

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

Tuesday 16 December 2008

Session 3

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

18th Meeting 2008, Session 3

CONVENER

*Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con)

DEPUTY CONVENER

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)

*Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab)

*Bill Kidd (Glasgow) (SNP)

*Hugh O'Donnell (Central Scotland) (LD)

*Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP)

*Bill Wilson (West of Scotland) (SNP)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Loudon) (SNP)

*Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO ATTENDED:

Camilla Kidner (Scottish Parliament Directorate of Access and Information)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Terry Shevlin

ASSISTANT CLERK

Joanne Clinton

LOCATION

Committee Room 6

Scottish Parliament

Equal Opportunities Committee

Tuesday 16 December 2008

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:07*]

Work Programme

The Convener (Margaret Mitchell): Good morning everyone, and welcome to the 18th meeting in 2008 of the Equal Opportunities Committee. I remind all present that mobile phones and BlackBerrys should be switched off completely. Even when they are switched to silent, they interfere with the sound system.

We have received apologies from Elaine Smith, and I am pleased to welcome Johann Lamont in her place.

Under the first item on our agenda, we will consider whether we want to follow up on our recent round-table evidence session on sexual imagery in goods aimed at children. We have various options if we wish to undertake further work, and it is proposed that we ask the Scottish Parliament information centre to prepare a detailed options paper for future action. Any such paper would come before the committee on 13 January.

I would be interested in considering further research, and Camilla Kidner from SPICe is here with us. Camilla, if the committee decides that it wants to commission external research, what would be involved?

Camilla Kidner (Scottish Parliament Directorate of Access and Information): We could first develop a proposal, based on the committee's requirements. The proposal would then have to be approved by the committee and by the Conveners Group. SPICe would then turn the proposal into a proper specification that would be put out to tender.

We would have to allow at least a month for people to contact us with their bids for the research. SPICe and the clerks would then evaluate the bids and award the contract. The process—from the committee's initial proposal to the awarding of the contract—would take two to three months.

The Convener: That sounds like an attractive option. From the evidence that we heard, there has been a lack of research into the extent of the problem. We look forward to receiving a paper on 13 January. Are members content with that?

Members indicated agreement.

Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP): Yes, we should look a lot further into the issue. I notice that our proposals for future work mention holding an event. What kind of event?

The Convener: Again, SPICe will give us ideas on that.

Sandra White: Based on the results of the research?

Camilla Kidner: At the moment, things are open. The options paper could certainly include the possibility of an event based on the results of the research.

The Convener: At the moment, we are just raising ideas. We will see how feasible they are once we see the options paper, which we look forward to. Thank you for your contribution this morning, Camilla.

As agreed at previous meetings, the next two agenda items will be taken in private. The first is consideration of a draft report on the Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Bill, and the second is consideration of an approach paper on our proposed inquiry into female offenders in the criminal justice system. As soon as possible after today's meeting, the report on the bill, and the final remit for the inquiry, will appear on the website.

We are about to move into private session, so I invite members of the press and public to leave. I wish them all a very happy Christmas and new year.

10:11

Meeting continued in private until 11:18.

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