

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 10 November 2020

International Framework Update

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Sustainability Committee

- 1.1 Note the response received to a letter from the Lord Provost to the Mayor of Krakow on issues relating to equalities and LGBTQ+ rights
- 1.2 Agree for City of Edinburgh Council equalities officers to approach Krakow Council officials with an invitation to engage sharing of best practice in promoting LGBTQ+ equalities in both cities
- 1.3 Agree that a refresh of the Council's International framework be undertaken to ensure that international engagement activity meets the needs of the city during a period of renewal from recession, and is carried out in support of agreed equalities outcomes.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

Contact: Nick Langan, Senior Policy Officer

E-mail: nick.langan@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3670

International Framework Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report outlines next steps towards ongoing refresh of the Council's approach to international engagement to be undertaken during 2021.
- 2.2 In doing so, the report responds to two motions made to the Policy and Sustainability Committee in August 2020 by Cllr Staniforth and Cllr Day on the role of the Council's international strategy in supporting equalities outcomes.
- 2.3 The report outlines the positive response received to a letter from the Lord Provost to the Mayor of Krakow on issues relating to equalities and LGBTQ+ rights.

3. Background

- 3.1 In August 2019 the Policy and Sustainability Committee approved a new framework of principles to guide future international engagement and activity by City of Edinburgh Council. The framework notes that international activity should clearly:
 - 3.1.1 Support the strategic aims of the Council;
 - 3.1.2 Support identified challenges and opportunities for the city;
 - 3.1.3 Be delivered in partnership to ensure high impact and value for money; and
 - 3.1.4 Be carried out in alignment with the international priority work of key partners.
- 3.2 In support of this approach, the framework incorporated the establishment of a new International Edinburgh Group of partners and stakeholders. This group aimed to facilitate sharing of information on international activities and approaches across partners who face many of the same issues and opportunities.

- 3.3 In August 2020 agreed two motions relating to the role of Council international activity in supporting equalities outcomes. These included a motion by Councillor Staniforth on the city's relationship with Krakow, which asked for contact with Krakow to determine the City's position regarding reports of the wider 'LGBT-free zone' in that region and for a short report detailing options for further action to support the LGBTQ+ community there.
- 3.4 In addition, Committee also agreed a motion by Councillor Day which requested that a review of the Council's international framework be undertaken to include information on the how relationships can support the Council's Equalities Framework.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Edinburgh commands huge international attention. It is the capital of Scotland and seat of the Scottish Parliament, with a huge programme of investment and development and a worldwide reputation for its cultural activity.
- 4.2 Foreign owned businesses employ an estimated 48,000 people in Edinburgh, approaching one in five of all jobs in the city. Edinburgh is also home to people who either emigrated to this country or are first or second descendent generations of immigrants. 16% of the city population are non-British nationals, compared to 6.6% in Scotland overall. Edinburgh also has the largest population of EU nationals in Scotland.
- 4.3 Historically, Edinburgh has been aligned with twin and partner cities based on mutually strategic priorities and civic duties within the Lord Provost's office. Edinburgh is twinned with 9 cities worldwide and has 3 other partner cities with varying degrees of engagement through the Lord Provost office and within the other Council services.
- 4.4 Edinburgh and Krakow have a history of agreements of cooperation and partnerships since 1995. Over the last 3 years there has been 8 exchange visits between Edinburgh and Krakow. A new 5-year partnership agreement between Edinburgh and Krakow was signed in 2019 and supports a range of sectoral interests in both cities.
- 4.5 In 2020 news reports stated that the Lesser Poland Voivodeship, of which Krakow is part, has declared itself an 'LGBT free zone'. In response to this, the Lord Provost wrote to the Mayor of Krakow seeking clarification on Krakow's stance and expressing our concern around equalities.
- 4.6 In return, the Lord Provost received a positive response indicating that the city of Krakow (as an independent decision-making body under the Constitution of the Republic of Poland) will not be adopting this free zone and has informed the Krakow citizens through their Equality Council.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 To follow up on recent Krakow engagement and ensure that wider Council international activity can be carried out in support of agreed equalities outcomes, it is proposed that:
 - 5.1.1 City of Edinburgh Council equalities officers approach Krakow Council officials with an invitation to engage in a seminar looking at best practice in promoting LGBTQ+ equalities in both cities.
 - 5.1.2 In line with Councillor Day's motion, and in view of the changing international context within which the city is operating, a refresh of the Council's International Framework is carried out to ensure that international activity aligns with equalities outcomes, and meets the needs of the city throughout recovery and renewal during the Covid-19 pandemic and related economic recession.
- 5.2 Towards the second of these actions, preparatory work already underway has included officer engagement with Scottish Government colleagues on best practice approaches to embedding equalities issues in international engagement activity.
- 5.3 A session of the International Edinburgh Group was also held in October 2020 to re-engage with partners on international activity, and to begin work towards understanding partner's engagement plans and priorities for the coming year.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Actions in this report can be taken forward within existing agreed budgets. Any additional impacts arising will be considered as part of future reports to Policy and Sustainability Committee.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The International Edinburgh Group represents key stakeholders and partners in international activity across the city. Initial engagement with this group has begun and will be continued throughout delivery of the actions outlined in this report.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Edinburgh International Activity Report, August 2019](#)
- 8.2 [Motion by Councillor Staniforth - The City's Relationship with Krakow, August 2020](#)

8.3 [Motion by Councillor Day - Equality and LGBT + Rights, August 2020](#)

9. Appendices

None