

# Report

Report to:	<b>Corporate Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>15 December 2004</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Corporate Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Provision of an Advisory Service for the Ethnic Minority Community in Lanarkshire</b>
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## 1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ request approval for the joint funding of an Advisory Service for the Ethnic Minority Community in Lanarkshire

## 2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Corporate Management Team is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that a Service Level Agreement be drawn up with the Ethnic Minority Law Centre to ensure the provision of an Advisory Service to meet the needs of the ethnic minority community in Lanarkshire
- (2) that funding of £18,000 is provided on a three year pilot basis to the Ethnic Minority Law Centre
- (3) that the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABS) form part of a two tier arrangement with the Ethnic Minority Law Centre and that this is reflected in future service level agreements with the CABS
- (4) that the Council funding for the West of Scotland Race Equality Council ceases from March 2005

## 3 Background

3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to promote racial equality and prevent discrimination. This includes supporting the provision of a means by which the Black and Ethnic Minority population can access specialist advisory services on a range of matters. The current position is that services including advice on racial harassment and discrimination, welfare rights, immigration and nationality can be accessed through the Ethnic Minority Law Centre, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and the West of Scotland Race Equality Council.

3.3 However, there are changes taking place which have implications for existing arrangements. These are summarised below:

- West of Scotland Race Equality Council (WSREC).  
South Lanarkshire Council presently contributes £3,000 per annum to WSREC from the Council's grants allocation budget.

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) conducted a review of Race Equality Council's (RECs) as a result of which they withdrew most of their core funding and few RECs remain. Funding is now project based and has to be bid for annually. Following discussion with CRE, many Councils withdrew financial support to WSREC. South Lanarkshire Council has continued funding at the same grant level but given concerns about future viability of WESREC, money has been issued on a quarterly basis.

WSREC do handle clients from the Council geographical area but it is not clear as to the extent and detail of this. Legal cases are referred by them to the EMLC.

- **Ethnic Minority Law Centre (EMLC)**  
The EMLC was established in 1991 to provide unmet legal services to the Ethnic Minority Community across the former Strathclyde area. In 1996 Glasgow City Council agreed to fund work within the City. Outreach work beyond that area has been funded from the Community Fund with top up funding from Local Authorities. The contribution from Council is £2,500 per annum from the grants allocation budget. The funding from the Community Fund expired on 31 March 2004. Although the EMLC is honouring its commitment to ongoing cases, this outreach work can no longer be sustained unless funding is put in place.

The EMLC has provided details of the statistics for the work it undertakes in Lanarkshire (North and South) and demonstrated a professional approach. In discussion with officials from both South Lanarkshire and North Lanarkshire Councils the EMLC has expressed a keen interest to continue work in the Lanarkshire area and a willingness to hold surgeries locally. From the current Lanarkshire case work, the EMLC estimate the cost of providing appropriate service is £42,000, with the proportion for South Lanarkshire amounting to £18, 000, based on the share of the Ethnic Minority population.

- **Citizens Advise Bureaux (CABS)**  
The CABS provide a range of advice services and receive £189,500 in funding from the Council annually. They potentially could provide an initial and local point of contact for the Ethnic Minority community but would require training and support. Unlike the EMLC they would only be able to deal with cases up to a certain level, but could form part of a two tier approach. The EMLC are agreeable to providing training and support and CABS are keen to take on this work and form a two tier advisory service in association with the EMLC.

This would be incorporated into future service level agreements with the CABS.

#### **4 Proposal for the provision of a Lanarkshire complaints service for the Ethnic Minority community.**

- 4.1 Following discussion between officers from the two Councils within the recently formed Lanarkshire Race Equality Partners group, and consultation with the EMLC and the CABS, a Lanarkshire wide advisory service provided through the EMLC and CABS is both a viable and cost effective solution. This pan Lanarkshire approach

would reflect that of the local ethnic minority community who have recently come together to form the Lanarkshire Ethnic Minority Action Group (LEMAG).

It is therefore proposed that a two tier advisory service be developed and funded by:

- Establishing a service level agreement for three years with the EMLC for the provision of an advisory service commencing in January 2005 which includes a commitment to training and support for the CABS.
- Funding the South Lanarkshire contribution to the service by combining current funding for WSREC (£3,000) and the EMLC (£2,500) with £12,500 from the mainstream Corporate Resources budget to meet full year costs estimated at £18,000.
- Ceasing the funding of £3,000 to WSREC with effect from 31 March 2005.
- Incorporating a reference to participation in an advisory service for the ethnic minority community in the CABS service level agreement

## **8 Employee Implications**

8.1 None

## **9 Financial Implications**

9.1 The grants allocation budget to WSREC of £3,000 and the EMLC of £2,500 would be combined to support the proposal for the next three years.

9.2 £12,500 would be allocated annually from the Corporate Resources budget over the next three years to support the proposal.

## **10 Other Implications**

10.1 None

## **11 Consultation**

11.1 The provision of an integrated Lanarkshire-wide advisory service has been agreed in principle and would be supported by community representatives on the Lanarkshire Ethnic Minority Action Group (LEMAG).

**Alan Cuthbertson**

**Executive Director ( Corporate Resources)**

23 November 2004

### **Link(s) to Council Objectives**

- Supporting Our Communities

### **Previous References**

Reports to the CMT on the Council's Race Equality Scheme: November 2002, April 2004, September 2004.

### **List of Background Papers**

Race Equality Scheme

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact: Gill Bhatti, Employee Development and Diversity Manager

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