

# Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force Meeting

16:30 – 18:00 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2005  
The Old Library, Richmond House

## MINUTES

### Attendees

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Margaret Hodge MP (Chair) | Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)     |
| John Healey MP            | HM Treasury (HMT)                          |
| Leslie Manasseh           | Trades Union Congress (TUC)                |
| Sonny Taank               | Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)       |
| Michael Hewson            | DWP  |
| Afsana Shukur             | DWP  |
| Cay Stratton              | DWP/National Employment Panel (NEP)        |
| Helen Judge               | Home Office (HO)                           |
| Shelagh Prosser           | Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) |
| Mandy Mayer               | Department for Trade and Industry (DTI)    |
| Inderjit Dehal            | Department for Education and Skills (DfES) |
| Sally Collier             | Office for Government Commerce (OGC)       |
| Kate Nutt                 | OGC  |

### **Secretariat:**

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Viv Miller       | DfES Secondee    |
| Emma Heppenstall | DWP, Secretariat |

### **Presenters**

|                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Jane McLuckie-Townsend | DWP             |
| Matthew West           | HO              |
| John Harvey            | Iris Consulting |
| Rodney Waldeck         | Iris Consulting |

### Apologies

Apologies were received from

Gerry Sutcliffe MP, DTI; Jim Fitzpatrick MP, ODPM; Paul Goggins MP, HO; Jacqui Smith, MP DfES; Trevor Phillips, CRE; Nahid Majid, Chair, Ethnic Minority Stakeholder Group; Neil Bentley, CBI; Jonathan Portes, DWP; Tony Orhnial, HMT; Janice Munday, DTI

### **Item 1: Welcome and Introduction**

The Chair welcomed all to the Task Force meeting, particularly Rodney Waldeck and John Harvey from IRIS Consulting.

### **Item 2: Minutes and Action Points**

The Task Force agreed the minutes of the last Task Force meeting of February 24<sup>th</sup> 2005.

### **Item 3: Procurement**

The Chair introduced Jane McLuckie-Townsend from the Ethnic Minority Employment Division (DWP) who, along with John Harvey from IRIS Consulting gave a presentation and an update on where we are with the procurement project. [Presentation attached].

Key points:

- Understanding gained with the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) of permissible activities to promote race equality
- IRIS framework ready for dissemination and testing in Departments
- Minority Ethnic Group of NEP has examined DWP procurement and identified key steps for progress and fundamental challenges

The Chair thanked IRIS Consulting and agreed that the report can be published.

The Chair gave an update on her discussion with John Oughton of the OGC, where he confirmed that the OGC had no problem with the principles of the framework, provided relevance is properly defined and value for money maintained.

Careful consideration is needed on how race equality relevance to contract is defined and linked to equal opportunity in the work place. Enforcement of the framework when cascading down the supply chain is an issue yet to be resolved. In order to get the testing of the framework up and running the Chair is prepared to concede this issue for the moment.

John Healey stated that this was a good piece of work; there are 16 or 17 areas where the Government is already using procurement for social purposes. He stated that IRIS Consulting findings were not un-typical in that the key findings were engaging at an early stage of the procurement process and ensuring value for money. He agreed that more clarity is needed in defining what is relevant to the contract and legally we have to be confident in this relevance. There were a wide range of comments made, from maintaining cost effectiveness principles and looking at diversity.

The Chair said that we will continue to work on the pilots, with a view to initiating these and awarding first contacts in January 2006. She will try to persuade DfES/ Sure Start

Unit to be involved in the pilots. She will speak to Beverley Hughes. John Healey promised OGC/HMT support for the pilots.

The Chair is keen for testing in selected government departments to start in January 2006. It is important that OGC remain involved and should be part of the training workshops for applying the framework in government departments. She would like to hold roundtable discussions with the Home Office, DWP, DfES (perhaps Sure Start Unit) to clarify the relevance to contract issue and value for money. The GLA should be invited as they have some good practice in this area. Cay Stratton (NEP) will be invited to this discussion. The Leadership issue will be taken on board and the Chair will work with the departments involved to take this forward.

The Chair will hold a meeting of officials in the next three weeks to talk further about these pilots and break down some of the barriers. She said that leadership is needed from the top, so that procurement and policy officials are clear about Government's intention and the legitimacy of this approach. A meeting is needed to include DWP, HO, OGC, DfES, NEP, DTI, TUC & IRIS. However, we should try to keep the numbers manageable to make it a real working meeting.

Agreement:

- To test the Framework in a number of Government departments
- To undertake work to develop policy governing how we define and assess value for money in government accounting
- Margaret and other ministers to provide leadership within their departments during the pilots. Wider leadership issue across government unresolved.

**Action 1.1: Race Equality in public Procurement report to be published**

**Action 1.2: Work on the Framework to continue to enable pilot testing to start in January 2006**

**Action 1.3: Margaret Hodge to chair a meeting of departmental representatives to discuss testing the framework and breaking down the barriers we face. Attendees to include DWP, HO, OGC, DfES, NEP, DTI, TUC.**

**Item 4 & 5: Priorities for the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force and future ways of working**

The Chair asked that these 2 agenda items be discussed together.

The Chair referred to her letter to Task Force members and stated that she wanted to get some focus and generate discussion on the priorities for the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force. There have been issues of poor ministerial attendance and suggested that a more focused ministerial Task force would lead to a more action focused working group.

John Healey suggested that attendance might be improved if the ministerial conference rooms in the House of Commons are used.

The Chair said she was happy to try this and was happy to hear other ideas regarding the priorities of the Task Force, if officials could discuss with their ministers and they could write to the Chair.

**Action 4.1: Ministers to write to the Chair with ideas for the priorities and this will be considered at the next Task Force meeting.**

**Item 6: Any other business**

None.

**Close**

Margaret Hodge thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

Annex 1: Action points

Annex 2: Presentation on Procurement

The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 9.30 am to 11.00am.  
Venue to be confirmed

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### ACTION POINTS

|                   | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Responsible</b>              | <b>Deadline</b>               | <b>Status</b>   |
|-------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>AP<br/>1.1</b> | Iris report to be published   | Secretariat                     |                               | <b>Cleared</b><br>Report is now on the EMETF website:<br><a href="http://www.emetaskforce.gov.uk">www.emetaskforce.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>AP<br/>1.2</b> | Work to continue on the Framework to enable pilot testing to start.   | Secretariat / Departments & OGC | January 2006                  | Ongoing<br>Progress update at next EMETF meeting.   |
| <b>AP<br/>1.3</b> | Meeting with Ministers of departments involved in testing the framework to be held in the next 2 to 3 weeks. Attendees to include DWP, HO, OGC, DfES, NEP, DTI & TUC. | Private Office                  | December 2005                 | <b>Cleared</b>  |
| <b>AP<br/>4.1</b> | Ministers to write to the Chair with ideas for the priorities and this will be considered at the next Task Force meeting  | Task Force Members              | January 17 <sup>th</sup> 2006 | to be discussed at EMETF meeting 17 <sup>th</sup> January   |