



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

Thursday 15 November 2012

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
21st Meeting 2012, Session 4

CONVENER

*Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)

Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con)

*John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)

*Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Lab)

*Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con) (Committee Substitute)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Douglas Thornton

LOCATION

Committee Room 4

Scottish Parliament

Equal Opportunities Committee

Thursday 15 November 2012

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 09:01*]

Inclusive Play

The Convener (Mary Fee): Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the Equal Opportunities Committee's 21st meeting in 2012. I remind everyone to either switch off their mobile phones or turn them to silent. I have received apologies from John Finnie this morning.

Agenda item 1 is consideration of responses received on inclusive play park provision in Scotland. Paper 1, which provides a summary of responses received since the committee last looked at the issue in February, includes a number of recommendations for our consideration. The paper is very good, and it gives a lot of background to and explanation of what is happening in areas across the country. At paragraph 8 there are a number of recommendations, on which I am keen to hear members' views.

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP): I am happy with the paper and its recommendations. The paper is very positive.

Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Lab): I think that the recommendations are good. I am slightly concerned that Moray Council has again decided not to respond. This is the second time that it has been asked to respond to a parliamentary committee, so I wonder what action we could take on that. Even if Moray Council came back to us and said that it did not have any information, that would be a start. To ignore letters from a parliamentary committee speaks volumes; I think that that is disrespectful to the committee.

Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): Does that lack of response not go against freedom of information legislation? It was a request from an entity and it does not need to be specified as a freedom of information request to be treated as such. It is quite bad practice.

The Convener: Yes; FOI applies to records.

Marco Biagi: I agree that the paper is a very interesting snapshot. I was not here for the original consideration, but the recommendations seem to be very well advised.

The Convener: I am putting on my councillor hat. When I was in Renfrewshire Council, it took a very positive view of play parks. Through the local

area committees, a number of play areas were being upgraded or were on the list to be upgraded. The council had almost a schedule of play parks and it was looking at what needed to be done so that areas that did not have play park provision could get it. The council took a very positive view.

The paper is very good. The recommendations are that we forward the correspondence to the Public Petitions Committee, and that we write to the Government before the introduction of the children and young people bill if any concerns arise today. Do we have any concerns, other than that about Moray Council?

Dennis Robertson: What action will we take on Moray Council?

The Convener: We will press it a bit further.

Do members agree to the first recommendation, which is to forward the correspondence to the Public Petitions Committee?

Members indicated agreement.

09:05

Meeting continued in private until 11:32.

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