

Moray Equalities Forum

Minutes of the meeting on 31 March 2011, Elgin Town Hall, 13:30 – 15:30

Present: John McConnachie (Chair), Irena Paterson, Monica Lee-Mcpherson, Judith Franklin, Suzy Gentle, Cathy Coverly, John Ferguson, Bridget Mustard, Kirsty Sherlock, Heather Johnson (BSL interpreter), Sarah Campbell, Don Toonen, Sean Hoath

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone back and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

There were no items raised for Any Other Business

2 and 3 Representation and remit of the Forum

These were moved to item 7: GREC research

4. Moray Council budget

Don thanked everyone who had contributed to the consultation and explained how the feedback from the Moray Equalities Forum was used to inform Elected Members in their decision regarding the Moray Council budget for 2011 – 2012 (summary attached). The members of the Forum had raised a number of serious issues and factual information to argue against or mitigate the impact of some of the proposals.

Concerns were raised against 14 proposals. Out of these, 4 have now not gone ahead, 3 will go ahead but with mitigating actions and 7 have been amended to minimise negative impacts.

The Chair summarised by stating that this outcome shows how important it is to have a group like the Moray Equalities Forum.

5. Consultation

a. Equality Impact Assessments

There were no impact assessments submitted to the forum. Instead, Don explained that there are going to be significant changes in the way these will be carried out in the future. These are:

- Equality Impact Assessments will be, as much as possible, carried out as part of policy development. This means that the forum will be involved, where appropriate, at a much earlier stage.
- Involvement of the forum in the assessment process will mainly take place outwith the forum meetings with those representatives whose groups are

likely to be affected by the policies. Progress will be reported back to the forum at meetings.

b. Licensing Board

Sean Hoath gave a presentation on the work of the Licensing Board. He asked the Forum to feed back on the Board's equality strategy and on its impact assessments of policies on liquor licensing and gambling licensing and guidance and information to license holders.

Don will circulate summaries of the assessments and strategy and will contact individual forum members for feedback over the next three weeks.

6. Equality Act 2010

Don gave a short presentation outlining changes in equality legislation following the Equality Act 2010.

Further guidance can be found on websites of Equality and Human Rights Commission, ACAS, Government Equalities Office through the following links.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/>

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1363>

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010/equality_act_2010_what_do_i_n.aspx

7. GREC Research

Sarah Campbell from Grampian Racial Equality Council gave a presentation outlining the results of her research into equality issues in Moray. The research used a variety of methods including focus groups, face-to-face interviews and semi-structured interviews. Her report gives a number of recommendations:

- Work more closely with the LGBT Community in order to develop a positive working relationship.
- Promote the use of Prejudice Incident Reporting Forms in all cases of discrimination in order to get a better picture of the extent of bullying, particularly in schools.
- Work more closely with the Muslim community to facilitate the development of a mosque in Moray.
- 5 recommendations aimed at strengthening the role of the Moray Equalities Forum.

Once the report has been presented to Committee, members of the forum will receive a copy. The report is likely to play a major part in the development of the forum over the next series of meetings.

8. AOCB

No points were raised.

9. Date and venue of next meeting

Several members stated that the last Thursday of the month is not going to be a feasible time to attend meetings. Kirsty will liaise with the Chair to set a date for the next meeting.