

Moray Equalities Forum

Minutes of the meeting 28 June 2011, Training Room HIE, Forres

Present:

John McConnachie (Chair), Irena Paterson, Suzie Gentle, Lansana Bangura, Don Toonen, Martine Scott.

The chair welcomed everyone present.

The minutes of the previous meeting (31 March 2011) were approved.

The meeting focused on the recommendations from the GREC research about the future development of the forum.

Public sector equality duty

Don Toonen gave a presentation on the implications of the Equality Act 2010 regarding the public sector duties (notes attached). Although the specific duties have not been finalised yet, it is becoming clear that public authorities will need to base their policies on evidence and consultation with equality groups. This means a greater role for organisations such as the Moray Equalities Forum. The consultation on the Moray Council's budget for 2011-12 showed that the forum can have an influence on policy decisions.

GREC recommendations

The recommendations from the GREC report give a direction for the forum and are a comprehensive set of guidelines for the next few years in establishing it as an effective representative of the various equality groups in Moray.

Vision for Moray Equalities Forum – group discussion

There followed a group discussion aimed at developing a vision for the forum and at prioritising actions for the near future.

The discussion raised three objectives/action points.

The importance of equalities for everyone

The group felt it was important for the forum to promote the idea that equalities isn't just "for other people" but that, rather, equality issues can affect everyone. Group members would like to see a focus on awareness raising. Some of the members would like to become involved in awareness training for other organisations. The group identified the following actions:

- Collect information about the expertise and training materials within the forum. Don will contact all members and ask them to send him information by the end of July 2011.
- Consider the development of an online module. Don said that the Moray Council is currently developing such a module which is due to be submitted for approval.

John added a note of caution that the effectiveness of some training materials can depend very much on the particular skills of the person delivering it and that there need to be some assurance of the quality of delivery.

First point of contact for consultations/decisions

One of visions discussed at the meeting was for the Moray Equalities Forum to become the first point of contact for consultations/decisions made by public authorities in Moray and for it to be involved before decisions are made.

It was suggested that all members should inform John of any consultation that they are aware of so that the information can be forwarded to all members of the forum.

Issues to consider for the future are:

- How best to pass information from the forum to public authorities

Appoint a representative/point of contact

The members are asked to think about appointing a representative who can be a fixed point of contact for the forum members and towards other organisations.

Actions to consider were:

- Contact CEOs of partner organisations directly
- Participate in the Community Planning Partnership
- Contact organisations such as Patient Participation Forum, Tenants Forum, residents Associations etc.
- Attend Community Engagement Seminars. The next seminar will be held on 27 October. Martine will send information to the forum members.

AOCB

John reminded members that he will only chair the forum until November 2011, after which he will be in New Zealand. Members are asked to start thinking about a replacement.

Next meeting

The next meeting will take place in week beginning 29 August 2011. Don will advise members of the exact time and venue.