

'Sham' dialogue wins some support

# Asians split on police liaison

THE ASIAN community in Sheffield was in disarray last night when many groups pledged support for continuing discussions with the city's police-community liaison panel 24 hours after others condemned it as a sham.

At an emergency meeting of the panel, set up four years ago to discuss problems experienced by ethnic minorities in their dealings with the police, members of many black organisations said they still

By **SHEENA HASTINGS**

had faith in the good work it was doing.

Panel chairman Choudry Walayat said: "The people at the meeting represented groups including the mosques, Sikh temple, Bangladeshi Welfare Association, Pakistani Welfare Association and others. They were unanimously for going on with our talks."

On Monday night, groups led by the Asian Welfare Association

and the Asian Youth Movement decided to break with the panel and set up an independent police monitoring unit to collect evidence of police mistreatment and neglect, and prosecute individual officers.

They claimed attacks on young Asians had escalated during the last year, and that Asian problems were not taken seriously by the panel. Youths have said police dogs have been used to split them up in the street when they were doing no wrong.

Parents have complained of their teenage children being taken to jail without notification to parents or community workers.

Proposals for the police monitoring unit are to be put to the county council. It will provide a 24-hour call-out service to help those who have been subjected to racist attacks, or claim to have been mistreated by the police in any way.

Last night Mr Walayat said: "The last thing we want to see is a split in the Asian community, but the vote was in favour of the panel, and that's what we must have. I shall be talking to the AWA and others to see if a compromise can be reached."

I do believe the panel is more representative of the silent majority of Asian people in Sheffield than the small group of politically active people who want to break away from the police."

A spokesman for the AWA said: "We're determined to go ahead with the unit. We must gather our own evidence to show that police attitudes and attitudes generally in Sheffield are not changing."

"I'm sure if the facts of specific cases were put to the other groups they would agree with us."

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