

## **Cheltenham Borough Council**

### **Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 10th July 2006**

#### **Update on Work with Cheltenham's Black and Minority Ethnic Communities**

##### **Report of the Assistant Director Community Services**

### **1. Executive Summary and recommendation**

#### **1.1 The issue**

- 1.1.1** This report provides an overview of the current work being undertaken by the council with black and minority ethnic communities in Cheltenham

#### **1.2 I therefore recommend that:**

- 1.2.1** **The Overview and Scrutiny notes this report and continues to support the BME work and developments which are being undertaken by the council.**

#### **1.3 Summary of implications**

##### **1.3.1 Financial**

The post of Community Development and Learning Worker (BME) was originally a jointly funded 12 month contract between CBC and Adult Education (Gloucestershire) through the Learning Skills Council.

With the early termination of the contract by the post holder Adult Education (Gloucestershire) has diverted its funding to purchase an additional day per week, to the end of the contract, from one of its own workers in the field.

CBC funding was agreed in the last budget round to mainstream £31,100 towards this post from April 2007.

##### **1.3.2 Legal**

None as a result of this report

##### **1.3.3 Human Resources**

None as a direct result of this report

## 1.4 Implications on corporate and community plan priorities

### 1.4.1 Corporate business plan priorities addressed include:

- We will re-dress the imbalances in our communities and build strong healthy geographical communities and communities of interest
- We will enhance the town's reputation as a national and international culture centre, promote a healthy and sustainable economy and provide opportunities to broaden and enrich sport, play and cultural experiences for all
- We will be an excellent and sustainable council delivering high standards of service.

## 1.5 Statement on Risk

Risks identified in the Community Service division's Risk Register

- We will be unable to proactively engage with the town's black and minority ethnic communities, and optimise outcomes due to lack of dedicated internal resources.
- The council will be unable to meet the key obligations of the Gloucestershire Compact with the voluntary and community sectors which could result in claims of conflict.
- On going budgetary cuts affecting funding opportunities for the voluntary and community sector.
- We will be unable to proactively manage partnerships with voluntary groups, and optimise outcomes due to lack of internal dedicated resources.

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## 2. Introduction

### 2.1

	<b>County</b>	<b>Cheltenham</b>
All people	564,709	110,090
White	548,451	106,333
Non-White	16,258	3,757
Mixed	4,892	959
Indian	3,719	1,099
Pakistani	476	57
Bangladeshi	757	181
Asian Total	6,871	1,878
Black Caribbean	2,459	129
Black African	550	195
Black total	3,338	355
Chinese	1,354	558

*Census 2001*

Lately there has been a noticeable increase in the 'new European' community, especially the Polish community, that has yet to be quantified or studied. Also there are new government requirements to give the needs of the Traveller community

greater priority.

**2.2** The Cheltenham Borough Black & Ethnic Minority (BME) population is one of the largest in the county, after Gloucester.

- Although the level of unemployment amongst the BME population is lower than that at a county or national level, it is still above the “white” population.
- Lack of qualifications amongst the BME population in the Borough is below the county level and slightly lower than the white population.
- Attainment of higher-level qualifications of the Borough’s BME population is greater than the county average and higher than the white population.
  
- The Borough’s BME population has a lower than county average for owner occupation, and is also significantly below the corresponding figure for the local white population.
- Limiting Long Term Illness levels in the BME population are lower than in the white population of the Cheltenham Borough.

**3. Background**

**3.1** 2004 saw the collapse of the Cheltenham BME Forum which had never worked at full capacity. Lack of capacity and service failures also saw CBC withdraw its funding from GlosREC, at the same time national CRE also withdrew their funding leaving a severe capacity issue at GlosREC. CBC also dispensed with its Equalities worker post.

**3.2** To begin rebuilding its links and capacity in this filed CBC commissioned a study from ‘Linking Communities’, then Gloucestershire’s only BME research consultancy, into the breakdown and requirements of Cheltenham’s BME community and to advise on the best way forward for the authority. Whilst the report recognised the equalities work taking place within the authority one of the recommendations was for a dedicated BME worker within the Council. It highlighted the lack of capacity and institutional racism as key issues.

**3.3** Community Services succeeded in securing one years matched funding from the Adult Education (Gloucestershire) that enabled the recruitment of a full time worker on a 12 month contract. The post was filled in November 2005.

**3.4** Since then, as well as contacting a number of local individuals and organisations and networking countywide - including local Bangladeshi, African, Turkish, Muslim, Indian, Chinese, Malayalee, French, Spanish and Hebrew community leaders - the postholder has helped organise a number of events including:

- The One World Cultural Diversity Week was held 27th to 31st March 2006.

This was a partnership project with the local Black and other minority ethnic artists, Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucestershire County Council Adult Education, Equalities Team, Linking Communities, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham Library, Cheltenham Festivals, Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, Everyman Theatre, Lifelong Learning and Global

Dimension.

- Hosted four cultural story telling events in the library
- Establishing the Cultural Heritage Family Learning Project

The project aims to engage with children, young people and families in exploring their identity as a resident of their local community as well as the wider community of Cheltenham, as part of their family, enabling the learners to recognise Cheltenham's own culture which embraces such a cultural diverse residence.

- Living in Our Neighbourhood Project will also enable the adults of the families to engage with their children in recognising their own identity.

**3.5** There is a growing 'new European', predominantly Polish, community within the borough whose impact has yet to be quantified and will require further work.

**3.6** The postholder also participated within the internal MacPherson Group addressing issues of a racial nature within the authority and responsible for developing and training the authorities' racial incidents policy and procedure.

**3.7** Capacity and resources both within the Council and within the communities is inadequate – a situation exacerbated by the postholder's sudden and unexpected departure for domestic reasons.

#### **4. Consultation**

**4.1** A wide range of BME groups and organisations have been actively consulted with by the council's Community Development and Learning Worker since November 2005.

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<b>Background Papers</b>	Cabinet report – 28 June 2005 – Supporting black and minority ethnic communities in Cheltenham  Social and Community Overview and scrutiny Committee – 11 April 2005 - Information paper: black and minority ethnic support in Cheltenham update  Report of Linking Communities (Gloucestershire) independent BME consultants available from Community Services
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<b>Scrutiny Function</b>	Social and Community