

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE –20 SEPTEMBER 2005

AYRSHIRE RACE EQUALITY PARTNERSHIP – RESEARCH PROJECT ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF THE BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES ACROSS AYRSHIRE

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the results of the research project carried out by the Ayrshire Race Equality Partnership into the needs of the black and ethnic minority communities across Ayrshire and to identify further actions arising therefrom.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** In 2003 a Report commissioned by the three Councils and other public agencies in Ayrshire made two recommendations, viz;

that an Ayrshire Race Equality Partnership (AREP) should be established to address race equality issues across Ayrshire; and

that a needs assessment should be carried out to identify service needs of black and ethnic minority communities across Ayrshire.

- 2.2** Following the establishment of AREP a funding application was submitted to and approved by the Commission for Racial Equality to match funds from AREP to allow the needs assessment referred to above to be carried out.

- 2.3** The membership of AREP is East, North and South Ayrshire Councils, the Procurator Fiscal Service, Strathclyde Police and the NHS.

3. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 3.1** Producing the needs assessment has been a challenging task due to a number of factors. First, the number of people in Ayrshire identified in the 2001 census as being from the black and ethnic minority community is relatively small - about 1500 people in total which is less than 1% of the total population. Second, identifying people to take part in the survey and contacting them in a language that they understood required considerable organisation and

planning. Third, there was reluctance on the part of many people approached to take part in an interview survey.

For these reasons it has taken two years to complete the survey. Despite these obstacles the survey has been successful in generating nearly 150 responses or approximately 10% of the black and ethnic minority population of the area.

3.2 Summary of key findings across Ayrshire

3.2.1 Out of the 147 completed questionnaires returned, 48 came from East Ayrshire, 65 from North Ayrshire and 31 from South Ayrshire. Three responses did not specify where they lived or indicated that they came from outside the area. The biggest response came from the Chinese community, with smaller responses from the Pakistani and Indian communities. The main issues raised were as follows

- The most important issue for the Chinese community is for interpreters and the provision of information in minority languages, particularly Cantonese.
- The main requirement for the Muslim community is culturally appropriate facilities, such as single sex swimming and gyms and access to community centres and grants to support religious events.
- In terms of community safety, most BME people are primarily concerned about young people hanging around neighbourhoods and the misuse of drugs and alcohol.
- 36% of BME people in Ayrshire are concerned about racism and 21% state that they are concerned about harassment. However, racism and harassment rank below vandalism as issue for concern.
- 36% of all those surveyed state that they have suffered from discrimination at one time, mainly in the form of verbal racial abuse
- 25% of those who responded to this study are not registered with a dentist
- 6% of all respondents said that they had made a complaint about a public service and 14% stated that they had wished to make a complaint, but had been unsure how to do so
- Broadly speaking, the BME communities are positive about considering a career in public services

3.3 Summary of findings relating to East Ayrshire

3.3.1 In East Ayrshire there were 48 respondents, the greatest number of these being Chinese. Specific points from the East Ayrshire respondents include the following:

52% of respondents indicated that English was the main language they used and whilst overall 60% of respondents indicated that they

had “good” or “fluent” command of spoken and written English they nevertheless identified language as a key issue in accessing public services. In particular they saw the absence of leaflets and other publications in languages other than English as being a barrier to access.

25% of respondents considered there were gaps in public sector provision.

69% said they had not accessed community facilities like libraries and sports centres in the preceding twelve months.

Almost 50% of respondents stated that they had experienced discrimination either personally or in connection with a family member. The nature of the discrimination varied but included general stereotyping, being talked down to, discrimination at school, problems with neighbours, racial abuse and racially motivated vandalism.

73% of respondents said that they found police friendly and approachable. However, a significant minority felt that police officers did not take them seriously when they made a complaint or worse still abused their position of authority.

98% of respondents were registered with a General Practitioner and 77% with a dentist.

- 3.3.2** There are other lessons to be learned from the survey. Response rates overall were low. Effective engagement with black and ethnic minority communities, as required to implement a Race Equality scheme or support community planning is proving challenging. The research suggests that developing Race Equality Schemes in areas of small black and ethnic minority populations is in some ways more challenging than in cities or areas of larger black and ethnic minority populations, where minority communities tend to be more developed and more easy to engage with. These are significant challenges for community planning partners in Ayrshire.

4. FURTHER ACTION

- 4.1** To take forward the issues identified in the report, AREP is formally launching the report at a meeting on 29 September. This launch is being supported by the Scottish Executive and the Commission for Racial Equality. The launch event will include both a more detailed description of the findings and lessons learned from the report. It will also include a presentation from the CRE on how the report relates to the review of race equality schemes. The event will provide an opportunity for partners to learn at first hand about the work of AREP and how the survey findings can be incorporated into the review of their individual Race Equality Schemes.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The Ayrshire Race Equality Partnership meet with the guiding principles of the Community Plan particularly in respect of Social Justice and Social Inclusion. It also reaffirms the Council's 4 core values of Equality, Quality, Partnership and Access. It also conforms with the Committee's previous decision to target its resources and activities specially within Ayrshire.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** The Committee is recommended to:-
- i. note the findings of the report into the Needs of Black and Ethnic Minority Communities across Ayrshire;
 - ii. instruct the relevant officers to take account of the findings in the review of the Council's Race Equality Scheme; and
 - iii. note that the Council will be represented by elected members and officers at the launch of the Report on 29 September 2005.

Elizabeth Morton
Depute Chief Executive/
Executive Director of Corporate Support

19 August 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report on an Assessment of the Needs of the Black and Ethnic Minority Communities across Ayrshire [April 2005]. (Copies of the full report are available from the Members' Information Access Point)

Any person wishing further information should contact Martin Rose, Head of Personnel (telephone 01563 576092)