

## **EQUALITIES PANEL 27<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

### **Membership**

Public and staff members of the Panel are recruited to stand for 3 years (term of office as agreed in 2005).

Three members of the Panel are due to stand down since the Panel's commencement in 2003:

- Gerri Bird (public)
- Graham Lewis (public)
- Norah Al-Ani (staff)

The options are:

1. To agree the principle that, in the interests of continuity of knowledge and expertise, should any Panel member whose term of office has come to an end be interested in and willing to continue in their role, this should be automatic. Should Panel members not wish to continue, any vacancies are put forward for open recruitment processes.
2. To agree option 1 but add the condition that Panel members may only be automatically reselected in this way for a limited number of times, eg maximum of two terms = 6 years.
3. At the end of a term of office, all vacancies are open automatically to the relevant sector (public or staff) for a full and open recruitment process.

The Panel is invited to choose one of the above options to adopt, and for this decision to take effect at the end of this meeting.

If the Panel agrees with option 1, Gerri Bird, Graham Lewis and Norah Al-Ani - who have all expressed an interest in continuing their roles - will remain members of the Equalities Panel for up to a further 3 years.

If the Panel agrees with option 2, vacancies for two public members and one staff member will be opened up for recruitment before the next meeting.

The Panel is also invited to express its appreciation to Andy Yacoub for his contribution to the work of the Panel since 2005.

### **Chair**

It was agreed in 2005 that the Equalities Panel will have an Independent Chair in order to ensure impartiality, and to enable the full and equal participation of all Panel members.

Andy Yacoub, Diversity Manager at Suffolk County Council, was invited to take up this role for the duration of 2 years. This proved to be a successful appointment for all parties. However, due to work commitments Andy had to step down early in 2006. Graham Watts, the Council's Equalities Champion and one of two management representatives on the Panel, agreed to act as interim Chair until a replacement was found.

Enquiries have so far proved unsuccessful in this regard, although further avenues are still being explored.

The Panel is therefore recommended to agree that Graham Watts continue as interim Chair until an alternative Independent Chair is identified, nominated and approved by Panel members.

As Graham Watts is also a management representative on the Panel, a decision would need to be made as to whether a temporary alternative management representative be sought while GW acts as Interim Chair.