

WORK carried out by research analyst Mick Evans is helping to shape the way we deliver our services for communities across the county.

But if you think he's simply a number cruncher – think again. His job also includes meeting and talking to residents about how we can serve them better.

For the last four years part of his job has been to consult with the county's black and minority ethnic communities.

Every two months he organises forums held in Chesterfield and Long Eaton to make sure the services we offer meet their needs.

He said: "Traditionally, these communities can often feel isolated.

"We have around 45,000 people who potentially could find it difficult to access our services due to cultural differences or language barriers.

"By linking our departments with communities it means we have a communication channel through the forums to help make our services more inclusive and accessible."

Mick, who joined the Policy and Research Team in April 2006,

added: "Communities want somebody to listen to the issues they have and to try and do something about them."

Working with community leaders through the forums he established that many older people did not know how to access care services, such as sheltered accommodation.

"Through our consultation work adult care has funded two development workers who are working with providers to support them in meeting the needs of the black and minority ethnic communities," said Mick.

Analyst Mick forms valuable link with communities



His work has also led to the creation of the Diverse Project – which allows young people from different backgrounds to come together by taking part in creative arts workshops.

"Our consultation found that young people wanted a chance to share their stories. It has given them an opportunity to meet youngsters from other backgrounds and better understand each other," added Mick.

Mick's job also includes carrying out research to build up a comprehensive picture of life in Derbyshire and ensure the council has a good understanding of Derbyshire's economy and communities.

Looking at areas such as the job market, social deprivation, education and housing it provides evidence to create policy and helps us direct services to where they are needed most.

He has been involved in providing information and analysis for the council's local economic assessment – which provides an assessment of the county's economic performance.

Mick said: "The local economic assessment is a comprehensive review of the different aspects of communities in Derbyshire.

"It gives us a rounded picture of Derbyshire to enable us to focus on issues affecting the economy and provides a starting point in drawing up local economic policy."

He has also helped to develop the Derbyshire Observatory – a website providing an overview of Derbyshire on a range of themes.

Mick's also played a key role in a partnership research project to support work aimed at reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training.

And he's recently produced a report for the Derbyshire Partnership Forum which provides an indication of deprivation across the county.

Mick added: "Being an organisation of significant size and influence it is important that the work we do is based on reasonable evidence.

"Within the team we aim to provide research and information that can support policy and service development in the council and help the decision making process."

More information: Mick Evans 39325

'A two-way communication channel'

FOR the past three years Mick has worked closely with James Lee, strategic development manager at Links: The Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Service and Action, through the forums.

James said: "Mick works with colleagues in different departments within the council and my role is to ensure the different communities get involved in policy consultation.

"I think the work we do is extremely important – without it the county council would find it extremely difficult to get involved and engage with the different communities in terms of producing policy and development.

"Likewise, the different communities would have little opportunity to find out information or express their views and opinions.

"Mick and I have a great working relationship and I think we work very well together. It is like a two-way communication channel between the county council and the different communities across Derbyshire."