

Leicester
City Council

Wards affected: All wards

CABINET

16 August 2004

THE SOMALI COMMUNITY IN LEICESTER

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 On 12 July, Cabinet considered a resolution made by the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee on the Needs of the Somali Community. Cabinet were informed that a report considering the issues raised by the Committee in greater detail would be submitted to this meeting.

2. Summary

- 2.1 At its last meeting on 14 June the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on the Needs of the Somali Community from Jawaahir Daahir (Somali Development Services) and Hashim Duale (Eastern Leicester Primary Care Trust, but speaking in a personal capacity). A background report was also submitted. Members considered that the issues raised as a result of the presentations should be brought to the attention of the Cabinet.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet are recommended to:
- (a) ask that an officer-level task-and-finish group be created, involving appropriate partner organisations and accountable to the Community Cohesion Project Board, to consider the issues raised by the Somali Community in the context of a wider review of the way in which the Council and other bodies provide services for new and existing communities within the City;
 - (b) ask that officers write to key representatives of the Somali Community to inform them how the Council will be considering the issues they have raised.

4. Financial and Legal Implications

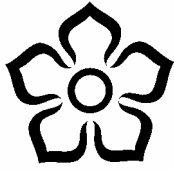
- 4.1 No financial or legal implications arise directly from this report.

5. Report Author

- 5.1 Lee Harrison, Head of Policy & Performance, Chief Executive's Office

DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 14 June, the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee received, at their request, a presentation and background report on the Needs of the Somali Community. The Committee also received representations from Mr Faisal Haji of the Somali Integration and Advocacy Centre.

2. The Views of the Committee

- 2.1 Members of the Committee considered that the issues raised in the presentations should be brought to the attention of the Cabinet. It was felt there was a need for the Council to do all it could within reason to address the issues raised in the presentations, while acknowledging that there were areas such as health and employment where the authority's role is limited.

- 2.2 As was reported to Cabinet on 12 July, the Committee agreed the following resolution:

“that the following issues be submitted to Cabinet by means of a report:-

- (1) to instruct Officers to create or revive a working party / taskforce which looks at the needs of the Somali Community and has representation from all Council Departments and relevant agencies;
- (2) to instruct this working party/taskforce to produce proposals to address the issues raised in the report and the presentations;
- (3) that a report be produced by the working party/taskforce which considers the long term needs of the Somali Community;
- (4) to instruct Officers to enable the Somali Community to have a full opportunity to access the Community Cohesion Fund;
- (5) that Cllr. Suleman, as Cabinet Lead for Community Cohesion and the Chief Executive, or the entire Cabinet if necessary, be requested to meet with representatives of the Somali Community to explain how the Community

Cohesion fund will work and to discuss in detail any issues which the Somali Community have raised;

- (6) that the Leader be requested to make a formal response to the meeting held on 12 March 2004 with Mr. Haji outlining what action has been taken following that meeting; and
- (7) that progress on these matters be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.”

3. Officer Response

- 3.1 As the background report for the Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee set out, the Council has already undertaken a wide range of initiatives aimed at the Somali Community, with further initiatives due to be rolled out over the next few months. A summary of these is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 It is suggested that an officer-level task-and-finish group be created to consider the issues concerning the Somali Community raised at the Scrutiny Committee, in the context of a wider review of the way in which the Council provides services for new and existing communities within the City. The work of this group would also take account of the findings of the recently issued GOEM-commissioned *New Arrivals Research Report* by Dr Maggie O’Neill and Fiona Galli, which considers access to Training, Employment and Social Enterprise in Charnwood and Leicester. It is suggested that the task-and-finish group involve appropriate partner organisations and report to the Community Cohesion Project Board.
- 3.3 Officers have already informally briefed key individuals within the Somali Community on short-term funding possibilities including the Community Cohesion Fund. Councillor Suleman has been involved in meetings with members of the community on this matter. The Leader has made a formal response to Mr. Haji regarding the meeting that they had on 12 March 2004.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 Corporate Directors’ Board and the Head of Legal Services have been consulted on this report.

5. Report Author

- 5.1 Lee Harrison, Head of Policy & Performance, Chief Executive’s Office
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