



Date of Meeting	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
Portfolio	Neighbourhoods Community and Culture
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Public Document	

**Research report - 'Unknown and Unseen: the Social, Economic and Cultural needs of the Kashmiri Community in Rochdale'.**

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Following feedback from a 'community equalities listening event' hosted by the council, members of the Kashmiri heritage community highlighted concerns around their unmet needs in Rochdale. The Between 2015 - 2017 the University of Manchester were asked to undertake a research project to identify the social, cultural and economic needs of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale borough and to explore a method for delivering services to communities who do not fit into existing monitoring systems.
- 1.2 Funding for this research came from the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) which was obtained by the University of Manchester under a "Research into Practice" programme, with additional funding from the former Police and Crime Commissioners Office.
- 1.3 Members of the local Kashmiri heritage community raised concerns that Kashmiris were becoming more vulnerable to rising Islamophobia and extremism in the Northwest. They also claimed that Kashmiris suffer greater degrees of social marginalisation and exclusion compared to other South Asian communities and that their needs are not being addressed due to a lack of understanding and monitoring of the Kashmiri population.
- 1.4 The attached research report provides information on Kashmiri heritage communities including: approximate population size in Rochdale borough, migration and settlement, growth of community infrastructure, socio-economic factors and their needs in relation to health, education, the criminal justice system. It also included a series of recommendations for the Council, partners and national bodies to consider.

<b>2. Recommendation</b>
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2.1 That cabinet:-

Note the recommendations stated throughout the attached research report that have been presented to the council for consideration.

2.2 Note that officers within the council and external partners have shared the findings of the report and developed an action plan (appendix 1). Officers, partners and national bodies are considering how the recommendations in the research report could be implemented within their own services and organisations.

<b>3. Reason for Recommendation</b>
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3.1 Statistical methods used to estimate the Kashmiri community in the borough suggests that two thirds of the identified Pakistani community in Rochdale borough are actually of Kashmiri heritage, and therefore the largest South Asian community in the borough.

3.2 The research states that that the Kashmiri population is around 14,847. This estimate includes both adults and children. This is significant because the 2011 census puts the number of Kashmiri adults in the borough at only 1,026.

3.3 The research also suggests that awareness about the Kashmiri community amongst many services and organisations is poor and attributes this to Kashmiris not being included in ethnic monitoring systems, including at a national level via the Census. The report therefore suggests the Kashmiri community remain 'unknown and unseen'.

<b>4. Key Points for Consideration</b>
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4.1 Section 11 (page 29) of the research report offers a detailed discussion of the findings and highlights the social, economic and cultural needs of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale borough including employment, health, education, crime, culture and community infrastructure. Based on qualitative and quantitative data the researchers findings are that:-

4.1.1 Services and organisations have limited awareness about the basic characteristics of the Kashmiri community in Rochdale borough.

4.1.2 Pahari, the mother language of Kashmiris is not recognised on par with other community languages used by public bodies to provide language support.

4.1.3 Survey data shows that unemployment amongst the Kashmiri community is significantly higher than other South Asian minorities.

4.1.4 Limiting disability and long standing illness are fairly high in the Kashmiri community, especially for people over 50 years of age.

4.1.5 Awareness about the Healthy Living provisions in Rochdale borough is significantly low amongst the Kashmiri community.

- 4.1.6 The Kashmiri community appears to be lagging behind other minorities in terms of educational attainment. Over 60% of 16-24yr old respondents in the household survey had lower level qualifications.
- 4.1.7 Participants highlighted a fear of being the victim of crime including a fear of being physically attacked because of their ethnic origin or religion.
- 4.1.8 Almost half of the participants said they thought Britain was more prejudiced today than 5 years ago. Around 30% of the sample reported that they had experienced harassment in their local area because of their ethnic origin.
- 4.1.9 The majority of participants who indicated that they were practicing their religion said that they felt able to do this freely in Britain.
- 4.1.10 Mosques remain the most important space for community gatherings. With improvement in the relevant skills and knowledge these can play a more effective role in addressing the issues of segregation, cohesion and integration.
- 4.1.11 Some community organisations provide spaces for community interaction and communication.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations from the report are listed within appendix 1 and have been shared with relevant parts of the Council, partner agencies and national bodies for consideration and comment. Many of the issues highlighted are not within the Council's direct control or influence.

### **4.2 Alternatives Considered**

Not applicable as this report was presented to Rochdale Borough Council for consideration.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Costs and Budget Summary</b>
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- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report however associated actions may result in additional costs to services.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Risk and Policy Implications</b>
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- 6.1 The recommendations in the report have the potential to enhance service provision for people with a certain protected characteristic and will add to the council's commitment in meeting our responsibilities under the Equality Act.
- 6.2 A number of the issues relating to the Council and Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are being considered through the Council's Equalities Steering Group.
- 6.3 In addition to implementing the recommendations within the research Report which are specific to the Kashmiri community, a review of how the council

meets the needs of other existing, new and emerging communities within the borough could take place. This would ensure equitable access to services for all communities and demonstrate how we are meeting the requirements of the Equality Act.

6.4 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6.5 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

<b>7. Consultation</b>
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7.1 Not applicable as this report was presented to Rochdale Borough Council for consideration.

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
<b>Research report - 'Unknown and Unseen: the Social, Economic and Cultural needs of the Kashmiri Community in Rochdale'.</b>	
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