EAG shall have the following aims:

- a) To act as a consultative body for changes which might impact on equality;
- b) To act in an advisory capacity to the Cabinet Member with portfolio responsibility for equality, particularly in response to questions and concerns regarding the Council's delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and discharging other responsibilities set out in the Equality Act 2010;
- c) To support the openness and transparency of the Council in delivering high quality and accessible services;
- d) To improve and maintain public trust and confidence in the Council.

3. Objectives

The EAG shall have the following objectives:

- (a) To provide scrutiny of the Council's work and functions to support the Cabinet Member's responsibility to ensure that the PSED is being delivered;
- (b) To bring any issues of concern regarding equality and the Council's delivery of the PSED to the attention of the Cabinet Member;
- (c) To offer independent views of the Council's work around equality;
- (d) To assess the Council's progress towards meeting its equality objectives and provide informed observation to the Cabinet Member thereon;
- (e) To provide constructive challenge to Council Officers to work to improve equality outcomes;
- (f) To receive and consider feedback from the Cabinet Member on issues raised and action undertaken to resolve them;
- (g) To ensure all stakeholders are kept informed of responses to issues raised and, where appropriate, discussions in regard to equality issues.

4. Membership

The Cabinet Member shall determine the EAG membership format, which will usually comprise the following representation:

- (a) Elected Councillors: at least one from each political party group;
- (b) Council Unions: one representative, to be nominated by the body of Trades Unions;
- (c) Infrastructure Organisation: one representative to be invited so long as an organisation is contracted by SBC to provide community representation through the infrastructure contract;
- (d) Community representatives able to understand and fairly present experience or a considered view of equality issues and requirements from across and beyond the protected characteristic groups, such representatives to be proposed by the Infrastructure Organisation in conjunction with the Chair of the Swindon Equality Coalition (SEC) so long as this organisation shall remain in existence with appropriate objectives.

5. Organisation and Meetings

5.1 Appointment of Chair

The Chair shall be appointed annually by the Cabinet Member and may be an elected Councillor or a community representative, provided that the members shall have the opportunity to review the appointment.

5.2 Meeting Frequency

The Cabinet Member shall determine the frequency of the meetings, which will usually be four times a year on a quarterly basis, provided that the members shall have the opportunity to review the frequency and to request meetings for specific purposes.

The Cabinet Member shall determine the time for scheduling meetings in consultation with the members in order to maximise appropriate attendance.

5.3 Operation

Administrative support will be provided by the Council's Committee Services.

Support and advice on equality specific issues, including interpretation of the Equality Act 2010, will be provided by the Change Lead: Equality & Diversity.

The Agenda will be set by the Chair, confirmed with the Cabinet Member. Issues for discussion may be submitted to the Chair by any representative.

Temporary sub-groups may be established from time to time to investigate and review specific issues, such sub-groups to recruit expertise from outside the EAG as appropriate.

Attendance may vary depending on the nature of the items under discussion and there shall be no requirement for a quorum at meetings.

6 Training

SBC training opportunities will be made available to EAG members as necessary.

The Infrastructure Organisation will be responsible for ensuring that their proposed representatives have appropriate knowledge of these Terms of Reference, as well as of Council structure, process and meetings procedures.

7 Rights and Responsibilities of Members

EAG members and others who are invited to attend shall have the right to be heard and treated with fairness, any conflicts to be resolved with dignity and respect. They will also be expected to uphold the principles of equality and to promote good practice in regard to those principles.

8 Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed within a year of implementation and thereafter at a time to be determined by the Cabinet Member.