



Full Council
13 July 2020

Report from the Assistant Chief Executive

Brent Black Community Action Plan

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix 1 Brent Black Community Action Plan
Background Papers:	0
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Shazia Hussain, Assistant Chief Executive shazia.hussain@brent.gov.uk Pascoe Sawyers, Head of Strategy and Partnerships Tel: 020 8937 1045 Email: pascoe.sawyers@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present to Full Council the Brent Black Community Action Plan, which was developed with black community Leaders in the borough.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note and endorse the Brent Black Community Action Plan.
- 2.2 To refer the Action Plan to Cabinet for appropriate resourcing and implementation.

3.0 Detail

Context

- 3.1 The tragic killing of George Floyd in the United States brought to greater prominence the Black Lives Matter movement, sparking protests across the

globe and a strong call for action on tackling inequalities and systemic racism. All during a time when the Covid-19 pandemic has painfully highlighted its disproportionate impact on BAME communities in terms of cases of the virus and mortality rates.

- 3.2 communities in Brent, one of the most diverse boroughs in the country, continue to be affected by the inequalities highlighted, requiring decisive and urgent action by the Council and partners. Our community has been further rocked by two recent incidents in the borough – the shooting of a two year old child in Harlesden and the murder of two women in Fryent Park.
- 3.3 In the context of these global and local challenges and events the Council met with 72 black community leaders and representatives on 11 June to listen to concerns and take decisive action to make improvements for residents.

Working with Brent’s Black communities

- 3.5 The total Brent population in 2020 is estimated¹ to be 343,016, 61,396 (17.9%) of whom are in a black ethnic group and 7,746 (2.3%) of whom are in a white and black ethnic group. The below breakdown showcases the diversity of the Brent’s black community:

Ethnic group	Number of people	Percentage of population
Black Caribbean	21,648	6.3%
Black African	28,127	8.2%
Other Black	11,621	3.4%
White & Black Caribbean	4,300	1.3%
White & Black African	3,446	1.0%

- 3.6 Brent has the seventh highest black population in terms of numbers, and ninth highest by percentage, and they make up 13% of the Greater London population.
- 3.7 To accelerate action on tackling inequalities on 11 June the Council’s Leader, Deputy Leader, Chief Executive and Police Borough Commander met with leaders and representatives from Brent’s black communities to listen to people’s concerns. Following this constructive meeting, which was attended by 72 community members, a draft action plan was produced to support the black community and tackle inequalities in our borough in the short, medium and long term. The draft action plan was discussed on 17 June at a second meeting of black community representatives, for feedback and agreement. These community meetings are part of on-going conversations and joint working between the Council and community.

¹ GLA central projections (2016)

3.8 The Council is not starting from scratch on a lot of these proposals contained in the action plan. A few highlighted examples of ongoing work:

- Brent identified raising the educational achievement of boys of Black Caribbean heritage as a Borough Plan priority. Attainment had been consistently well below that of pupils nationally at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 over the past five years. To raise the achievement of boys of Black Caribbean heritage in Brent schools a project was established to support Black Caribbean Achievement Champions in every participating school. Additionally, it supported rigorous and robust analysis of the performance of pupils of Black Caribbean heritage, evaluated the effectiveness of key aspects of schools' practice and established a training programme to ensure pupils of Black Caribbean heritage achieve well. This project has had a very positive impact on the attainment for this group of pupils in Brent. For example, the 2018/19 validated data for the end of Key Stage 2 shows significant narrowing of gaps between the attainment of boys of Black Caribbean heritage and all pupils. In reading, writing and mathematics combined there has been an improvement of 16 percentage points representing a remarkable 70% fall in the size of the gap. The gap now remaining is 7 percentage points.
- Brent secured £250k of investment from Trust for London, working in partnership with the Black Training and Employment Group (BTEG), to deliver the Moving on Up programme. Cabinet approved a proposal to match this with a further £326k of Neighbourhood CIL funding, subject to a signed agreement for the grant. The project will work with black young men to help build their aspirations, develop their skills, and secure quality employment. The project also includes recruiting a group of mentors to support black young men in Brent, as well as working with high value sectors such as creative, tech, and finance, where young black men are disproportionately under-represented.
- The Council has a programme of using its assets and investments to provide better community facilities and job opportunities. The acquisition of the Picture Palace recognised the demand for more community and cultural space in Harlesden, a decision informed by significant community engagement, including with local schools and grassroots organisations. The council is working with community groups to develop the spec to find an operator for community/culture/enterprise space.

Review of equalities and HR policies and practice at Brent Council (Pavey Review)

3.9 Brent Council has long been known as a dynamic and open organisation with both a diverse workforce and set of elected members that reflect the composition of the borough's population. In 2015, Councillor Pavey was commissioned to review Council's policies and practice to see where improvements could be made. 64 recommendations resulting in the following headline achievements:

- the Council employs a largely representative number of BAME staff (66%) in relation to the overall proportion of BAME residents in the borough (65%). This is the highest median percentage of BAME employees of all London Boroughs (average 17%)
- BAME officers, at the time of the Pavey review were previously less represented (14%) at the highest levels of the organisation. By March 2018, 40% of BAME colleagues were in higher-graded roles and by the end of March 2019 this had increased even further to 44%. In 2015, the Council Management Team were all white British, in 2020 it is 38% BAME.
- in 2018-2019, the majority of internal promotions were BAME employees (65%) in line with the Council's workforce. The ethnicity profile of those promoted has been broadly similar to the ethnicity profile of the council workforce overall
- 67% of Brent's Elected Members are BAME. This has helped to translate into a Cabinet of 80% BAME members
- staff networks were set up to enable staff to influence internal policies and procedures (LGBT+, Cultural Diversity, Gender Equality and Disability). The networks continue to thrive with significant support from Council Management Team.

3.10 While the Council's progress demonstrates genuine commitment to embed equality and diversity within the structures of the organisation, it is acknowledged that there is still much more that can be and will be done. The Brent Black Community Action Plan will help to build on the Council's progress.

Implementation and accountability

3.11 Following Full Council's endorsement, it is proposed that Cabinet will oversee the implementation of this action plan including prioritisation and the allocations of resources. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny function will be able to hold Cabinet to account on progress.

3.12 Importantly, Brent's black community will need a significant and regular role in holding the Council to account for the delivery of the action plan. Effective implementation can only be achieved by working in partnership with Brent's black communities, with their ongoing involvement and continuous feedback. As part of the action plan senior council managers will continue to build 'cultural competence' by spending time with Brent's black communities in their localities and our staff to understand people's lived experiences, further cementing the partnership with communities.

3.12 One piece of work that has already begun is the review of names of monuments, buildings, places and streets in Brent with associations with historical figures involved in the slave trade.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The financial implications of the actions outlined in the plan will need to be developed and considered by Cabinet.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 None as a result of this report and action plan at this stage.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 The council, as a public authority exercising public functions, is subject to a general public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 Equality Act 2010 (EqA). The PSED requires public authorities to have “due regard” to:

- The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the EqA.
- The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This involves having due regard to the need to:
 - remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
 - encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- The need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This includes having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and to promote understanding.

6.2 This report and action plan will support Brent Council to continue to meet its public sector equality duties.

Report sign off:

Shazia Hussain

Assistant Chief Executive