



Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

Making representations on behalf of Scotland's Jewish Communities: policy and protocols

Policy

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is constituted by the Jewish communities of Scotland. Although the Council is composed primarily of representatives from those communities, it does not have a delegate structure and its objectives are distinguishable from the objectives of the communities. As defined in its constitution, SCoJeC's independent objectives include

- education about Jewish life and practice
- advancing the welfare of Jewish communities
- promoting participation in civic life, and
- the promotion of racial harmony

Protocols

SCoJeC draws its authority from its Council. Although the Council delegates certain functions to its officers, the officers are accountable to the Council and are required to report on political representations.

Statements made by SCoJeC are made on behalf of all Scotland's Jewish Communities. Consequently

- a) statements of views held by some communities, or members of some communities, but contradicted by others, cannot be made by or on behalf of SCoJeC, unless
- b) where there are differences in position, SCoJeC may seek to represent, without comment, the full range of alternative views.

[An example of the first might be the position on Israel; an example of the second might be to represent differing views in Judaism on the religious position of women.] SCoJeC may however make statements in its own right relating to its constitutional objectives. All statements made on behalf of SCoJeC should be based as far as possible on a consensus rather than on the view of a majority.

Representations

The representations made by SCoJeC and its officers include

- verbal representations, including public statements to politicians, the press and external bodies (such as the Community Security Trust or Board of Deputies)
- formal representations, including responses to consultations, evidence to committees or letters on behalf of SCoJeC and
- informal representations, made during interactions with politicians, interviews with the press and other organisations.

Because in practice representations are sought and made either without notice, or at very short notice, the Council has agreed these guidelines for political engagement, subject to the protocols above, and on the understanding that any response which is made on behalf of the Council will be duly reported to Council.

1. Where there is notice that a representation is being sought (e.g. a public consultation), the officers of the Council will:
 - inform members of the Council that a response is proposed
 - seek the views of Council members individually
 - circulate a draft response, and
 - be empowered to submit a response on behalf of the Council.

2. Where a representation on behalf of SCoJeC is sought without notice (e.g. at a meeting with a politician, or a statement for the press), the officers of SCoJeC will:
 - where the content of the response has previously been agreed, endeavour faithfully to represent that content
 - where the content has not been agreed, endeavour to ensure that any response is fully compatible with the objectives of the Council and the protocols above, or
 - alternatively, emphasise that they are able to speak only in a personal capacity.

Agreed in Council 3rd October 2010