

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

ETHNIC MINORITIES FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER 2004 AT 1400 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors William Menzies, Isabel Macrae, Neil McGhee, Drew McIntyre and Tommy Farrell.

ALSO PRESENT: Representing Islamic Education and Cultural Centre: Mr Shafiq and Mr Malik; and SimoneDe Lorentiis, Information Officer, Ethnic Minority Law Centre.

ATTENDING: Elizabeth Morton, Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support; Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support; Robert Paton, Head of Economic Development and Property; Martin Rose, Head of Personnel; John Crawford, Head of Protective Services; Carol Andrew, Business Advisor; Anne Basford, Network Co-ordinator; Graeme Cumming, Community Worker; and Robert Beaton, Administrative Officer.

ALSO ATTENDING: Chief Inspector Robert Brown, Strathclyde Police; Cathy Roarty, East Ayrshire LHCC, NHS Ayrshire and Arran; and Lillian Smith, Internal Trades Manager, Business Gateway International.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Harry Wilson, Danny Coffey and Mr Thomas Ho, KULOC.

CHAIR: Councillor William Menzies, Chair, Social Inclusion.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and took the opportunity to introduce Elizabeth Morton who had been appointed to the position of Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support within the Council.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The minutes of previous meeting of 17 June 2004 (circulated) were approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Developing Business Links with China

The Chair indicated that representatives would be aware of a recent trade visit to China by the First Minister on 30 October 2004 which had provided extra governmental support for Scottish companies to help them seize opportunities offered by China's growing economy and that, however, the Council didn't have any responsibility for developing trade links as this was undertaken by the Scottish Enterprise Network.

Lillian Smith from the Business Gateway International provided an update on a joint venture with twelve Ayrshire companies as part of an initiative to promote trade links with China.

It was noted that further information could be provided by contacting the Business Gateway at 53 John Finnie Street, Kilmarnock (01563) 541579.

It was further noted that Graham Cumming would liaise with the Business Gateway, Kilmarnock to arrange to provide information for enquirers whose first language was not English.

3.2 Ethnic Minority Representation for Volunteering in Homelessness Initiative

Cathy Roarty advised that the Scottish Church Housing Association were in the process of conducting an audit of volunteering and were considering appropriate ways of involving the voluntary sector in homelessness initiatives. Current gaps in provision had been identified as welcome packs and befriending.

It was noted that the Scottish Church Housing Association were keen to work with all faith organisations and had requested a contact for any ethnic minority groups interested in participating and that nominations could be sent via Cathy Roarty.

AYRSHIRE RACE EQUALITY

4. Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support advised that to date they had surveyed about 5% of the black ethnic minority community in East Ayrshire and when completed, the results would be analysed by an external provider.

It was noted that the survey analysis would assist the Council and its Community Planning partners to inform how services are planned with a possibility of attracting Commission for Race Equality funding to further develop ethnic minority community plaster building in East Ayrshire.

ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFYING SITES FOR ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTRE ADJACENT TO A77

5. Having heard the Head of Economic Development and Property, the representatives noted the Council had provided and would continue to support identification of suitable premises for the proposed Islamic Cultural Centre from within the Council's property portfolio.

In addition, it was suggested that the Islamic Cultural Centre representatives consider appointing an estate agent or property consultant to advise of private sites that would be suitable for their development needs as the Council had no responsibility for identifying private sites.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT/BUSINESS START-UP INFORMATION

6. It was noted that the item had been requested by the Islamic Education Cultural Centre and was in relation to perceived difficulties with graduate recruitment for ethnic minorities.

Martin Rose, Head of Personnel confirmed that the Council as one of the largest employers in the local employment market, along with its Community Planning partners such as NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Strathclyde Police and Strathclyde Fire and Rescue regularly advertise job opportunities in the local, national press and on the internet and further assistance could be provided by Careers Scotland at 55 John Finnie Street, Kilmarnock (01563) 527165.

It was noted that the ethnic minority representatives would notify the Head of Personnel of any perceived difficulties in getting information on job vacancies to ethnic minorities in East Ayrshire.

MARIM UPDATE

7. Superintendent Robert Brown updated the meeting on behalf of MARIM and indicated that in the last six month period there had been thirty three incidents of a racial nature, with a fifth of which being detected and enquiries remained ongoing. It was agreed to note the position.

CELEBRATION OF CHINESE NEW YEAR – 8TH FEBRUARY 2005

8. Graham Cumming, Community Worker, updated the meeting that KULOC would be hosting celebrations for the Chinese new year on 8th February 2005 and most notably, a display by the Line Dancing Group with two dragons comprising a mixture of Chinese and non-Chinese pupils.

KULOC had extended an invitation to the Provost and Elected Members of East Ayrshire to attend the celebrations and it was noted that Graham Cumming would liaise with Mr Ho regarding arrangements.

UPDATE ON ETHNIC MINORITIES LAW CENTRE

9. Simone De Lorentiis, Information Officer provided an update on the activities of the Ethnic Minority Law Centre and gave general details of the type of case work handled by the centre.

It was agreed to note the position.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10. It was agreed to note the next meeting would take place during summer 2005 and alternative arrangements to hold the meeting in a different venue would be considered.

The meeting terminated at 1250 hours.