

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **ETHNIC MINORITIES FORUM**

**Note of meeting held on 29 April 1998**

#### **Present**

##### **East Ayrshire Council Representatives**

Councillor Eric Jackson, Vice Chair of Policy & Resources (Chair)  
Margaret Burnell, Senior Depute Director of Education  
Anne Basford, Network Support Co-ordinator, Department of Education  
John Crawford, Head of Protective Services, Department of Community Services  
Carol Foote, Service Development Manager, Department of Commercial Operations  
Graham Haugh, Depute Director of Personnel  
Councillor Katie Hall, Representative on Equal Opportunities Member/Officer Group  
Joe Herd, Area Community Education Officer  
John Johnstone, Community Involvement Inspector, Strathclyde Police  
Alan McDougall, Depute Director of Social Work  
Donald McVicar, Strategy Officer, Department of Support Services  
Jim Maitland, Depute Director of Housing  
David Montgomery, Chief Executive  
Councillor James O'Neill, Chair of Commercial Operations  
Inspector Bob Pollock, Strathclyde Police Liaison Officer

##### **Ethnic Minority Representatives**

Sarah Craig, Solicitor, Ethnic Minority Law Centre  
Henry Ho, Secretary, KULOC Chinese Community Association  
Mr Malik, Islamic Education & Cultural Centre  
Mrs Malik, Chandni Asian Women Group  
Shafiq Nasir, Islamic Education & Cultural Centre  
Aaliya Seyal, Development Worker, Ethnic Minority Law Centre  
Kenny Shek, KULOC Chinese Community Association

#### **Apologies**

Mrs Aslam, Chandni Asian Women Group  
Mrs Bundhoo, Hindustani Community  
Councillor Jane Darnbrough, Vice Chair of Social Work  
Mr Iqbal, Islamic Education & Cultural Centre  
Ruquiya Khan, Chandni Asian Women Group  
Councillor Andrew McIntyre, Chair of Development Services  
Councillor David Sneller, Chair of Policy & Resources

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

- Councillor Eric Jackson (EJ) welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Ethnic minority representatives and Council officers introduced themselves to the meeting.

#### **Equal Opportunities Strategy**

- David Montgomery (DM) outlined the key strategies of the Council and the core values of Quality, Equality, Access and Partnership.
- DM focused on the Equal Opportunities Strategy – one aspect of this strategy is the Ethnic Minorities Forum.
- A copy of the Council's Equal Opportunities Strategy was circulated. This document sets out, in general terms, how the Council will take matters forward constructively and communicates with the people it represents.
- The Council does not have a specific unit with responsibility for equal opportunities – every employee has a responsibility to promote equal opportunities in their work.

- It is important to have an Ethnic Minorities Forum in order that representatives from all minority groups can come together on a regular basis to discuss issues of mutual interest with Council representatives.
- Representatives were encouraged to put forward issues they wish to raise for the agenda of the next meeting – officers will research the issues prior to the meeting.

### **Support and Opportunities for Ethnic Minority Groups within the Education Service**

- Margaret Burnell (MB) commented that Education is the lead Department in this Forum - Education is the largest Department of the Council and its services touch the lives of everyone.
- The Education Department has developed very strong links with minority ethnic groups over the years.
- MB gave an overview of the services provided and gave representatives the opportunity to raise any issues on any services they feel the department is not providing.
- Anne Basford (AB) made a presentation on the Bilingual Service which provides educational support and opportunities for bilingual children and adults – copy of presentation attached to agenda for the meeting.
- Joe Herd (JH) outlined progress which has been made to develop and increase the level of involvement by black and minority ethnic groups in Community Education activities - copy of report attached to agenda for the meeting.

### **Identification of Relevant Contacts to allow Consultation on Social Work Strategies and Plans**

- Alan McDougall (AMcD) commented on the importance of the views of minority ethnic groups being built into the Children & Families, Community Care and Criminal Justice Strategies which are being developed for the Council.
- Staff within Social Work have been identified to engage with representatives of ethnic minority communities to ensure that specific and general views are obtained.
  - May Martindale, Divisional Manager, Tel: (01563) 528011
  - Jim Haslett, Divisional Manager, Tel: (01290) 421076
  - John Butler, Service Officer, Tel: (01563) 576922
  - Kay Gilmour, Principal Officer, Tel: (01563) 576936
- It is important that any services planned are appropriate and meet the needs of members of ethnic communities.

### **Identification of Special Needs in Ethnic Minority Groups in Relation to Social Work Services**

- The Department of Social Work would welcome advice and comments on the current Social Work services provided and how services meet the needs of members of the ethnic minorities groups within East Ayrshire.
- AMcD will write to representatives of this Forum giving details of operational contacts for local Social Work issues.
- Meetings will be set up to discuss specific Social Work issues.

### **Provision of Environmental Health – Leaflets and Guidance in Different Languages**

- John Crawford (JC) would welcome some indication of what languages information leaflets should be provided in to help local businesses comply with statutory obligations.
- It is important that information required by enforcement officers is completely understood by proprietors. Therefore, if interpretation problems exist, contact should be made with the Department of Community Services who will organise interpretation facilities.
- MB will trawl for details of bilingual staff within the authority in order that a register can be established of those willing to provide a service.
- AMcD will provide information to the Department of Education on the role of Christine Sang.
- Minority Ethnic representatives will provide details of people who would be willing to provide interpretation services on behalf of the Council to assist communication.
- DM encouraged ethnic minority citizens to advise the Council if they are expecting a visit from a Council Department and there may be language difficulties in order that interpretation support can be arranged in advance where possible.

- Councillor Jim O'Neill (JO'N) added that citizens experiencing language problems when they are due to have repairs/maintenance work carried out in their home should contact Carol Foote, Service Development Manager at Holmquarry House Tel: (01563) 555579.

### **Housing Provision and Services Available to Ethnic Minority Groups in East Ayrshire**

- Jim Maitland (JM) outlined the Department's progress in housing provision and services available to minority ethnic groups in East Ayrshire, covering 4 main areas:
  - Housing Needs Survey
  - Allocations Policy
  - West of Scotland Community Relations Council
  - WSCRC expansion to East Ayrshire
- JM will write to representatives of the Forum seeking issues they wish to discuss and giving them contact telephone numbers for Housing staff.

### **Input from Ethnic Minority Law Centre**

- Sarah Craig (SC) outlined the Ethnic Minority Law Centre's main areas of work.
- The Ethnic Minority Law Centre is managed by a Board, made up of representatives from interest groups.
- A surgery, giving advice and representation on a number of issues, is held on the first Wednesday of every month from 0900-1200 hrs within the Gateway Centre, Kilmarnock.
- The Centre would welcome the opportunity of improving access to the community.
- Joe Herd (JH) commented that suitable times would be arranged to suit community representatives.
- DM suggested that Sarah Craig should contact the Council's Head of Public Relations to discuss opportunities for advertising this surgery via Council offices and establishments.

### **Input from Minority Ethnic Representatives**

- Minority Ethnic representatives expressed their satisfaction on the business being discussed at this Forum and congratulated the Council for establishing this Forum.

### **Conclusion**

- Community Education should proceed now to set up meeting involving Police, to discuss issue re: sale of alcohol to underage and threats.
- Community Education to contact Property Services to discuss the possibility of more permanent accommodation, although financial issues may have to be considered.
- The Ethnic Minority Law Centre will contact Public Relations to discuss publicity for this surgery.
- Social Work and Housing Departments will write to representatives to arrange meeting re: policy documents.
- Interpretation arrangements will be made for visits by Council staff, where language barriers may exist, wherever the Council is made aware of these.
- East Ayrshire Council is determined to build strong relationships with its communities and build on the good practice which exists.

### **Future Arrangements**

- It was agreed that the Forum should be established on a standing basis.
- Discussion took place on the frequency of this Forum – it was agreed that this Forum will meet twice per year, in addition to participating in an annual meeting of the Equal Opportunities Forum.

### **Date of next meeting**

- A suitable date will be identified for September/October – representatives will be consulted on a suitable time for the Forum.

## **AGENDA**