

## Deputation concerning Anti-Racist Schools Strategy: The price of conforming to Critical Race Theory - Spokesperson Adrian Hart

I suspect that few of our 54 councillors had heard of “Critical Race Theory” (CRT) when they supported last summer’s motion ‘to become an anti-racist council’. Leaving aside the fact that CRT forms the basis of BHCC staff and councillor anti-racism training, the council surely has a duty to explain to *electors* (and especially to parents) why they have allowed this racial ideology to enter schools (see Note 1).

The fact that the approach to anti-racism advocated by CRT runs counter to liberal approaches and *promotes* an impossible to verify and hugely contested political belief – namely, *that our society is fundamentally constructed around systemic white supremacy* – cannot be a fact that the council is comfortable with? To defend your decision, **you should explain** to citizens why you have seen fit to break with liberal-universal approaches. Moreover, you should:

(a) **Explain** to citizens why, in sponsoring a partisan political ideology, you chose to contravene s406 and s407 of the Education Act (1996) and s78 of the Education Act (2002) (See Note 2).

(b) **Explain** to citizens why you approved a CRT approach to staff and pupil training given that it invites teachers and children to define and treat one another differently according to the immutable characteristic of skin colour. The invitation CRT issues to children is, precisely, that they should define themselves and each other as victims or oppressors according to their colour. Amongst younger children in particular this will foster confusion, upset and division. Your choice of CRT is, therefore, a breach of the Equalities Act and, specifically, the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 1c) *the duty to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it*.

It seems extraordinary that on November 9th 2020, the CYPS committee was not advised of these legal implications in the Report of Deb Austin. Just one month earlier a government minister had given a speech to parliament (widely reported in the media) reminding the house that CRT-taught-as-fact *breaches the Education Act*.

(c) **Explain** to citizens why you describe the ‘Racial Literacy 101’ training as non-mandatory (see Note 3).

(d) **Explain** to citizens why such fundamental and controversial changes have taken place without the fullest public discussion. The November 9th officer report states that a small number from a group called the ‘Brighton & Hove Educators of Colour Collective’ (BHECC) worked with a consultant commissioned by the council to draft your schools strategy (see Notes 4 and 5).

Thank you.

(Note 1) Integral to CRT is its rejection of liberal-humanist and universalist approaches to anti-racist education. A liberal approach correctly views schools as a politically neutral sphere in which partisan political ideologies can be *presented* (discussing and contrasting alternative standpoints at GCSE or A level stages is, of course, a good thing), but they should never be *promoted*. Our long agreed liberal approach is underpinned by a social consensus around democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, *mutual respect and tolerance*. Informed by UK equality law, a liberal approach to anti-racism in schools holds as self-evident the humanist view that skin-colour is not grounds for discrimination and people should not be defined and treated differently solely on the basis of an immutable characteristic. The universalist standpoint recognises and condemns skin-colour racism while embracing the aspiration to transcend colour difference. Yet, CRT caricatures colour-blindness as though it can only ever be *racism-blindness*. This committee has seen fit to commission a 5 year 'Anti-racist Schools Strategy' currently underway in the form of a 'Racial Literacy' teacher and staff training which describes itself as providing: '***an understanding of structural/institutional racism, white privilege and a critical race theory approach***'. [<https://www.beem.org.uk/Event/128271>]

(Note 2) In doing so you have brought our council into disrepute according to your own code of conduct.

(Note 3) when your strategy document says: '**It is advised that the program aims to initially engage with staff/teachers/governors that support the work and any mandatory engagement comes further down the line**'. The council may view the training as 'recommended' rather than mandatory but the leadership of my local primary (Carlton Hill School), having been urged to take the training, has booked it for an all-staff INSET in September (INSETs are mandatory).

(Note 4) The council is elected to represent all citizens, including the majority of parents who have not been consulted, and who may have different beliefs to those of CRT. Policies should reflect the broadest consensus view - not those of a small pressure group who adhere to an extreme political ideology.

(Note 5) To end: As someone who has produced anti-racism resources for schools (see link to the film 'Only Human' Note 6) and who has written books and articles on this topic, I would urge you to seek out groups providing educational outreach work along liberal-humanist principles (these include Equiano Project and Don't Divide Us, Debating Matters to name a few). As I write this deputation (for submission late in May) my FOI request to see the school training materials is overdue. I cannot verify the nature and extent of its CRT approach. But I trust this committee has scrutinised the training and will justify it by offering the explanations I've outlined above.