

	<b>Cabinet</b> 16 June 2025
	<b>Report from the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Community Development</b>
	<b>Lead Member – Leader of the Council (Councillor Muhammed Butt)</b>
<b>Revised Black Community Action Plan (BCAP)</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	One Appendix 1: Revised Black Community Action Plan
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Kibibi Octave – Director, Community Development 020 8937 5436 <a href="mailto:kibibi.octave@brent.gov.uk">kibibi.octave@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to endorse a re-prioritised Black Community Action Plan (BCAP).

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approves the revised Black Community Action Plan (BCAP), including workstreams, new governance structures and timelines.
- 2.2 Approves, as requested at the community consultation in November 2024, extending the delivery period by at least 1 year to redress time lost, providing a remaining delivery period of 8 years in total (2025-33)
- 2.3 Approves that the plan concentrates on delivering the top 5 themes over a 4-year period (2025-29).

- 2.4 Following community consultation, although “Accountability” ranked lower in terms of priority, in line with recommendations made previously during 2024, approves the creation of an *Independent Advisory Steering Group (IASG)*, with Council representation, that would help inform officer-led Equity, Diversion and Inclusion work. The purpose of the IASG would be to inform and advise on delivery, attract funding opportunities, and provide assurance and transparency to the community. This will also demonstrate the Council’s commitment to co-design and co-produce activity informed by the community, including local experts and those with lived experience.

### **3.0 Detail**

#### **3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword**

- 3.1.1 The Black Community Action Plan was endorsed by Cabinet in July 2020; however, it was paused in November 2022 to undertake a full governance review.
- 3.1.2 The review has now concluded and as part of the Council’s continued commitment to address racism, its impact and alleviate structural disadvantage we have co-designed a revised action plan, in conjunction with individuals and organisations representative of Brent’s Black communities.
- 3.1.3 The revised plan supports the Borough Plan’s Strategic Priority 3 - Thriving Communities, which aims to engage with under-represented groups, provide support, advice and relevant education within the borough.

#### **3.2 Background**

- 3.2.1 Following the brutal murder of George Floyd in May 2020, the global impact and questions raised as a result of his death, Brent’s 10-year Black Community Action Plan (BCAP) was developed in June of the same year, attempting to address issues of systemic racism and inequality locally.
- 3.2.2 The BCAP was developed through discussions with representatives of Brent’s Black communities and endorsed by Full Council in July 2020. An implementation plan was agreed in September 2020.
- 3.2.3 BCAP was placed on hold pending the outcome of a governance review (November 2022). The governance review focused on a proposal, developed between officers and members of the BCAP steering group, to transfer responsibility and funding for this work to an external organisation. However, the work the Council commissioned to explore the feasibility of this option, did not provide sufficient evidence to support a change of this nature.
- 3.2.4 In 2024, a policy steer was for the Council to keep overall responsibility for driving progress on the commitments made and recommended a re-set to:

- Clarify what has been achieved in the first 3 years of the BCAP, who should be responsible for progress on remaining commitments and to ensure that this responsibility is built back into Council-wide performance reporting frameworks.
- Ensure that the BCAP continues to be jointly led by the Council, its partners, and the community by putting effective governance structures in place.
- Provide greater certainty on the budget that the Council can allocate to the BCAP over the next 3 years, including the capacity in Council teams to support this work.
- Rebuild trust with people who engaged with the development of the BCAP and saw it as an opportunity for something different to happen because of the genuine commitment from the Council to listen to concerns and act on them.

3.2.5 Following this refocused direction, a refresh of the BCAP took place. This included focus groups with previous steering group members and online questionnaires; culminating in an in-person public event, the 'BCAP Re-Fresh Workshop', held at Brent Civic Centre on 25 November 2024. Over 80 participants fed-back

3.2.6 The purpose of the 'BCAP Re-Fresh Workshop' was to realign, or if desired, renew historic BCAP themes with emerging needs in the Black community. Participants agreed that historic themes should remain but wanted them addressed in order of priority to the Black community. Participants, worked with council leads across key departments to provide suggested activities against each priority, culminating in the revised co-designed action plan (Appendix 1)

3.2.7 BCAP Themes (ranked in order of importance by public consultation)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Early Intervention for Children and Young People
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tackling Health Inequalities
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Developing Community Spaces – Run and Managed by Local People
- 4<sup>th</sup> Homes and Homelessness
- 5<sup>th</sup> Support with Employment and Enterprise
- 6<sup>th</sup> Enabling and Strengthening Community Leadership Through Capacity Building
- 7<sup>th</sup> Tackling Criminal Justice Inequalities
- 8<sup>th</sup> Accountability (Board/Transparency)
- 9<sup>th</sup> Embedding Equity and Diversity Within the Council Workforce

## Rank what theme is the most important to you ?



**3.2.8 Early Intervention: Children, Young People and Families – Ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in priority.** Key issues included serious youth violence, school exclusions and parent/family support programmes. A call for more youth clubs and a broader range of afterschool provision. It was raised that Black children and young people need safe spaces where they can be themselves, learn about their history and become inspired.

Parenting and family learning programmes were supported, including self-development i.e. pathways to become school governors and councillors. Participants also raised, financial literacy for children, young people and parents as a key ‘early intervention’ priority. Stating that financial literacy could help remove socio-economic barriers and drive behaviour change. Financial literacy was considered to improve negative debt cycles, linking to the Council’s Radical Place Leadership work, currently focused within the Harlesden area, with a specific priority aimed at tackling debt.

**3.2.9 Tackling Health Inequalities – Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in priority.** Key issues included mental health waiting lists and access to higher-quality medical services. At the public consultation, it was emphasised that exposure to information about detecting and managing illnesses that are more prevalent in the Black community e.g. prostate cancer, diabetes and sickle cell would be welcomed. Participants suggested, longer-term interventions and campaigns relating to healthy eating and exercise.

**3.2.10 Develop Community Spaces Run and Managed by Local People – Ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in priority.** Providing the voluntary sector, social enterprises Black-led or owned businesses with affordable spaces was raised as a key priority. There was much discussion on this topic, with participants referring to “Picture Palace” as an ideal opportunity to support this priority. The “Picture Palace” building is located in Harlesden town centre.

Additionally, participants raised the need to support the community in acquiring the skills to manage spaces, including creating opportunities to take on “meanwhile spaces”, as well as those on longer leasing arrangements.

- 3.2.11 **Homelessness and Homes – Ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in priority.** Provide education and preventative information about housing and debt management. Explore whether an independent housing organisation could provide dedicated support to the Black community. Provide advice including options on mortgages, shared ownership, renting and flat-sharing arrangements for under 30s. It was considered whether the ‘Homelessness and Homes’ priority was realistic, particularly given the housing pressures facing all demographics in Brent. However, this priority was expressed by participants as a key issue facing Brent’s Black communities, also connecting to Radical Place leadership work in the Harlesden area and its priority of focusing on tackling homelessness.
- 3.2.12 **Support for Employment and Enterprise – Ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in priority.** Providing residents with career workshops and business development strategies. Create pathways to industries with an underrepresentation of Black staff e.g. financial services, scientific and professional services. Pathways could lead to work experience, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.
- 3.2.13 **Enabling and Strengthening Community Leadership Through Capacity Building – Ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in priority.** To provide opportunities for those aspiring to leadership roles within the voluntary and non – voluntary sectors. Collaborate with education providers to support leadership qualifications. An example that was put forward was, London Metropolitan University’s Community Development & Leadership BSc.
- 3.2.14 **Tackling Criminal Justice Inequalities was a new theme and ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in priority.** As the BCAP emerged as a direct result of criminal justice inequalities and an ongoing lack of trust in the criminal justice system in the U.K, participants felt that it was important to include the theme as a new priority. Participants advocated for clear pathways to obtain advice and support for individuals or families seeking justice. To deliver workshops educating the Black community about their rights on matters such as, stop and search, strip searches and interviews without an appropriate adult.
- 3.2.15 **Accountability – Ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in priority.** Transparency, skilled leadership, regular and visible reporting on the achievements of the BCAP. Establish a board of trustees who are remunerated. This should be an application/nomination process. The Board should convene a public meeting twice a year to discuss progress against the action plan.
- 3.2.16 **Embedding Equality and Diversity within the Council Workforce – Ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in priority.** To visibly see diversity, at all levels. However, whilst participants commended the priority, they expressed they were more interested in outward facing community action, rather than internal Council action.

### 3.3 Taking the work forward

- 3.3.1 BCAP delivery has been dormant for over 2 years. To achieve the revised priorities, it is important that sufficient time is invested to make the action plan a success and deliver on the agreed workstreams. As requested at the community re-fresh consultation, it is now recommended to restore a minimum of 1 year to the overall BCAP timeframe, meaning the overall timeframe for delivery is now 2025-33.
- 3.3.2 Historically, the BCAP was represented by a large steering group, with a mix of both Council and community representatives. However, rather than reinstate this approach, it is proposed that an Independent Advisory Steering Group (IASG) is created to shape delivery and to provide consultative support to officer-led Equality, Diversion and Inclusion work. IASG appointments will be advertised externally, seeking individuals with the skills and expertise across the main 5 themes to help drive activity, attract external funding, maintain the voice of the community and externally consider progress against the plan. The Lead Member for BCAP alongside a Council officer (e.g. Director for Community Development) should be represented on the IASG to ensure effective connections between the IASG and Council activity.
- 3.3.3 Discussions with stakeholders and Brent residents show there is agreement that Brent Council should have oversight of BCAP at this time, mainly due to the time lapse and impetus needed to reinstate activities.
- 3.3.4 At present, to achieve relevant outcomes, it is important that BCAP delivery works in synergy with various Council departments. It was expressed throughout the review and consultation period, that Brent Council needs to be proactive when it comes to BCAP delivery.
- 3.3.5 It is recommended that internal departments should take ownership of outputs, co-ordinated by the Council's EDI board, particularly where there is complementary delivery; with a commitment to align outcomes as part of service planning.
- 3.3.6 Outcomes should be measured by creating a BCAP data dashboard and where possible, key themes such as, "Tackling Health Inequalities", should take progress reports to relevant boards, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board. Where activity is to be delivered in conjunction with external partners, such as housing associations, schools/settings and police etc. the relevant department should act as the lead area for brokering discussions.
- 3.3.7 In March 2025, senior officers reviewed a draft action plan and subsequently requested a stocktake of the Council's current provision, against the delivery plan to help ascertain what we might immediately align with BCAP delivery.
- 3.3.8 Complementary strands of work were identified, such as, initiatives that support the use of "Meanwhile spaces" and activities for young people delivered through Family Wellbeing Centres. However, there are gaps where delivery isn't part of core Council business such as, cultural competency programmes within Health and Education. Approximately 40% of the action plan's activities can be initiated through existing workstreams, with 60%

requiring external partner input and coordination. The stocktake exercise provides a gap analysis to support the proposed IASG to advise on funding opportunities where it is most needed.

#### **4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

- 4.1 The revised Black Community Action Plan was shaped in conjunction with the community. As mentioned above, this included focus groups with previous steering group members, interested parties and online questionnaires, culminating in an in-person public event on 25 November 2024. Over 80 participants fed-back.
- 4.2 The Leader of the Council, as Lead Member for BCAP has been briefed throughout all re-design stages. Cabinet Leads have also fed into the re-design.

#### **5.0 Financial Considerations**

- 5.1 The Borough Plan reserve had a £379k closing balance in 24/25. This is made up from prior years' unspent BCAP allocation. The reserve balance will be drawn down in 25/26 to support set-up and delivery of the proposed IASG.
- 5.2 The remaining balance is unlikely to be sufficient to support BCAP delivery for the remaining 8 years of the programme. Other sources of funding will need to be explored. Having reviewed historic BCAP project delivery and initiatives, most projects were allocated between 25k – 40k (*excluding larger programmes funded through NCIL*). Using general project spend as a base estimate, it is likely that a minimum of 100K a year is required to support the x5 main themes against the action plan (20k per theme). However, if a greater allocation is needed to support delivery of a particular theme, redistribution of finance would be recommended by the IASG to the Council's EDI Board.
- 5.3 At the community meeting held in November 2024, disappointment was expressed at the lack of transparency over BCAP funding to date. Participants requested the council revisit a commitment to allocate funding to support BCAP delivery.

#### **6.0 Legal Considerations**

- 6.1 There are no significant legal considerations at this time. If Cabinet approve the launch of the revised action plan, a BCAP Independent Advisory Steering Group with appropriate governance structures will be established. Members of the IASG will have the appropriate skills, expertise and lived experience to undertake their roles, all external appointments will be advertised.

#### **7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster

good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- 7.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.3 The BCAP was formed to increase focus on systemic racism and inequality and improve the lives of those who identify as Black and who live in Brent. It aims to address inequalities by breaking down barriers to positive progression, upskill and create opportunities against the identified priority themes listed above. As such, it contributes to the council’s work to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the borough, as laid out in its [2024-2028 EDI Strategy](#).

## **8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 8.1 There are no climate considerations currently.

## **9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

- 9.1 Historically, x1 manager and x1 coordinator were funded through Borough Plan money to support delivery of the BCAP. It is intended to create a post to support coordination, reporting, commissioning and BCAP steering group delivery arrangements.

## **10.0 Communication Considerations**

- 10.1 A communications campaign will be initiated once Cabinet approves the revised action plan.

### **Report sign off:**

**Nigel Chapman**

Corporate Director Children, Young People and  
Community Development