

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	SOUTHAMPTON FAIRNESS COMMISSION		
DATE OF DECISION:	18 JUNE 2013		
REPORT OF:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None

BRIEF SUMMARY

This report recommends the establishment of an independent, time-limited Fairness Commission to consider issues of fairness and equality in Southampton. A Fairness Commission is a group or body of senior influencers, often independently chaired, which explores and recommends ways to increase fairness and reduce inequality for residents. The commitment to establish a Fairness Commission for Southampton was included in the 'Southampton Transition Plan: The first 100 days (May 16th 2012- August 2012)'. This report also seeks delegated authority for Council officers to undertake detailed work on the issues and impacts of the introduction of a Living Wage.

Other areas have set up similar commissions, to explore and bring a fresh perspective to complex issues relating to fairness and equalities. Good practice from these areas has been used in developing the proposal for a Fairness Commission for Southampton. Learning from councils that have given detailed consideration to the introduction of a Living Wage will inform further work within the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To endorse the proposal to establish a Southampton Fairness Commission.
- (ii) To agree the underlying principles and draft Terms of Reference.
- (iii) To delegate authority to the Director for Environment and Economy, following consultation with the Leader of the Council to determine the final Terms of Reference and membership of the Commission.
- (iv) To delegate authority to the Head of Strategic HR, to undertake work on the introduction of the Living Wage for the Council, following consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Resources, Head of Finance and IT, and formal consultation and negotiation with the unions.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The commitment to establish a Fairness Commission for Southampton was included in the 'Southampton Transition Plan: The first 100 days (May 16th 2012- August 2012)'. The Leader and Cabinet are committed to progressing their aspiration to introduce a Living Wage. This report recommends proposals for the development of a Southampton Fairness Commission to progress these commitments.
2. These proposals are set against a backdrop of austerity. The impact of the introduction of the Welfare Reforms on residents brings a potential risk of increasing poverty and inequalities. The Southampton Fairness Commission would build on the City's work in tackling poverty, inequalities and community cohesion and bring a new perspective and expertise to this work.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. To not develop a Southampton Fairness Commission – however this would mean the administration's commitment to establish a Fairness Commission would not be met and hence this was rejected.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

4. The commitment to establish a Fairness Commission for Southampton was included in the 'Southampton Transition Plan: The first 100 days (May 16th 2012- August 2012)'.
5. The proposal to establish a Southampton Fairness Commission will enable the development of city wide work to help all local citizens to share in the benefits of the City's overall future prosperity.
6. Other areas have set up Fairness Commissions, including Islington, York, Blackpool and Liverpool. All have enabled the development of credible, independent bodies, with the expertise to explore and bring a fresh perspective to complex issues relating to fairness and equalities. Plymouth City Council has recently announced the launch of their Fairness Commission. Good practice from these areas has been used in developing the proposal for a Fairness Commission for Southampton.
7. The Southampton Fairness Commission will lead by example and work for change that will improve the quality of life for everyone in Southampton and consider how to make the City a fairer and more equal place to live and work. It will set forward a vision for Southampton that could inform, influence and inspire the Council and others, including the public and local employers.
8. The model and structure of the proposed Southampton Fairness Commission is that of a time-limited, independent body. (Detailed in Appendix 1 – Draft Introduction and Terms of Reference). Delegated authority is sought for the Director for Environment and Economy, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine the final Terms of Reference and membership of the Commission.

9. The Commission will be chaired by an independent person who will provide strong leadership in setting the strategic direction. The position of the Chair of the Commission will be openly advertised and will be appointed by the Director for Environment and Economy, following consultation with the Leader of the Council. It is proposed the Vice Chair will be an elected Member of Southampton City Council and will be appointed by Cabinet for the next municipal year.
10. The Commission will comprise representatives (Commissioners) from the public, private and voluntary sector. They will be 'Ambassadors for Fairness' for the City and will also be responsible for taking recommendations back to their own organisations for implementation.
11. Information about the role of Commissioners, along with the application and selection process, will be available online and will be circulated widely via partnerships and networks. Recruitment of Commissioners will take place once the Chair and Vice Chair have been appointed. Commissioners will be appointed by the Director for Environment and Economy in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair. It is proposed there should be a broad mix of expertise amongst Commissioners and for the Commission to work in partnership with other networks and organisations concerned with fairness, poverty reduction and social improvement. All positions are unpaid.
12. The Commission will also encourage supporters and will engage with the public on a range of themes. It will make particular efforts to reach out to people with multiple needs who often find it hard to make their voices heard, so that they have every opportunity to be engaged in its work and to influence Council and City priorities.
13. The Commission will meet up to six times during 2013/14 to examine key thematic priorities including:
 - An aspirational and prosperous City: education, employment and pay, including the Living Wage.
 - Communities working together: access to a better local environment and services.
 - Local democratic representation and influence: increasing citizen, community and voluntary sector involvement.

A final report will be submitted to the Cabinet by the end of 2013/14.

LIVING WAGE

14. The Leader and Cabinet are committed to the introduction of a Living Wage for the Council. The Living Wage is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK and employers choose to pay this on a voluntary basis. The UK Living Wage is calculated by the Centre for Research in Social Policy. Paying the Living Wage is good for business, good for the individual and good for society. The UK Living Wage for outside of London is currently £7.45 per hour and is reviewed in November each year. In the UK, 205 employers are currently signed up to the Living Wage campaign.

15. The introduction of a Living Wage requires detailed work on a number of issues so that a comprehensive assessment can be made of the financial, HR and other implications. Other councils have considered this issue and some have introduced a Living Wage to varying degrees and it is important to ensure the Council benefits from research and learning. It is also important to ensure there is formal consultation and negotiations with unions before any detailed conclusions are made. Therefore, delegated authority is sought for the Head of Strategic HR, to undertake work on the introduction of the Living Wage for the Council, following consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Resources, Head of Finance and IT, and formal consultation and negotiation with the unions.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Revenue

16. A one-off revenue budget of £10,000 within the Communities Portfolio was approved by Council on 10th July 2012 to establish the Southampton Fairness Commission. This budget was not utilised in 2012/13 and, subject to approval by Council in July 2013 of a request to carry forward this funding into 2013/14, it will be used to progress any specific initiatives that seek to reduce poverty and will also fund any nominal costs for the work of the Commission (e.g. any costs associated with meetings, information, participation and engagement and the publication of the final report). Costs relating to expenses for unpaid Commissioners will be for travel and subsistence only. The allowance rates will be the same as for Southampton City Council employees and Members. If the carry forward request is not approved then costs up to £10,000 will be met from the General Fund revenue budget contingency.

Property/Other

17. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

18. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 permits a council to do anything that an individual may do whether or not normally undertaken by a local authority (the General Power of Competence). The power is subject to any pre or post commencement restrictions on the use of the power (none of which apply in this case).

Other Legal Implications:

19. None.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

20. The recommendations from the Fairness Commission will relate to the relevant Policy Framework plans and will also assist the Council to meet the overall aims of its policy framework.

KEY DECISION? Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Southampton Fairness Commission Draft Terms of Reference
2.	Southampton Fairness Commission Draft Membership

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	Yes
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Other Background Documents

Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
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1.	None	
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