



## **Making representations on behalf of SCoJeC: policy and protocols**

### **Policy**

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is the representative body of the Jewish communities of Scotland. Although most Council members are representatives from those communities they are not subject to a mandate from those communities and SCoJeC's objectives are distinguishable from the objectives of the constituent communities.

SCoJeC's objectives as detailed in the constitution are in summary:

- educating the general public about Jewish life and practice;
- advancing the welfare of Jewish communities and promoting their participation in Scottish civic life;
- fostering harmony between ethnic, racial, and religious groups.

### **Protocols**

SCoJeC draws its authority from its Council. Although the Council delegates certain functions to its Executive (see constitution section 5c), they are accountable to the Council and are required to report to them.

Statements made by SCoJeC are made on behalf of all Scotland's Jewish Communities and should be issued by a spokesperson given authority by the Council or by its delegated authority. The spokesperson will normally be a Council member or member of staff designated by Council or by the Executive on the Council's behalf, but members of Council do not have the authority to speak on behalf of SCoJeC unless authorised to do so. Occasionally the Council or Executive may nominate an external person with particular expertise, who has assisted the Council in the relevant area.

Consequently:

a) statements of views held by some communities, or significant numbers of members of the 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,

or

c) where there is a significant consensus, report that while making clear that there is a minority who dissent.

An example of a) might be taking a position on particular actions of the Israeli government; one of b) might be representing differing views within Judaism on same sex marriage or assisted suicide; and of (c) support for the internationally accepted (EUMC/IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

SCoJeC may however make statements in its own right relating to its constitutional objectives.

Any disagreements or clarifications should be discussed and resolved internally, and not in public.

SCoJeC's spokespersons should be able to make common-sense judgement on whether there is widespread consensus on particular topics, relying on previously agreed positions and statements when possible and appropriate.

It is the collective responsibility of the Council to ensure that representations are of the consensus view, and that there is an appropriate delegation of authority, trusting in the relevant spokespersons to make statements responsibly.

## **Representations**

The representations made by SCoJeC and its delegated spokespersons are -

- verbal representations, including public statements to politicians, the press, and external bodies (including other communal bodies such as the Community Security Trust or the 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 meetings with other organisations or individuals.

In practice representations are often required with very short deadlines or during a meeting without notice. Council has therefore 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 without prior approval or precedent will be reported to Council.

1. Where there is notice that a representation is being sought (e.g. a public consultation), the delegated spokespeople of the Council will:
  - inform and seek the views of members of the Council,
  - consult with relevant organisations and individuals in the community,
  - circulate a draft response with a clear deadline for comment, and
  - be empowered to submit a response on behalf of the Council after that deadline.

2. Where SCoJeC is invited to or requests a meeting with an external body,
  - when the meeting is with officials of that body (for example, civil servants), SCoJeC will be represented by the appropriate member of its staff;
  - when the meeting is with the office-bearers of that body, SCoJeC will be represented by the appropriate office-bearer accompanied by a member of staff with knowledge of the subject of the meeting;
  - when the meeting is with an elected politician, SCoJeC will normally be represented by the appropriate office-bearer together with a member of staff with knowledge of the subject of the meeting, but if an appropriate office-bearer is not available the meeting should still proceed.
  
3. 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 delegated spokespeople of SCoJeC will:
  - where a response is required immediately or by return, will endeavour faithfully to represent the sense of previously agreed policy or statements on that same topic;
  - where there is no previously agreed policy, will endeavour to ensure that any immediate response is fully compatible with the objectives of the Council and the protocols above, and is what the spokesperson believes on the basis of experience to be the likely consensus within the community, and will as soon as possible thereafter seek retrospective approval from the Executive, and if that is not forthcoming notify the external body as soon as practicable;
  - when an immediate response is not required, circulate a draft response, making use of all the relevant channels, and make clear the deadline for comment, after which the response will be submitted.