

CITY OF DURHAM

COUNCIL
13 JANUARY 2009

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL/
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARKING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Background

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on 10 December 1948. On adoption, the Declaration was proclaimed as a common standard of achievement for all people of all nations towards which individuals and societies should strive by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance. Although the Declaration is not a binding document, it inspired more than sixty human rights instruments which, together, constitute an international standard of human rights. Today the general consent of all United Nations Member States on the basic Human Rights laid down in the Declaration makes it stronger and emphasises the relevance of Human Rights in daily life.

The Declaration was essentially a demand on Government by their people to create a Charter relating to them. Over the last 60 years the make up of communities has changed greatly and, although some of the values aspired to in 1948 have been realised, the delivery of a truly inclusive society continues to be a key challenge locally, nationally and internationally.

For this reason, the United Nations Association UK has suggested to all Authorities nationwide that they may wish to re-dedicate their communities to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Similar initiatives are being taken worldwide co-ordinated by the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

A special A2 size facsimile of the Universal Declaration, designed along the lines of the 1948 UN Yearbook, has been created which this Council is asked to display in an appropriate location, once signed by the Mayor.

Recommendation

1. That the City of Durham re-affirms and re-dedicates itself to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. That the Mayor signs the facsimile of the Declaration, on behalf of the people and community contained within the City of Durham District.
3. That the signed facsimile be displayed at an appropriate location within the Town Hall.