

To: Chair and Members of the HR and Diversity Panel

Date: 7 August 2009

Executive & Presenting Officer: Mrs Sarah Wilson, Consultation & Performance Officer

Status : For information and decision

BME Recruitment and Retention

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This report is intended to outline the current and proposed processes in place for the recruitment and retention of BME police officers, PCSOs and police staff.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of this report and consider the options outlined for increasing BME recruitment.

3. Reasons

- 3.1 In 1999 the Government launched *Dismantling Barriers*, a 10 year employment target to achieve 7% BME police officer and staff strength. Although nationally BME police officer representation has doubled to 4.1% during those 10 years, it has become clear that local targets reflecting local circumstances and community needs would be more beneficial.
- 3.2 Currently the local target in Cleveland is 5% BME police officer representation, against a BME population proportion of 2.93% in the 2001 census. Of an establishment of 1727 there are currently 29 BME officers, which constitute 1.6%. An additional 57 officers would need to be recruited to achieve the 5% target.
- 3.3 BME people also make up 1.6% of Cleveland's PCSO establishment, and 1.6% of police staff.
- 3.4 Employment Law
With such a shortfall of BME employees against the 5% target, it seems that some very positive action to encourage BME recruitment will be needed over the coming

years. We must be careful, however, not to impinge on employment law protections against positive discrimination.

- 3.5 Affirmative action is the process of giving special rights of hiring or advancement to ethnic minorities to make up for past discrimination against that minority. Whilst this has been used by the police in the United States and Northern Ireland it is not favoured in the UK as it might be seen as positive discrimination, which is illegal in many circumstances. The anti-discrimination legislation in the UK has been framed to protect relatively advantaged groups in the same way as it protects relatively disadvantaged groups, i.e. white British workers can bring race discrimination claims etc. However, the new Equality Bill may allow some leeway in terms of positive action at the point of recruitment in order to achieve a more balanced workforce.
- 3.5 Positive action refers to a range of measures and development initiatives that employers can lawfully take to help people from under-represented groups compete for jobs on equal terms with other applicants. Positive action does not seek to remove competition for jobs and any initiative undertaken as positive action stops currently before any part of the selection process.
- 3.6 Due to the inability to adequately security vet people from outside the UK, applicants for police officer and police staff positions must have been resident in the UK for a minimum of 3 years. This places restrictions on the number of BME people who can apply for positions within Cleveland Police.
- 3.7 Current position for police officers
There is currently a pool of 150 new recruits ready to go onto the Teesside University training course, of which 4 people are BME. This pool of new recruits will cover Cleveland's recruitment needs for the next 2 years. The 4 BME applicants will take Cleveland's BME police officer representation to 2% providing there are no BME leavers during this time.
- 3.8 The forthcoming Equality Bill may give limited scope for positive action, such as allowing new BME recruits to progress ahead of the 146 white people who are awaiting university training, or choosing BME recruits at the selection stage where they are of equal calibre. The only other way to exceed 2% BME officers over the next 2 years is through transferees from other Forces.
- 3.9 Over the last 3 years recruitment and attrition rates for BME officers have remained roughly equal and this has meant that Cleveland has been unable to increase its proportion of BME officers. Analysis shows that it is not the same people joining and leaving.
- 3.10 Over the last 3 years 5 BME officers have left the organisation. This equates to a 14.7% turnover rate over 3 years. During the same period the overall turnover rate was slightly higher, at 15.7%, so BME officers are leaving at a similar rate to their white counterparts.
- 3.11 Of the 5 officers who have left during this period, one transferred to another Force on promotion, one was dismissed, one retired on medical grounds and 2 resigned.

- 3.12 Of the 29 current BME officers, only 2 are in specialist roles and the highest rank achieved is Inspector.
- 3.13 Cleveland's Black Police Association (BPA) has a very close relationship with the ACPO team, who are viewed as extremely supportive. Cleveland's BPA have more contact with the ACPO team, more funding and more rights, such as access to Professional Standards Department files, than is the case for many other BPAs.
- 3.14 Cleveland BPA recently conducted a survey of their members to ascertain perceptions of Cleveland Police by BME officers and staff. Several negative perceptions emerged from this survey, namely:
- There is a perception that BME officers are disciplined more harshly than their white counterparts.
 - There is a perception that BME officers have more difficulty in obtaining attachments for specialist roles than their white counterparts.
 - Whilst the ACPO team are viewed as supportive of BME issues, and the teams on the ground are generally supportive of their BME colleagues, there is a perception that racist attitudes may remain within some 'middle management' roles.
- 3.15 Current Activities
The Force Strategic IAG has formed a 'Recruitment and Retention Subgroup' to look at BME recruitment and retention. Representatives from the Force IAG, Diversity and Equality Unit, HR and CPA attend. One of the challenges which the group faces is the need to increase BME recruitment at a time when the Force are not actually recruiting, so much of the work planned is long term and aimed at overcoming barriers to promote future recruitment.
- 3.16 Outreach work is currently undertaken by HR and the Diversity and Equality Unit in schools, through District IAGs, Mosques, Gurdwaras, BME Network etc. It is planned to extend these outreach activities. HR is currently producing a leaflet to distribute during outreach work which will give contact details for further information on joining the police.
- 3.17 Planned Activities
"Time for Change" is a project being run by Cleveland's BPA, which is championed by the Deputy Chief Constable. The following proposals have been put forward by the BPA to improve the retention and progression of BME officers and staff:
- Independent representative to sit on promotion Boards
 - Independent representative to sit on disciplinary proceedings
 - Mentoring scheme to provide support for BME officers and staff
- 3.18 *'In Sight'* will be a positive action initiative designed to provide people from under-represented groups with an opportunity to explore career opportunities within Cleveland Police. Members of staff will provide a buddy/mentor service to potential new recruits. The scheme will be widely advertised in the BME community through BME Network, Vital magazine (BME Network magazine), Radio Ramadan, Mosques, Gurdwaras etc.

- 3.19 The Citizen Focus review of technology recommended that the recruitment advice content on the Force internet site be increased. There is potential to encourage BME recruitment and dispel myths through this section of the website. Feedback from IAG members suggests that BME community members can be discouraged from joining the police by the vetting process, believing that family member convictions could exclude them. A 'dummy's guide' to vetting with contact numbers for further information could be added to the website. The Recruitment website www.chooseclevelandpolice.co.uk has already been enhanced and now contains detailed information regarding the selection and vetting process.
- 3.20 Community Voice FM serves the community of Middlesbrough, in particular those who are most marginalised and suffer the most disadvantage. The radio station is running a scheme promoting BME women into work. The Diversity and Equality Unit will work with the station as part of this scheme.
- 3.21 Nationally the police are far more successful at recruiting BME PCSOs than BME police officers. A workshop is to be undertaken with Cleveland's BME PCSOs to explore the reasons why they chose to become PCSOs rather than police officers, and to explore reactions within their community to them joining the police. Workshops could also be undertaken with BME police staff.
- 3.22 Cleveland has very established support networks for BME and other under-represented groups. These will be promoted to encourage new recruits and transferees.
- 3.23 External recruitment could be a way to attract BME officers from other Forces, especially if specialist posts were advertised externally. Traditionally transferees have always been brought into response teams but this is being reviewed by HR.
- 3.24 Other Forces
Surrey Police have a pre entry qualification which potential new police recruits have to undertake before they can apply to be a police officer. This is a six month university course. This ensures that potential candidates are of a high calibre before they apply and also cuts down on initial officer training costs as it reduces the time needed for new recruit training.
- 3.25 Humberside police have a formalised scrutiny process with each department being held to account for the diversity mix of its staff. Nationally it has been found that BME officers are particularly under-represented within specialist teams so this system enables the Force and Authority to closely monitor each department.
- 3.26 Staffordshire police have recruited a dedicated Pro-active Recruitment Officer whose role is to support applicants through the recruitment process and work with BME officers and staff within the force to promote them as role models.
- 3.27 In its annual recruitment and retention report the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) notes the increase in the use of Web 2.0 technology in recruitment. Web 2.0 can be described as a second generation of the web which

allows people to contribute freely and interact rather than simply reading and accepting information. Using technology like social networking sites, such as Facebook, or virtual technology like Second Life allows employers to reach niche markets. The use of such technology could be considered for targeted recruitment.

4. Implications

4.1 Finance

In terms of the effects of positive action to promote BME recruitment on the overall cost of recruitment, there is little cost associated with outreach work. However, greater costs would be associated with some of the activities outlined in this report and funding would have to be made available for these.

4.2 Diversity/Equal Opportunities

There are important diversity and equal opportunities implications arising from this report. It is essential that both the Force and Authority are seen to be employers that value diversity within their workforce. This is a core imperative in the new Equality Standard for the police service. However, it is also essential that any initiatives introduced are not seen to be unjustifiably discriminatory against non BME people.

4.3 Human Rights Act Implications

There are no human rights act implications arising from this report.

4.4 Sustainability

Once positive action initiatives are in place they should be sustainable in the long run. Any affirmative action allowed under the new Equality Bill would appear to have to be time limited to the achievement of a legitimate goal, such as increasing the BME representation in employment until it equalled that of the local population

4.5 Risk

Failure to increase the BME representation within the Force will result in failure to meet agreed targets and could result in damage to the reputation of the Force and Authority.

5 Conclusions

Affirmative action is not currently allowed, although the Equality Bill would appear to give some leeway here. Currently, with police officer recruitment on hold for the next 2 years, the focus is on positive action and outreach work with BME communities to dispel myths and break down barriers in preparation for the next recruitment drive in 2011. It is hoped to attract more BME candidates through transfers from other Forces. However, with BME numbers currently so low within Cleveland, and with so few BME officers in higher ranks or specialist roles, it seems that some form of affirmative action would be required to achieve the BME employment targets in a reasonable timescale.

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