

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

ETHNIC MINORITIES FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 17 JUNE 2004 AT 1400 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors William Menzies, Neil McGhee, Drew McIntyre, Daniel Coffey and Tommy Farrell.

ALSO PRESENT: Representing KULOC: Thomas Ho and Henry Ho; Representing Islamic Education and Cultural Centre: Mr Shafiq and Mr Malik.

ATTENDING: John Mulgrew, Acting Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Educational and Social Services; Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support; John Crawford, Head of Protective Services; John Spooner, Business Development Manager; Maxine Ahrens, Housing Policy Officer; Anne Basford, Network Co-ordinator; Graeme Cumming, Community Worker; and Robert Beaton, Administrative Officer.

ALSO ATTENDING: Superintendent Liz Weir, Sub-Divisional Officer, Strathclyde Police; Linda Semple, Assistant Director of Health Policy, NHS Ayrshire and Arran; and Cathy Roarty, East Ayrshire LHCC, NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Maureen McKay and Harry Wilson; Fiona Lees, Chief Executive; Mr Iqbal, Depute Chairperson, Islamic Education and Cultural Centre; Janet Cameron, Area Procurator Fiscal; John Sweeny, Ethnic Minorities Law Centre; and Tom Merry, Senior Development Officer, Development Services.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and took the opportunity to let the Community Representatives know that since the last meeting David Montgomery had retired from the Council and that Fiona Lees had been appointed as the new Chief Executive.

The Chair indicated that item 10 shown on the Agenda as Ethnic Minority Law Centre would be continued to the next meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The minutes of previous meeting of 2 December 2003 (circulated) were approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Developing Business Links with China

John Spooner, Business Development Manager advised that a very informative meeting had recently been held with Mr Ho, Council Officers and Kilmarnock College and a representative from Angus Council on developing links across the business and education sectors in China. An event organised by North Ayrshire Council in connection with their Supply Chain Initiative was held in March 2004 and one company had attended from East Ayrshire. Currently, Business Gateway

International - Ayrshire are surveying Ayrshire companies with a view to ascertaining the level of interest in establishing trade links with the China Market specifically focussing on Business Culture and Logistics and on the possibilities of a trade mission to China.

3.2 KULOC Update

Mr Henry Ho advised that KULOC's Lion Dance Group procession through the streets of Kilmarnock to celebrate the Association's sixth celebrations was successful and thanked the Chair, Councillor Menzies and other Councillors who were present on the day. Mr Henry Ho also advised that the Association's sixth inauguration celebration at the Thistle Hotel in Glasgow was well attended and it was noted that the event was well publicised on press and television for the Chinese community.

Mr Henry Ho also updated on the success of grant applications since the last meeting. In particular, KULOC had obtained three grants to fund the projects which were planned: from Awards from All, East Ayrshire Council and Bridging the Language Barrier Project. It was further noted that KULOC would be shortly using the "Awards for All" grant on the feasibility study of the KULOC Centre and once the architectural plans had been completed KULOC would proceed with an application for a grant to renovate the second floor of the KULOC Centre. The remaining funds would be used for the Lion Dance Group on equipment, musical instruments, training fees and rent of the hall. The "Bridging of the Language Barrier" grant would support the existing English classes, computing classes and a new Mandarin class.

Mr Henry Ho indicated that the grant for the Chinese School was below the figure they required in order to have the classes running for the full year. It was noted that KULOC provided three classes of different age groups and unfortunately, the grant did not cover the teachers' fees, rent of classrooms and the ordering of Chinese text books. In this respect, the Council was asked to assist KULOC in finding more funding in order that the Chinese school could continue for the full year. Accordingly, it was agreed to request Brenda Walker, the External Funding and Sustainability Officer to get in contact with KULOC and provide them with information on alternative funding streams.

FUNDING 2004/05

4. Councillor Menzies indicated that since the last meeting, the Council had been able to continue with its support to Minority Ethnic Groups in East Ayrshire, in particular, the Education Committee had recently approved funding of £2,575 to assist KULOC to continue with its Chinese school and in addition, funding of just under £10,000 had been approved through the Community Learning Partnership to support people with their basic reading and writing skills. Councillor Menzies indicated that the Council also continued to support the Ethnic Minority Law Centre and this year the Council had been able to increase funding to the Law Centre to £6,000.

In addition, the Social Inclusion Partnership had agreed to allocate £30,000 to allow the Ethnic Minority Social Inclusion Project to continue.

COUNCIL ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTERPRETING SERVICES

5. Councillor Menzies indicated that a concern for many people whose first language is not English is how they accessed Council services. Maxine Ahrens, Housing Policy

Officer advised that the Council had been addressing this issue through improved interpreting services. In particular, in conjunction with the National Interpreting Service a telephone service, providing 1,500 experienced interpreters covering African, Middle East, North and South America and Caribbean, Asia, Europe, Pacific Islands and India, Pakistan and South West Asian languages was now available to frontline staff across East Ayrshire. It was noted that the quality of the service would be monitored and that assistance with interpreting was only one aspect of the Council's response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

ETHNIC MINORITIES SOCIAL INCLUSION PROJECT

6. Anne Basford, Network Co-ordinator advised that the purpose of the Ethnic Minority Social Inclusion Project was to develop effective communication strategies with ethnic minority families to facilitate better access to services, resources and community initiatives, to offer a range of support using community languages where appropriate, to allow informed decision-making and increase opportunities and participation.

The achievements included:-

- bi-lingual support systems working in nurseries and schools to support ethnic minority pupils and their families;
- making available dual language resources to ethnic minority groups and educational establishments;
- implementation of twice weekly translation/interpreting support sessions for members of the Chinese community;
- the implementation of "Persona Dolls" training which is an effective equality inclusion tool provided to early years establishments; and
- the establishment of links with Ayrshire Electronic Community to progress the roll-out of community languages ICT resources to local learning centres.

MARIM UPDATE

7. Superintendent Liz Weir updated the meeting on behalf of MARIM and indicated that in the last six month period there had been a number of racially motivated incidents, the majority of which had been detected. Breach of peace was a particular problem and the geographical focus was on Kilmarnock.

AYRSHIRE RACE EQUALITY PARTNERSHIP

8. Linda Semple, Assistant Director of Health Policy NHS Ayrshire and Arran provided an update on the needs assessment and advised of the successful bid to the Commission for Racial Equality for additional funding into Ayrshire.

Councillor McIntyre left the meeting during the above item.

NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN RACE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

9. Linda Semple, Assistant Director of Health Policy NHS Ayrshire and Arran provided information to Members of the Forum about the Health Service Race Equality Action Plan which was subject to formal ratification. Linda Semple indicated that the Health Service faced considerable challenges in simply identifying the small black and ethnic minority population. However, it was indicated that great progress had been made in collaboration with partner members in establishing a demographic profile.

It was noted that a copy of the Year 1 report would be issued with this minute of the meeting.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR COUNCIL EMPLOYEES IDENTIFICATION BADGES

10. Robert Beaton, Corporate Policy Officer advised that all frontline Council staff and Councillors had been issued with new identify badges showing clearly their photograph, name, job title, badge expiry date and telephone contact number. In particular, Environmental Health Officers had been provided with new badges and anyone calling at restaurants or shops claiming to be on Council business should be able to produce an identify badge.

It was noted that the new identify badge would clearly identify East Ayrshire Council employees and assist in making East Ayrshire a safer place.

KULOC SUPPORT FOR LOCAL CHARITABLE CAUSE

11. Mr Henry Ho advised that KULOC were planning a day in July/August to raise funds for a local charity. In particular, the Association felt it should play its part and support local charities as part of the Scottish Community in East Ayrshire. Accordingly, assistance in identifying a local charity in East Ayrshire that might benefit from KULOC's support was requested.

It was agreed that Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support liaise with KULOC to suggest a charitable cause within East Ayrshire.

WELCOME PACKS FOR SUPPORT FOR THE HOMELESS

12. Cathy Roarty, East Ayrshire LHCC advised that the Scottish Council for Churches and NHS Ayrshire and Arran had produced welcome packs targeting vulnerable homeless persons to offer assistance and a befriending service. Currently, Christian faiths were well represented and participation from all religious ethnic minority groups was particularly welcome. It was noted that further details could be obtained by contacting Cathy Roarty.

NHS AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN - DEVELOPMENT DAY

- 13.** Cathy Roarty, East Ayrshire LHCC advised that NHS Ayrshire and Arran were having a development day on 14 July 2004 on access to services under the Improving Health Thematic Group Joint Health Improvement Plan. It was noted that further details could be obtained by contacting Cathy Roarty.

The meeting terminated at 1527 hours.