

Subject:	Becoming an Anti-Racist Council		
Date of Meeting:	30 July 2020 29 July 2020 – Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee		
Report of:	Interim Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods, Communities		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that discussions on the council's role and its responsibilities could not be completed in time to enable the agenda to be published.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report sets out the immediate actions the council is taking to become an anti-racist council and how it will work with Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in the city – long and newly established - that have been fighting against racism and racial inequality. There is a significant body of research that demonstrates the structural inequality experienced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic people – in education, in employment, in health outcomes, with the latter starkly evidenced by the disproportionate impact of COVID19 on some Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.
- 1.2 The council values the cultural, economic and social diversity of the city and aims to support and encourage it. We will continue to take a leading role in seeking to increase equality, inclusion and fairness in the city. Increasing equality is a central principle informing how we plan, finance, deliver, commission and review our services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That committee notes the actions committed to in this report towards becoming an anti-racist council and the authority's plan for being led by Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) residents and communities in the development of its anti-racism strategy.
- 2.2 That committee instruct officers to provide a progress report in November 2020 on the council's activity to becoming an anti-racist council.

- 2.3 That committee notes that the draft anti-racism strategy will be brought to committee for approval in Spring 2021 at the latest.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2019 the council adopted a new corporate plan with fairness and inclusion at its centre. The plan clearly committed the council to challenging inequality in the city and within the council. It identified “that some communities are underrepresented in civic life and [committed to] support projects such as Operation Black Vote to ensure that participation is fair and representative of the whole city, to invest in a civic leadership programme for underrepresented groups, to promote fair employment practice to tackle the under representation of people from BME communities and to invest in an independent support service for people who have experienced racial and religiously motivated hate”.
- 3.2 It also produced a Fair and Inclusive Action Plan that includes a programme of work to develop and support a representative, engaged and skilled workforce that is accountable for its behaviour towards each other and the council’s service users. It recognises the interlink between our actions and behaviour as an employer and the influence and impacts on our relationship and trust with communities and ability to serve our diverse customer base. This programme of work was approved by the council’s Policy and Resource Committee in October 2019 and in collaboration with Trade Unions and the council’s BME Workers Forum has focused on tackling racism with regard to workforce matters.
- 3.3 In June and July 2020 over 10,000 people safely took part in Black Lives Matter protests in the city. It was a powerful demonstration and affirmation of the city’s values of inclusivity and desire for Brighton & Hove to become an anti-racist city, and for public institutions to amplify their commitment and actions.
- 3.4 As a ‘City of Sanctuary’, as a participant in the global refugee resettlement programme, as an asylum seeker dispersal area; with at least one in five of the city’s residents from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background and over 98 languages spoken as first languages across the city’s schools, the city is proud to be welcoming and diverse. However, it is not enough to be welcoming, to be diverse and to be non-racist. The council is seeking to become anti-racist. The council recognises that more is required to end racism and racial inequality; that not all residents have equal access to services and opportunities or can live free from harm and discrimination. Individual, institutional and structural racism exists in Brighton & Hove. As a civic leader, service provider and place shaper the council can use its power and influence to tackle racism.
- 3.5 Leading from the corporate plan commitments, using local and national research, learning from others and residents’ feedback the council has already identified an initial series of actions to pursue ahead of more detailed dialogue with Black, Asian and minority ethnic residents and communities.

These actions are as follows:

1. To work with BAME communities to create and deliver an anti-racism strategy (started – see section 5 for more detail)

2. To support BAME businesses through council procurement including BAME supplier training (started)
 3. To work collectively with other public bodies especially the police on challenging each other to improve diversity and eradicate racism in our organisations (started)
 4. To work with BAME communities and groups to agree our approach to different statues, plaques and street names; removing some, retaining some and erecting educational information boards and/or walks and commissioning new celebrations which fully reflect the city's values and population (recommendations by Autumn 2020)
 5. To have a BAME resident as a standing invitee on the council's main decision-making committee - Policy & Resources Committee (by October)
 6. To create and deliver a BAME civic leadership programme to increase the number of BAME people as councillors, NHS Board members, trustees of voluntary sector organisations, governors of schools, magistrates (start in Autumn 2020)
 7. To resource BAME groups to have stronger voices and influence; BAME Communities Fund launched 13th July
 8. To work with parents and carers from BAME backgrounds who have children or young people with SEND to ensure council services meet their needs (October)
 9. To work with BAME school staff on an action plan for staff training, recruitment and retention of and support for BAME staff, support for BAME pupils and decolonisation of the curriculum
 10. To educate councillors and officers on white privilege, on language when talking about ethnicity and race, and structural racism (Autumn 2020)
 11. To relaunch the council's internal 'We Need to Talk About Race' campaign paused due to the outbreak of COVID19 (August)
 12. To provide specialist equalities training to BHCC staff undertaking HR investigations into allegations of racism (September)
 13. To undertake diverse recruitment campaigns and continue to engage with BAME community groups to overcome barriers to employment (Autumn)
- 3.6 Council's Health and Adult Social Care directorate has joined the work of the Sussex Health and Care Partnership to develop a pan-Sussex action plan in response to the COVID disparities for Black, Asian and minority residents. The council's plan focuses on what actions have been undertaken to address the risk of Covid-19 to our BAME workforce; what work is still in progress and what future action is needed, how services have adapted to recognise the needs of our BAME communities and what work is needed to ensure that good practice is continued and future needs are recognised.
- 3.7 A new resource area will be launched on the council website where people will be able to access information, advice, follow the council's progress, find out how to get involved and hold the council to account.

- 3.8 Alongside the above actions, working with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, residents – of all ages - and businesses the council will devise its anti-racism strategy, agreeing the change, actions and outcomes expected.

4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Alternative options include continuing with the Fair and Inclusive Action Plan (FIAP) as set out in the report to Policy and Resources Committee 10th Oct 2019 which has focussed on race inequality within the council over the last year. However, it was felt that with the momentum of Black Lives Matter in the city, country and internationally the public commitment to be an anti-racist council complements and strengthens the work already underway through the FIAP. This is an opportunity to strengthen the conversation about racism in the organisation and the city and embed the commitment to change across the organisation. The anti-racism work sits within the four workstream of the FIAP – accountability and consequence, recruitment and retention, learning and development, services and communities.
- 4.2 A further option was to do nothing. This was not considered viable as the local Black Live Matters protests provided a strong message to public institutions in the city that to be non-racist was not sufficient and that to tackle structural racism and make real and lasting difference to the lives of Black residents, institutions had to commit to anti-racist action. Inaction would be to condone the status quo.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Leader and the Lead Councillor for Communities & Equality have already met with several Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups including the Racial Harassment Forum, International Network of Women, Black Brighton, Sussex Race Equality Action Project and the council's BME Workers Forum to hear their views, concerns and ideas. The Lead Councillor for children and young people has engaged with Black teachers and with community groups.
- 5.2 Existing Black, Asian and minority ethnic partners have been invited to form a community advisory group (CAG). The group will be critical to shaping and influencing the council's approach to engaging with Black, Asian and minority ethnic residents, groups and businesses and the council's actions to an become anti-racist organisation and to lead Brighton Hove to be an anti-racist city.
- 5.3 With the guidance of the CAG a comprehensive engagement plan will be produced which will include ensuring there is dialogue with Black, Asian and minority ethnic young people, refugees and migrants and LGBTQ People of Colour. It will also explore how to facilitate a city-wide conversation on racism, recognising the commitment and activity of many white British residents to ending racism.
- 5.4 The council has already heard how having to tell and re-tell their experiences of racism is stressful for and harmful to Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and therefore is very mindful that it must act as well as listening. The engagement process must be an investment in Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and people and not simply draw on people for the benefit of the council.

5.5 As well as being led by Black, Asian and minority ethnic residents and communities the council's actions and strategy will be informed by best practice from around the UK.

5.6 Updates on the council's work toward becoming an anti-racist council will be reported to TECC committee and to the city's One Voice Partnership.

6. CONCLUSION

6 The council is making a long-term commitment to tackling racism and bringing about real and lasting change with improved life outcomes, opportunities and experiences for Black, Asian and minority ethnic residents. Some actions can be delivered quickly, while others will take time to implement. Individual, institutional and structural racism exists in Brighton & Hove. Ending racism requires action by all organisations and individuals. Neutrality is not an option.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

7.1 Resources to progress the work outlined in this report will be met from within existing service budget or staff capacity. Any additional resources for future work identified through the development of the anti-racism strategy will have to be agreed through the appropriate decision-making process.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michael Bentley

Date: 17/07/20

Legal Implications:

7.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report. All of the actions proposed are in line with the Council's powers and duties, in particular under the Equality Act 2010.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 17/07/20

Equalities Implications:

7.3 Engagement with a wide range of groups and individuals, as well as use of existing data and consultation findings will support the aim that this work is led by Black, Asian and minority ethnic residents and communities. Genuine and sustainable change will require a long-term commitment to being open to challenge, honest reflection and significant action. Without this commitment there is a risk of damaging trust and confidence in the council among a wide range of communities and increasing community tensions.

Sustainability Implications:

7.4 A city where all residents can play their part, fulfil their potential and live free from harm and discrimination helps create a more sustainable city.

Brexit Implications:

7.5 None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

7.6 As a result of anti-racism actions we would anticipate, initially, to see a rise in reporting of race hate crimes as communities trust and confidence in the statutory agencies increases and in the long term a reduction in number of race hate crimes.

Public Health Implications:

7.8 The relationship between ethnicity and health is complex and likely to be the result of a combination of factors. People from BAME backgrounds are likely to be at increased risk of acquiring Coronavirus. This is because BAME people are more likely to live in urban areas, in overcrowded households, in deprived areas, and have jobs that expose them to higher risk. People of BAME groups are also 17 times more likely than people of White British ethnicity to be born abroad, which means they may face additional barriers in accessing services that are created by, for example, cultural and language differences. Research has also shown that people of BAME communities are also likely to be at increased risk of poorer outcomes once they acquire the infection. For example, some co-morbidities which increase the risk of poorer outcomes from COVID-19 are more common among certain ethnic groups. People of Bangladeshi and Pakistani background have higher rates of cardiovascular disease than people from White British ethnicity, and people of Black Caribbean and Black African ethnicity have higher rates of hypertension compared with other ethnic groups. Data from the National Diabetes Audit suggests that type II diabetes prevalence is higher in people from BAME communities.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

7.9 The council's commitment to action to become an anti-racist council is a key development in its corporate commitment to making Brighton and Hove a fairer and more inclusive city. Furthermore, through using its civic leadership and place making role the council aims to have citywide impact.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Background Documents

1. Corporate Plan
2. Fair & Inclusive Plan