



<b>Subject:</b>	Review and purpose of the Diversity Working Group
<b>Date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2017
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager David Robinson, Good Relations Officer

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	For Members to agree the future and purpose of the Diversity Working Group.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consider the background to the Working Group, as set out in this report, consider the options regarding its future and purpose, and decide on which option meets the current needs of the Council.</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	Members will know that at an earlier meeting of the Diversity Working Group, some Members sought some clarification on the role of the group and its current purpose. Officers undertook to report back on this issue with options for the future and purpose of the Working Group.
3.2	Members will be aware that in 2011 the Historic Centenaries Working Group (HCWG) was established to support Members in considering how to navigate our way through the

impending Decade of Centenaries that was about to begin. The Membership consisted of the Elected Members on the Good Relations Partnership (GRP) as well as an additional party nominee. The purpose of the group was to provide a space to discuss potentially sensitive and divisive issues in relation to the Decade of Centenaries, within a small group setting. It was to be separate to the GRP so as to be for elected Members only. The GRP has 16 external members and it was felt that space was needed for the political parties to have their own space to explore the issues that were coming down the line in relation to the Decade of Centenaries.

3.3 Throughout 2011, the HCWG considered numerous items in relation to the Decade of Centenaries, agreed a series of Principles under which the Decade would operate and also agreed on an outline chronology of events to be commemorated.

3.4 The group reported into the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and any resource allocation for events and activities was agreed at the SP+R stage.

3.5 In January 2012, it was agreed that the Party Group Leaders would meet with the HCWG over a defined period of time to undertake a wider exploration on the development of a more comprehensive Council Diversity Strategy. This Group was called the Joint Diversity Working Group. At that stage, the purpose of this was to undertake an intensive series of workshops to generate maximum consensus on a range of sensitive impending issues such as:

- The Queens Diamond Jubilee celebrations
- The Equality Impact Assessment on the flying of the Union Flag over City Hall
- The Equality Impact Assessment on memorabilia and displays within City Hall
- Further work around the Decade of Centenaries
- The marking of Operation Banner
- Language issues

3.6 This group again reported up to SP&R and considered much of what has now been agreed in relation to the Decade of Centenaries programme and the City Hall Memorabilia project, both of which are now under way.

3.7 During most of 2014, the group did not meet, due to many factors including elections, Local Government Reform and changes in personnel. However in late 2014, throughout 2015 and this year there have been regular meetings of what is now simply referred to as the Diversity Working Group.

3.8	<p>In this latter period, the Working Group has continued to support officers on the Decade of Centenaries programme along with other commemoration type events. However, the Working Group has also become the focal point for a variety of additional requests for commemorative activity including stained glass windows and other commemorations such as the Blitz, statues and other matters.</p>
3.9	<p>Members have expressed a desire that there needs to be a refocus on the decade of centenaries and highly sensitive issues facing the Council and the City with adequate time allowed for discussion. They also expressed the view that the representation on the current DWG does not necessarily allow this to happen effectively.</p>
3.10	<p><b><u>Options for the future of the Working Group</u></b></p> <p><b>Option 1:</b> Continue with the Diversity Working Group in its current format, as a way of providing a space into which Members can raise issues to do with commemorations, historic issues and other related topics.</p> <p><b>Option 2:</b> That the resource intensive and highly sensitive areas facing Council and the City be discussed in the Party Leaders' Group and then taken to SP&amp;R for a decision.</p> <p><b>Option 3:</b> That the Diversity Working Group is brought to a conclusion and a historic Belfast working group is established to prioritise historic events and related issues. This would mean it would move away from a Good Relations focus. Good Relations would be discussed by Party Leaders and SP&amp;R.</p>
3.11	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no financial or resource implications as a result of the contents within this report, however a space for Members to locate requests for additional commemorative activity will need to be clarified. This should be factored into the wider review of commemorations that will be developed in the near future.</p>
3.12	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to deem whether it is necessary to continue with the Diversity Working Group and as such is a structural issue. There are no Equality or Good Relations implications as a result of this report. If anything it is a sign of strength that dealing with difficult issues can be achieved within existing Council structures.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None</p>