

TAYSIDE JOINT POLICE BOARD

20 August 2001

Report by the Chief Constable No. PB 36/2001

SUBJECT: RACE RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT 2000 – UPDATE

<p>Abstract: This report provides members of the Tayside Joint Police Board with an update on the position of Tayside Police in respect of compliance with the General Duty contained within the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000</p>

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 was enacted on 2 April 2000 and Tayside Joint Police Board and Tayside Police are both listed as public listed Authorities within Schedule 1A of the Act.

- 2.2 From 2 April 2000 both the Chief Constable and Tayside Joint Police Board have a statutory obligation to ensure compliance with the act as set out in section 71(1). This states that every body or other person specified in Schedule 1A or of a description falling within that Schedule shall, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need :

- (a) to eliminate unlawful discrimination; and
- (b) to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups

3 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Tayside Police have undertaken the following measures since last reporting to the Board in April 2001.

- 3.2 **Diversity Training** – The training of Senior Officers was completed in June 2001 and the Diversity training programme is now being delivered to the remainder of police and support staff irrespective of roles. The Board should note that this training has been developed by Equilibra and is accredited by the Commission for Racial Equality. Tayside Police are at the forefront of such training. Equilibra have recently been awarded the contract to deliver the National Equal Opportunities Training (NEOTs) programme for the Scottish Police Service and this will support the needs of new recruits to the service.

The Race Relations Amendment Act (RRAA) is a rapidly evolving piece of legislation, which will have significant implications for Tayside Police and Tayside Joint Police Board. Following discussion with the Clerk to the Board, it was felt that elected members may benefit from an awareness raising session relating to the responsibilities of the Board under the Act. Tayside Police would be pleased to offer a one day briefing session, and further details will be provided at the next meeting with the Board.

- 3.3 **Racial Unrest** – Tayside Police continue to monitor intelligence on the nature and causes of the recent racial unrest in the north of England. Officers within Tayside have been briefed to monitor and report on any signs of organised agitation and have increased patrol activity at Mosques, temples and other places of worship.
- 3.4 **Classification of Ethnic Origin** -The application of a standard ethnic classification system within the police service has never been achieved and when last surveyed by Tayside Police in 1999 no fewer than 9 different standards were being applied by police forces across Scotland.
- 3.5 For some time Tayside Police have promoted the view that there is a clear need to achieve a standard classification system to provide consistency across the service and allow a proper analysis of ethnic data in respect of racist crime, victim support, recruitment, retention and promotion, complaints and the level of multi-agency working. Data exchange between agencies is likely to increase and the achievement of a national police standard will provide a lead for partner agencies to follow. A common standard will also provide benchmarking and a more consistent measure for thematic inspection.
- 3.6 Tayside Police has consistently promoted the view that there are a number of contexts in which the police must derive information based on the ethnic appearance of an individual to support a physical description. This is a separate concept from ethnic origin and should not be confused with the need to allow self-classification by origin. A suitable national model for ethnic appearance is presently being developed.
- 3.7 In relation to the proposed standard ethnic classification system it is vital that individuals are allowed to 'self-classify' their ethnicity. As such officers and support staff must be in a position to explain the need to gather this data and to respect the ethnic category selected by an individual. It should be noted that many ethnic groups have expressed concerns about the census categories and they wish to reserve the right to choose different ethnic categories. The Justice Ministers Steering Group has been unable to achieve any consensus on this issue despite protracted debate.
- 3.8 Tayside Police will now adopt a National Standard Ethnic Origin Classification system that has been developed in consultation with the Office of National Statistics. This system is aligned to the 2001 Census and that will allow analysis of comparable data in 2003. Importantly the system has been adopted by ACPOS and will be common throughout all Scottish Police Forces.
- 3.9 In order to facilitate the exchange of data it would prove beneficial for the classification system to be adopted by the partner agencies of Tayside Police and it is the intention of the Force to promote this suggestion through consultation with the Scottish Executive and COSLA. A common system in line with Home Office Guidance on generic minimum standards for the recording and reporting of racist incidents will allow a much more detailed understanding by incident analysis and this

is to the mutual benefit of partnership working.

- 3.10 This issue must be considered by any body that relies on information technology to gather and analyse data, as changes to system specifications are extremely costly. Tayside Police were aware of the cost implications at an early stage and have built ethnic classification systems into its current development of integrated computer use within the Force.
- 3.11 **Lord Advocates Guidelines on the Investigation and Reporting of Racist Crime** – Tayside Police were consulted on the draft guidelines which ensure that proper account is applied to the impact of racist crime on minority communities and victims. The guidelines cover particular aspects of the use of custody and bail conditions to prevent re-offending and providing specific information in police reports for the Procurator Fiscal. In anticipation of the guidelines being published Tayside Police carried out an internal review and has introduced supporting systems that ensure a robust and consistent approach to such issues.
- 3.12 **Special Interest Seminar** – The Convener, Councillor John Corrigan, Mrs Moira Docherty, Head of Human Resource Services and Superintendent Ian Alexander attended a special interest seminar on the provisions of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 which was hosted by the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan on Tuesday 3 July 2001. The Commission for Racial Equality gave two linked presentations and Mr Dharmendra Kanani, Head of the Commission then responded to questions.
- 3.13 **Multi-Agency Reporting of Racist Incidents** – Tayside Police are presently working to extend the multi agency panel system into Angus and Perth and Kinross to provide a more co-ordinated response to racial incidents. Panel system allows the statutory and voluntary agencies involved in tailoring a response that meets the needs of the victims. Multi-Agency reporting also allows the participants to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the range and location of racist incidents. Within Dundee, Tayside Police act as the monitoring agency for all racist incidents on behalf of the Multi-Agency Panel. Where criminal activity is alleged, the Force investigate incidents and they also assist in the provision of resources to assist other agencies in dealing with non crime matters. Multi-Agency working is central to the Government's Community Safety Strategy and the Force as an established protocol for information and data exchange that should assist the local authorities in extending this scheme. This item can be linked directly to the earlier item on Ethnic Classification.
- 3.14 **Interpreter and Translator Facilities** – Tayside Police is reviewing the level of its interpreter and translator facilities in the light of the growth of mobility and service demand in relation to immigration issues and assylum seekers. The immigration service is increasingly pro-active in rural communities where agricultural wage levels are higher than in Eastern Europe in case where the immigration status of individual workers is doubtful. A Government commitment to accommodate assylum seekers has also led to an increase in racist incidents and the need for Tayside Police to support the service needs of diverse ethnic groups, be they victims or accused.
- 3.15 The Board may wish to note that Strathclyde Police report that the increase in assylum seekers in Glasgow now requires a provision for interpreting 152 different languages with a large service demand from individuals who can interpret Eastern

European languages.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no cost implications at this stage.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Tayside Police continue to strive to ensure full compliance with legislation and an enhanced delivery of service irrespective of ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

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