

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

### BI-ANNUAL MEETING BETWEEN EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL AND THE FORUMS ON DISABILITY

#### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 28 OCTOBER 1999 AT 1000 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

**PRESENT:** Councillors David Macrae, Drew McIntyre, Harry Wilson, Eric Jackson and Julie Faulds.

**ATTENDING:** Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive; Mary Fegan, Depute Director of Social Work; Dot Grieve, Area Community Education Officer; Alex Fraser, Education Department; John Spooner, Business Development Manager; Jim Kane, Chief Engineer, Roads Division; John Griffiths, Head of Leisure Services; Carole Devoy, Senior Employees Relations Officer, Corporate Services; Morven Gemmill, Service Manager, Social Work Department; Anna Gallagher, Solicitor/Team Leader (Legal Services); Donald McVicar, Strategy Officer, Corporate Services; and Robert Beaton, Administrative Officer; and representing the Disability Forums: Kilmarnock Forum on Disability - Alan Harley, Janice Cameron and Jim Bryan; representing East Ayrshire South Forum on Disability - Jim Liddel, Iain Brown, William Frew and Jean Smith.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Robert Stevenson and Jane Darnbrough.

**CHAIR:** Councillor David Macrae, Chair.

## MINUTES

### MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The Minutes of previous meeting held on 28 April 1999 were agreed in terms of accuracy.

### MATTERS ARISING

2. The following matters arose from the Minutes:-
  - **Car parking at Cumnock** - It was reported that work would commence on 8 November 1999 to repair defects to the remote footpath connecting Townhead Street to Glaisnock Shopping Centre.
  - **Relocation of two disabled bays at Glaisnock Shopping Precinct** - It was reported that the marking of bays was weather dependant and an apology was offered regarding the delay in lowering the kerbs at the new location.
  - **Orange Badge Scheme** - It was reported that the Social Work Department had monitored the response times for the re-issuing of badges and found that they met the performance indicators set and that application forms were currently available from Social Work Offices and that these were regularly restocked by staff.
  - **Council Transport and Electric Wheelchairs** - It was reported that advice regarding the operation of Council transport had been issued to both Disability

Groups. Representatives of the Disability Forums were concerned that Council transport was unable to accommodate an electric wheelchair and as a result, the Depute Director of Social Work was asked to seek clarification and report back to the next meeting on the matter.

- **Unauthorised use of disabled parking bays** - It was reported that the Chief Engineer (Roads Division) had liaised with Strathclyde Police to concentrate their efforts on a Spotlight Initiative to target unauthorised parking on pavements. In addition, the Chief Engineer was asked to ensure that the Spotlight Initiative included villages and other non-urban areas. In relation to the misuse of disabled parking bays in Council Car Parks, it was confirmed that car parking attendants had been instructed to enforce proper use of the bays. The improper parking of Council vehicles had been raised with Departmental Heads and the matter would be closely monitored and appropriate action taken.
- **Taxis and electric wheelchairs** - The Head of Protective Services was asked to provide information if there were any taxis equipped to carry an electric wheelchair in East Ayrshire.
- **Employee awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995** - It was reported that further joint working with the Disability Forums was being investigated to assist with raising staff awareness of the legislation requirements. In addition, work was ongoing to ensure greater access to employment opportunities, with the Council's vacancy list being made available on tape and also on the Internet. The co-operation of the Disability Forum in assessing the suitability of premises was acknowledged and already, the unsuitability of the Civic Centre as a venue for any Committee or meetings involving the public had been established.

The Morton Hall had also been the subject of liaison with the Disability Forum and it had been established that the access arrangement was acceptable. Representatives of the Disability Forum were requested to inform the Departmental Strategy Officer of any loop system which was functioning poorly or inoperative for appropriate action to be taken.

### **ACCESS TO KING STREET, KILMARNOCK FOR DISABLED DRIVERS**

3. Representatives of the Disability Forum advised that it was sometimes difficult for people with a disability to complete their shopping arrangements before 1030 hours as required by the current traffic order regulations. In addition, access to the disabled parking bays at the Gateway presented a great difficulty to people with a disability due to the steep incline.

Following discussion, it was agreed:-

- (i) to note that the Kilmarnock Forum on Disability had been consulted on the location of the parking bays at the Foregate car park by the Chief Engineer; and
- (ii) that a report would be made to the next meeting detailing parking sign provision in Kilmarnock Town Centre, together with current disabled parking bay provision.

### **SHOPMOBILITY WITHIN EAST AYRSHIRE**

4. It was reported that a Working Group had been established involving the Kilmarnock Town Centre Management Initiative, representatives of the Disability Groups and Officers from the Social Work and Development Services Departments to undertake a feasibility study on the establishment a Shopmobility Scheme for East Ayrshire. The Working Group had recently visited the Shopmobility Scheme in Stirling and a questionnaire would be issued shortly to people with a disability or a sensory impairment in East Ayrshire to establish the demand for a Shopmobility Scheme.

A funding application had been submitted by Development Services for the Public Transport Fund to upgrade facilities for the disabled at Cumnock and Kilmarnock Bus Stations. The latter included plans for an operational base for Shopmobility. An announcement on the awards was expected later that day and would be reported during the course of the meeting.

As part of the establishment of an East Ayrshire Shopmobility Scheme, a range of options were being investigated by the Working Group and it was acknowledged that much work required to be carried out to improve individual access to shops throughout the Council area and a further report back would be made to the next meeting on the Shopmobility Scheme proposals.

### **UPDATE ON EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S IMPLEMENTATION ON THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995**

5. The Depute Chief Executive advised that the Council viewed the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as a very important piece of legislation and acknowledged the close co-operation of both Disability Forums in assisting the Council to progress, together, various initiatives to meet the requirements of the Act.

There then followed a presentation by Officers of the Council and the points made are summarised below:-

- From 1st October 1999, service providers had a duty to ensure adequate provision was made and to undertake reasonable adjustments within a specified period to accommodate the needs of people with a disability. Accordingly, Legal Services were providing training on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and on the Human Rights Legislation to Members and Officers of the Council.
- The requirements of people with a disability or sensory impairment would be taken on board, especially in relation to the process of designing buildings which involved the Council as service provider.
- Over £1million had been allocated by the Council in 1998/99 on the Adaptations Service and the Council now had its own technical staff to install required adaptations with the ability to respond to hospital referrals within a 24 hour period.
- To provide a corporate response to the requirements of the Act, the Council had formed an Equal Opportunities Officer Working Group chaired by the Chief Executive on which all Services were represented. The Group had a remit to carry out a complete audit of all buildings in ownership of the Council. The results of the audit were expected by 30 November 1999 and the terms of the remit were to:-

- establish access requirements for outside buildings;
- establish access requirements inside buildings; and
- establish facilities required within buildings (i.e. loop systems and toilet facilities).

Following discussion it was agreed:-

- (i) that the Depute Director of Social Work investigate the cost and feasibility of purchasing text phones, including advertising the availability of the service across all Council Services and to report back to the next meeting;
- (ii) to note that the recent Community Safety Forum held at Kilmarnock Police Station had inadequate access for people with a disability and more suitable venues for meetings would be utilised in future; and
- (iii) that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Development Services be asked to provide further information on expenditure relating to provision of facilities for people with a disability or sensory impairment across East Ayrshire Council.

### **COMMUNITY REHABILITATION SERVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

6. The Depute Director of Social Work gave an update on progress and the main points are summarised below:-

- The recruitment exercise for the post of the Rehabilitation Officer should be concluded in the next four weeks.
- The contact information for occupational therapy services and rehabilitation services for the visually impaired would be published within the next four weeks.
- The level of outstanding occupational referrals was confirmed at 169 cases in the South and 160 cases in the North, and a priority would be given to address backlog in the South of the district.

Following discussion, it was agreed:-

- (i) to note that it had proved very difficult to recruit and retain a Rehabilitation Officer and the Depute Director of Social Work was currently reviewing a range of options to improve the Service; and
- (ii) to note that the Service Manager would undertake to provide advice on a "minor aid" case with representatives following the meeting.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF BID TO THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FUND**

7. The Chief Engineer advised that £590,000 had been awarded to East Ayrshire Council for the implementation of works to improve the disabled access facilities in Cumnock and Kilmarnock Bus Stations referred to at Item 4. The Chair welcomed the news as a very positive step forward and this was endorsed by all present.

### **LEISURE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

8. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Community Services which advised of the opportunities currently available for people with disabilities to

take part in leisure activities and progress being made in developing improved services.

After discussion it was agreed:-

- (i) to note that refurbishment of Galston Library, when completed, would result in an improvement in access for people with a disability;
- (ii) to note that access arrangements for the Baird Institute, Cumnock were currently being investigated and had been subject to consultation with the Disability Forum;
- (iii) to note that the Grand Hall, Kilmarnock layout of the rear car park was currently being investigated to improve car parking and access facilities.
- (iv) to note the current difficulties over access within the Visitors Centre at Dean Castle, and this would be identified in the Corporate Survey currently being undertaken; and
- (v) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

#### **ADVISORY LEAFLET - DOMESTIC REFUSE COLLECTION SERVICE**

9. There was submitted and noted report dated 21 October 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Community Services which advised of the recording of a Council information on tape.

#### **MONITORING OF DOUBLE TICK POSITIVE ABOUT DISABILITY SCHEME**

10. It was reported that the Council's performance had recently been audited by the Employment Service Disability Service Team who have indicated that the Council continue to meet and make progress on the user commitments contained within the Double Tick Scheme.

It was further reported that a Disabled Employee's Consultative Forum was currently being established and contact would be made with all employees who have indicated that they have a disability. In addition, Personnel Officers had recently received a presentation from the Disability Services Team to improve their awareness of the services they can offer to employers' in the recruitment and retention of disabled employees. The Council was also able to provide work experience placements for people with a disability through an established programme.

Following discussion it was agreed:-

- (i) to note the progress made to date regarding the double tick positive about disability scheme; and
- (ii) that the Head of Personnel would provide the Secretary of the East Ayrshire South (Disability Forum) with details of statistics concerning applications made to the Council by disabled people.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

11. It was agreed that the next meeting would be convened in April/May 2000 and that the Disability Forums would be consulted on the date and venue to be selected.

The meeting terminated at 1200 hours.

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