
Eliminating racism and tackling disadvantage - Black Lives Matter update

Overview Select Committee

Date of meeting: 4th February 2021

Lead director/officer: Miranda Cannon, Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: ALL
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- Report version number: 0.1

1 Summary

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to set out the governance approach along with an outline of key themes and early areas of work to take forward our commitment to tackling race inequality and disadvantage, and promoting inclusion particularly for Black, Black British, Caribbean, African and dual heritage people and communities living and working in Leicester.
- 1.2** Although Cllr Hunter, the Assistant City Mayor for Black Lives Matter has overarching responsibility for eliminating racism and disadvantage, the work is wide ranging and will require a collective commitment from executive leads in respect of their portfolio areas, elected members more widely and officers working across departments of the Council.
- 1.3** Our overall aim is to create and implement a plan of actions based on the lived experiences of our communities and staff in relation to direct and indirect racism in the City. The Council wants to listen to what it's told, reflect on this and to develop its policies and operations to bring about lasting positive change to the anti-racism work of the Council and the City.

2 Recommended actions

- 2.1** Overview Select Committee are recommended to:
- Provide feedback on the proposed approach.
 - Provide feedback and any further ideas on the proposed themes and areas of work which will then lead to the development of an action plan to be co-ordinated by the Race Equality Officer within the City Mayor's Office supported by the Equalities and Communications and Marketing Teams.

3 Background

- 3.1** Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an organised movement dedicated to non-violent civil disobedience in protest to police brutality, however the broader movement also advocates for other policy changes related to black liberation. The movement began in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting of Trayvon Martin and became nationally recognised for street demonstrations in the US following the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner. The movement returned to national headlines and gained further international attention during the global protests in response to the death of George Floyd in 2020.

- 3.2** Whilst the movement originated in America, there have been demonstrations bringing attention to the impact that racism and inequality has had in the UK overall, as well as speaking out against police violence in both America and the UK. The findings of the [race equality audit](#) published by the UK government in Oct 2017 showed that there are disparities between ethnic groups in all areas of life affected by public organisations. Some are more pronounced than others or have a greater impact on peoples' life chances and quality of life. Some of the key findings showed that nationally there were significant inequalities for Black people in areas such as health, employment, education, housing and criminal justice.
- 3.3** Leicester is a diverse city; although it is a city which celebrates and embraces its diversity, it has not been without its challenges in terms of people learning to live well together. Despite the challenges, it is a City with a strong history of international trade, innovation, political protest (Chartism, suffragette movement, anti-apartheid campaigning), parliamentary democracy, free speech, and globalism. This places Leicester in a good position to provide a full and long-lasting response to racism and the inequalities experienced by Black people and communities.
- 3.4** Having said this, recognition of how long it has taken to get to where we are today, as well as the complexity and scale of the task must not be underestimated. Progress requires concrete commitment from elected members and officers, as well as meaningful dialogue with Leicester's diverse Black communities.

4 Detailed report

4.1 Governance and resources

- 4.1.1** Tackling race inequality and disadvantage must be a collective endeavour and responsibility involving all members and officers across the Council. To drive forward our approach requires effective internal co-ordination, clear accountabilities and collective corporate ownership by both officers and members, with appropriate challenge and scrutiny both internally and externally. Achieving this collective corporate ownership is best achieved by embedding into the existing core governance and scrutiny arrangements of the Council.
- 4.1.2** It is proposed that a focused internal working group will be established chaired by the Chief Operating Officer. The working group will involve identified lead officers for the themes and areas of work defined below (see section 4.2) along with relevant key support functions such as Equalities, HR and Communications. This Working Group will report into the Corporate Management Team and to the Executive via City Mayor Briefing at least quarterly, and to the Overview Select Committee twice a year. In addition to this the Lead Director and Race Equality Officer will report into the joint Lead Member Briefing (Lead Members for BLM and Equalities) held on a monthly basis. All Directors will ensure that their lead member briefings with each member of the Executive regularly consider this important area of work.
- 4.1.3** In addition to lead officers for the key themes and areas of work, the Working

Group will include representation from the Black Workers Support Group and a cross section of staff. These staff representatives will be drawn from task and finish groups being set up by each of the three departments which will ensure that there is regular and effective engagement and involvement from across the Council workforce.

4.1.4 The first task of the Working Group will be to further develop the proposed themes and ideas below to create a defined set of actions, key outcomes and measures which are reflected in an action plan that will be signed off by the Executive in the first report of the Working Group to the Executive. The Working Group and the development and subsequent implementation of the action plan will be supported by a Race Equality Officer (BLM) situated in the City Mayor's Office.

4.1.5 The Working Group will meet monthly and the Race Equality Officer will help in the drafting and development of the action plan, co-ordinate key areas of work, and maintain the action plan by seeking updates in advance of the meetings of the Group. The officer will also support with the delivery of actions where appropriate for example supporting reviews, undertaking research and building networks and engagement within the community and with other partners.

4.1.6 To ensure the approach has credibility and reflects the voices of the community and wider organisations, it is proposed that a focused external reference group is established which will meet quarterly to provide a city and community voice into the work and input to the ongoing actions, and to help evaluate the impacts and benefits. Membership is proposed to include representatives from Trade Unions, the Voluntary sector, relevant community groups and the Universities. The reference group will be chaired by the Lead Member and supported by the lead Director and Race Equality Officer.

4.1.7 It will also be important that other existing fora and mechanisms are used wherever possible to ensure this work is embedded and has reach all the way across and in the Council as well as more widely within the community, and the Working Group will be asked to consider ways in which this can be achieved as a standing element of their approach.

4.1.8 Work will now commence to firm up the representatives of the Working Group and External Reference Group, to develop appropriate terms of reference and to establish the initial and ongoing programme of meetings. A structure chart showing the proposed governance approach is included at **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Key themes and lead officers

4.2.1 A number of proposed key themes, activity and lead officers have been identified via the Corporate Management Team and are set out below. These provide the basis for the establishment of the Working Group and the development of the action plan. The proposals below are by no means exhaustive but seek to reflect those areas of Council business and activity where it is clear from wider national and other research, that there is the potential to have a significant impact in terms of tackling race inequality and disadvantage. The Working Group will be asked to review this as the basis for the development of an action plan and build on it as appropriate.

The themes are as follows.

4.2.2 Council workforce, culture and practice

Lead officer: Craig Picknell, Head of HR

The focus of this theme will be on:

- Ensuring HR policies, practices and support relating to equalities including tackling race discrimination are fit for purpose;
- ensuring there is a culture where staff feel able and safe to provide feedback, and raise concerns and issues relating to race; and
- achieving an organisation which is reflective of the communities it serves particularly at the most senior level of the organisation.

There is already a range of important work underway to build on within this theme. This includes the annual review of the council's workforce profile to identify areas of under-representation, delivery of an existing action plan aimed at improving BAME representation at the most senior levels of the organisation which is already impacting positively in relation to recruitment processes, and a pilot reverse mentoring scheme that is now rolling out to a second cohort of BAME staff within health and social care, along with detailed engagement of the workforce across the Social care and Education Department. Both the City Development and Neighbourhoods Department and the Corporate Resources and Support Department are now similarly following the approach taken in Social Care and Education in commencing a series of staff conversations as well as establishing departmental task and finish groups. These will help support staff engagement across the wider workforce, with the aim of informing a review of relevant policies, procedures, support and culture and identifying further areas for action, as well as considering activity such as anti-racism training, potential coaching and mentoring programmes, and opportunities to celebrate Black history and culture through engagement of our staff.

4.2.3 Crime including Community Safety and Youth Offending

Lead officers: John Leach, Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services (or Head of Community Safety and Protection). Caroline Tote, Director of Children's Social Care in relation to Youth Offending Service

The focus of this theme will be on:

- Ensuring there is a robust approach to tackling hate crime in the city;
- seeking assurances that local Policing is fair and proportionate in terms of race equality and inclusion; and
- ensuring the Council's work in relation to Youth Offending considers specifically issues related to race equality.

This work will build on existing activity such as the City's hate crime action plan where actions regarding BLM were reflected in the latest version in June 2020 and which include:

- Pursuing discussions with the voluntary and community sector in order to further ensure the voice of the BLM campaign is amplified and any ways to assist with this agenda are conveyed by community representatives, so that

- agencies can better respond;
- providing resources to local schools for teachers and parents around how to discuss racism and right to protest; and
- delivering social media responses via the Safer Leicester Partnership to the Black Lives Matter campaign (Practical responses to a protest).

The Safer Leicester Partnership provides an existing forum through which there is a means to hold the Police and OPCC to account in relation to reporting on arrests by racial/ethnic identity in order to identify any concerns. Similarly, in relation to the Council's own regulatory and enforcement actions we must do the same to ensure that our own regulatory actions are also fair and proportionate.

In addition, it is proposed that other areas of work include:

- Ensuring the City's approach to tackling knife crime, as prioritised by the Safer Leicester Partnership, is cognisant of the BLM agenda and responsive to the needs of the Black community.
- ensuring through a multi-agency approach, victims from the Black community are appropriately supported and any perpetrators are also appropriately supported in relation to knife crime in the city;
- developing through Children Services targeted group sessions for young Black people (in appropriate environments) who are connected to the issues of knife crime;
- continuing to ensure all racist or other graffiti that is offensive to the Black community is promptly removed from public property where it is identified; and
- ensuring the Youth Justice Plan addresses disproportionality in the youth justice system.

4.2.4 Education

Lead officer: Sue Welford, Principal Education Officer

The focus of this theme will be on:

- Seeking to influence schools in relation to the teaching of Black heritage and culture within the curriculum and through other school-based activities;
- working with schools in improving outcomes (attainment, behaviour and exclusions etc) for Black students where outcomes are typically poorer;
- seeking to influence schools in relation to representation across the workforce and in school leadership and governance; and
- working collaboratively with schools in collecting and using data on key issues such as hate crime incidents to improve practice.

Whilst we do not have direct control over the practices and approaches taken by individual schools, we believe this is an area where schools will be keen to work with us to look at opportunities for improvement. There are clearly opportunities to look at developing and sharing good practice, advice and guidance as well as further developing and promoting the use of mentors and role-models across secondary schools to promote learning and understanding by staff about Black history and culture.

Within the Council's own practice, we can seek to include within the performance dialogue for each school, a greater focus on outcomes for Black children, including exclusion rates, as well as attainment outcomes. Finally, an area of work which would greatly help to identify other possible actions and interventions as well as help target support to individual schools, would be to scope out the collection of relevant data and identify a methodology for collection of that data in line with reducing the administrative burden in schools.

4.2.5 Social Care

Lead officer: Martin Samuels, Strategic Director of Social Care and Education

The focus of this theme will be on:

- Seeking to better understand the way in which social care services both adults and children's, are accessed by and experienced by Black communities; and
- ensuring staff at all levels are able to confidently identify, reflect on and address issues of racial bias in social care practice.

As noted above the department has already undertaken staff engagement workshops to gather the perspectives of staff and from this is creating safe spaces in teams / meetings for staff to explore issues relating to racism and practice as well as working with Organisational Development and Equalities to take action on areas where support is required. Alongside this the department is supporting the second cohort of a reverse mentoring scheme for Black staff and is working to identify where additional learning and development is needed related to social work practice.

Other proposed actions include:

- Commissioning training via the safeguarding CSP on reflective race analysis within statutory review processes to enhance learning from these processes;
- creation of an Anti-Racism Action Group, focussed on understanding and strengthening our offer to Black (and Asian / minority ethnic) people / communities;
- creation of a supporting network of Anti-racism stakeholders, to shape Action group activity;
- enhancing use of data that is held but not routinely analysed in terms of diversity profiles of people the department support / work with;
- using performance management and quality assurance information to identify and address disproportionality in service take up and delivery; and
- co-production of services with BAME children and young people and families.

4.2.6 Public Health and health inequalities

Lead officer: Ivan Browne, Director Public Health

The focus of this theme will be on:

- Addressing priority areas in terms of tackling health inequalities for Black communities; and
- better understanding disproportionate impacts of Covid-19 on Black communities in the City and establishing plans to mitigate the impact.

Public Health already incorporate a strong focus on health inequalities in their programmes of work, and for BAME communities there is a well understood predisposition to a number of health conditions which are prevalent in the city such as diabetes. The service proposes to further ensure that their work on “Health in all Policies” and use of Health Impact Assessment specifically assesses disproportionate health and wellbeing outcomes for Black communities and makes evidence-based recommendations to address these. In addition, Public Health both commission and directly deliver a range of services and there is the opportunity to further review these to identify and address any inequity of access and outcomes for Black communities. Finally, and importantly it has been recognised that Covid-19 has a disproportionate impact on BAME communities, therefore it will be important to undertake further analysis of the direct and indirect impacts and develop plans to both protect this more vulnerable group and to support resilience and recovery going forward.

4.2.7 History, culture and heritage

Lead officers: Mike Dalzell, Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment, and Joanna Jones, Head of Arts and Museums and Lee Warner, Head of Neighbourhood Services

The focus of this theme will be on:

- Reviewing the way in which Black history and culture is remembered and celebrated in the city and identify ways in which this can be strengthened.

Within this theme there is again a range of activity on which to build and strengthen the approach as well as a number of areas actively already planned and underway, which includes “Black Presence Explored”: work with community organisation Opal Arts and local poet ‘The Orator’ to explore images of Black people in the museum's art and sculpture collections, along with “Blacks Lives Matter Too”: an exhibition exploring issues and local responses to Blacks Lives Matter which was installed in Highfields Library in October, and finally the incorporation of a Windrush Event into the Festivals and Events Programme. Looking ahead further proposed activity could include:

- Opportunity to scope and scale up or commission new content for the Festivals and Events Programme;
- incorporating other activity relating to Black history and culture within the future Museum and exhibition programmes;
- incorporating panels relevant to Black History and culture in the next tranche of the heritage interpretation panels across the city;
- including related BLM content in the Community Gallery at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery (LMAG) and as a forerunner of more substantial ‘Story of Leicester’ space at LMAG; and
- Neighbourhood Services programme to include celebration events at community buildings including the African Caribbean Centre and curation and promotion of culturally diverse book collections.

4.2.8 Jobs and skills

Lead officer: Mike Dalzell, Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment,

Peter Chandler, Head of Economic Regeneration, Matt Clifton, Smart Cities Programme Manager

The focus of this theme will be on:

- Working with business and employers across the city to support opportunities for Black residents in accessing employment, developing skills and in addressing barriers they may experience;
- using the City Council's existing programmes such as apprenticeships, Adult Education and social value in Procurement to support the above; and
- improving digital inclusion in the city so everyone has equal opportunity to work and learn online, as well as develop key digital skills that will benefit them in the long term.

Within this theme there would be a focus on influencing the practice of other businesses and employers across the city and incorporating actions into our existing programmes of work with businesses, as well as utilising levers such as social value in procurement to help embed commitment and change. The focus of any activity is both around access to jobs and skills development, but also ensuring those who manage and govern businesses and other organisations reflect local communities in the make-up of their leadership. Within the cultural sector there is already work underway to develop specific action plans to recruit Black residents as staff, volunteers and trustees. This type of work is important to seek to replicate across other sectors. There is also currently work led by Smart Cities with the support of a range of other Council Services including Equalities, Neighbourhood Services and Adult Skills and Learning Services, to implement the Digital Inclusion Project (DIP) and create a functioning loaning scheme for laptops and tablets in local communities which can help address barriers to accessing adult learning and employment.

Specifically, other proposed activity could include:

- Targeted recruitment campaigns by the council and with employers;
- identifying and promoting discrete activities that could be 'added value' benefits from social value procurement;
- targeting our own apprenticeship and entry to employment programmes such as those within Housing; and
- increasing the offer for digital skills courses run by the Adult Skills and Learning service in conjunction with the Digital Inclusion Project loaning system so users can benefit fully from the equipment and can learn skills which might help them secure employment and work/learn more effectively online in the future.

4.2.9 Financial and welfare support

Lead officer: Alison Greenhill, Director of Finance

The focus of this theme will be on:

- Addressing priority areas in terms of identifying and tackling welfare benefit and financial support inequalities for Black communities; and
- ensuring there is equity in both access to and in provision of welfare and

other support to Black Communities.

Whilst there is already a robust and focused approach to using data and evidence particularly in relation to equality impact assessments across Revenues and Customer Support Services there are opportunities to:

- Review equality impact assessments working in conjunction with the DWP to identify gaps and further strengthen mitigations;
- improve recording of demographic data to demonstrate our outcomes; and
- work with communities and faith leaders across the city to support take up of the financial support available to maximise entitlement to welfare benefit and council discretionary funding together with developing digital skills to address barriers they may experience.

4.3 Underpinning all the above themes and activity there needs to be a focus on cross-cutting aspects particularly:

- Effective communications and engagement with a clear communications strategy and plan to underpin the agreed action plan and activity;
- a strong focus on council and city-wide data which incorporates both quantitative evidence and qualitative understanding of impacts and implications of economic, environmental and social conditions and decisions from the perspective of Black communities; and
- a robust approach to evaluating interventions and activity and assessing impact.

4.4 As demonstrated throughout section 4.2, there is a range of existing activity on which we can continue to build our own practice but equally a number of important opportunities where we can address gaps and drive improvements in tackling race inequality and disadvantage. It would be proposed to reflect the above in an initial draft action plan which can then be further reviewed and developed by the Working Group.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report. The draft 2021/22 capital programme includes a policy provision of £500k to assist with Black Lives Matter.

Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance, ext 37 4081

6.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The approach set out therein does of course more broadly contribute to our fulfilment of our legal obligations set out under the Public Sector Equality Duty – to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister, ext 37 1401

6.3 Equalities implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

In doing so, the council must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The actions listed in this Black Lives Matter update report should lead to positive outcomes for people from across a range of protected characteristics, with particular emphasis on race. The actions will help us to meet our statutory obligations under the Equality Act, and the Public Sector Equality Duty aims as stated above. The proposed action plan when agreed, will help to address identified issues and progress these as necessary.

Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, ext 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate change implications directly associated with this report.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, ext 37 2284

7. Background information and other papers:

None

8. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Governance structure chart

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