



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- MEETING** : Monday, 10th January 2022
- PRESENT** : Cllrs. Field (Chair), Pullen (Vice-Chair), Durdey (Spokesperson), Ackroyd, Castle, Dee, Evans, Gravells MBE, Hilton, Kubaszczyk, O'Donnell, Organ, Padilla, Sawyer, Wilson and Zaman

### Others in Attendance

Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Richard Cook.  
Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Andrew Lewis.

Head of Culture.

Chair of Gloucester City Commission to Review Race Relations, Rupert Walters.

Former Corporate Director for Gloucester City Council and Freeland Support for the Gloucester Commission to Review Race Relations, Anne Brinkhoff.

Community Representative for the Gloucester City Commission to Review Race Relations, Said Handsot.

Policy and Development Officer.

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer.

- APOLOGIES** : Cllrs. S. Chambers

### 79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 80. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

There were no declarations of interest.

### 81. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meetings held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

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**82. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

There were no public questions.

**83. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)**

There were no petitions and deputations.

**84. ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the updates.

**85. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN**

85.1 The Chair introduced the latest version of the Council Forward Plan and invited suggestions as to any items Members wanted to add to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

85.2 It was agreed that the Tourism and Destination Marketing Report would be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The Chair also expressed his wish for the Committee to consider the Blackfriars Priory Renewal Business Case and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Review New Charging Schedule. It was agreed that these items would be reviewed by the Committee at the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

85.3 Referring to the Green Travel Plan Progress Report 2022, the Chair noted that the date for this report was now confirmed in the Council Forward Plan for June 2022 and the Committee agreed to add this item to the Work Programme for the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

85.4 Councillor Hilton referred to the request from the Committee to hold a scrutiny session on the financial position of Gloucestershire Airport and asked for an update on how these arrangements were progressing. The Democratic and Electoral Services Officer confirmed that enquiries had been made with the Chair of Cheltenham Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ascertain his interest in being involved in a joint scrutiny session on the airport. She also confirmed that the Managing Director for Gloucestershire Airport had been approached and had been asked to confirm her availability on some upcoming Overview and Scrutiny Committee dates. It was agreed that follow-up enquiries would be made with the Managing Director to finalise a date for the scrutiny session.

**RESOLVED** –

That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be amended to reflect the above and

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To **NOTE** the Work Programme.

**86. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - TASK AND FINISH GROUP DISCUSSION**

- 86.1 The Chair explained that one of the functions available to Overview and Scrutiny Committees was to establish Task and Finish Groups, where nominated Members could investigate a particular issue and work with Council officers and partner organisations to recommend improvements or possible solutions. He referred to the explanatory narrative at Agenda Item 9 and invited suggestions from Members on issues which they would like to see investigated by a Task and Finish Group.
- 86.2 Councillor Wilson noted that in his experience, the most successful Task and Finish Groups were tightly focused on a specific issue. He suggested that food hygiene and safety challenges in the city might be an interesting issue for a Task and Finish Group to look into. He also suggested a Task and Finish Group reviewing how gambling licenses were issued in the city as a potential option.
- 86.3 Councillor Pullen reiterated the need for any Task and Finish Groups to be clear and focused on a specific problem. He expressed the view that a small remit with a short time-scale would be the most effective way of getting the best from a Task and Finish Group investigation.
- 86.4 Councillor Durdey expressed the view that an establishment of a Task and Finish Group would be a good opportunity, particularly for newer Members of the Committee, to look into an issue they had an interest in.
- 86.5 Councillor Dee put forward an idea for a Task and Finish Group on Art and Cultural engagement in the city, and suggested that the Group could look into how the Council could better engage with communities who were less likely to attend or be involved with cultural events, such as young people or people from racially minoritized communities. She expressed the view that this might be a particularly relevant investigation, given the hope that the cultural sector would continue to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 86.6 The Chair endorsed this idea and expressed his own interest in how the Council could better engage with marginalised groups. He expressed the view that the Council needed to think differently about events were approached following the pandemic.
- 86.7 The Chair noted that all the suggestions were good ideas and invited Members who had any further ideas after the meeting to contact the Group Leads or Democratic and Electoral Services Officer with details of their suggestion. It was agreed that the list would be circulated to the Committee for discussion at a future meeting.

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**RESOLVED** - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the discussion and revisit the item at a future meeting.

**88. GLOUCESTER COMMISSION TO REVIEW RACE RELATIONS FINAL REPORT**

- 87.1 The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Richard Cook, introduced the report and explained that the purpose was to present the work and findings of the Gloucester City Commission to Review Race Relations. He noted that the Commissions' report outlined a set of recommendations which ultimately attempted to improve the lives and enhance opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in Gloucester.
- 87.2 The Leader of the Council explained that the Gloucester Commission to Review Race Relations was headed by local businessman, Rupert Walters, and supported by officers from the City Council. He noted that Commissioners were selected from cross-sector organisations, including the Voluntary Sector, Police, County Council and the wider community in Gloucester. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Work Programme of the Commission included investigations into several key areas including criminal justice, education, mental health and representation at senior management level in the local workforce.
- 87.3 Referring to the narrative at 2.2 in the report, the Leader of the Council explained that the report outlined four calls of action which the Commission considered must be delivered at a Gloucestershire-wide system level. These included the establishment of an independent, permanent, funded and high profile legacy institution for Gloucestershire, putting measures in place to monitor equality in the workforce and driving the required changes in culture to help collect high-quality ethnicity data, and a commitment at leadership level to step up and help tackle the existence of racism in Gloucestershire.
- 87.4 The Chair of the Gloucester City Commission to Review Race Relations, Rupert Walters, and the former Corporate Director and Commission Support, Anne Brinkhoff, delivered a presentation on the findings, conclusions and recommendations in the report. The Chair of the Commission explained that the Commission had been tasked with reviewing race relations and producing recommendations to improve the lives of racially minoritized people in Gloucester following the killing of George Floyd during the Spring of 2020. He provided an overview of the timeline of the Commission's work and noted that the Call for Evidence was established early in the process to encourage involvement from the community. The Commission Support outlined the conclusions of the Race Commission report and the four Gloucestershire-wide 'Calls to Action', which were set out on pages 44 and 45 of the final report.
- 87.5 The Chair paid tribute to the Commissioners for their hard work in producing such an important piece of work. Referring to the emphasis on 'education' rather than session-based cultural intelligence training, he expressed the

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view that education was key to tackling race inequality issues and asked how Councillors could help the Commission achieve its goals.

- 87.6 The Commission Support confirmed that the preferred use of the term 'education' was due to the implication of longer-term and ongoing development. She suggested that Members could help by developing their own understanding of race inequality issues and noted that they could find a useful Equalities workbook for Councillors on the Local Government Association (LGA) website. The Chair of the Commission confirmed that the Calls to Action set out in the report acknowledged that conversations about racism were difficult and suggested that Members promote and encourage people to educate themselves wherever possible.
- 87.7 The Chair noted that he was keen to maintain momentum on the report and expressed the view that regular progress updates on the Calls to Action should be provided to either full Council or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 87.8 Councillor Pullen thanked the Chair of the Commission, the Policy and Development Officer and the Commissioners for producing the report and expressed the view that it was excellent and comprehensive. He also stated that the report was a difficult read as it highlighted clear evidence of racism in the city which was unacceptable. Referring to the narrative relating to the Call for Evidence and the statement that 'despite significant efforts, the uptake was low' with 82 responses, Councillor Pullen asked for further clarification on the barriers to engagement and for the Chair of the Commission's thoughts on why engagement from Black African and Caribbean communities was particularly low. He also queried whether the term 'Call for Evidence' may have been off-putting for some people, due to associations with the Criminal Justice system.
- 87.9 The Chair of the Commission clarified that the phrasing of the 'Call for Evidence' request was adjusted depending on which communities were being targeted, noting that it had also been referred to as 'Lived Experience' through some communication streams, such as the radio. In relation to engagement from Black African and Caribbean communities, the Chair of the Commission confirmed that this would be used as a learning experience and consideration was being given to whether the messaging would need to be altered in any future inquiries. He confirmed that much had been learnt during the Call for Evidence process despite the low engagement. The Chair of the Commission also noted that some people might have been apprehensive about sharing their experiences of racism, particularly where they were traumatic.
- 87.10 In response to a further question from Councillor Pullen regarding the decision not to progress with exploring the race inequalities in social housing, the Commission Support confirmed that this decision was down to capacity issues within the Commission and Social Housing providers. She noted that the Commission had to make choices with the resources they had, however there was a hope that this theme might be explored in future.

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- 87.11 Councillor Organ commended the Commission for the report and asked whether consideration had been given to the structure of the report given that there were many different racially minoritized communities and cultures in the city. The Chair of the Commission noted that 'Black' was an all-encompassing word which did not include all minorities. He confirmed that conversations had taken place internally and externally and that inclusivity would be a key consideration for the future independent legacy organisation.
- 87.12 Councillor Wilson asked for further details on the planned next steps and for clarification as to role the City Council would play in driving the Calls to Action forward. He also asked whether it was likely that updates would be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the coming months.
- 87.13 The Leader of the Council explained that the final details had not been decided since the report had only recently been published. He noted that although the City Council established the Commission to Review Race Relations, the inequality issues highlighted in the report affected the whole county, and therefore expressed the view that a county-wide approach was needed and that partners, including the county and district councils, should be involved with future plans. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the report was being shared with Leadership Gloucester on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January to ascertain their interest in taking the Calls to Action on board with a county-wide approach. Councillor Wilson responded that he recognised that the issues highlighted in the report went beyond the City Council, however as the City Council established the Race Relations Commission, he felt that the Council needed to take a leading role in pushing the Calls to Action forward.
- 87.14 Referring to the Call for Evidence and engagement with communities, Councillor Dee acknowledged that recounting experiences of racism would have been traumatic for many people. She noted that the University of Gloucestershire was due to occupy a new city centre premises in the future and asked whether it might be possible for student historians to collect oral histories of experiences and whether it might be a useful addition to the work of the Commission.
- 87.15 The Chair of the Commission confirmed that all data was helpful and agreed with previous comments that a Gloucestershire-wide approach was key. He expressed the view that there was no short-term fix to such a complex issue and felt that building trust with communities was key. The Chair of the Commission noted that some progress had already been made within the health service in terms of their engagement with racially minoritized communities, for example, with increased take-up of the Covid-19 vaccine. The Commission Support further noted that with the evident cross-party support for the report, the city was leading by example. She confirmed that the Black Workers Network had been complimentary about the work of the City Council and that the Cultural Services in the City Council had been assisting with this work.
- 87.16 The Community Representative for the Gloucester Commission to Review Race Relations, Said Handsot, suggested that the Equalities and Diversity

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Group previously established at the City Council should be resurrected to play a role in keeping momentum on the report. The Chair of the Commission confirmed that the report needed to leave a legacy and reiterated that Leadership Gloucestershire was due to consider the report with a view to deciding next steps on how to move the Calls to Action forward. He noted that the Deep Dive sessions had been very collaborative and that every organisation involved was keen to make progress.

- 87.17 In relation to the Deep Dive session investigating access to Diabetes services, Councillor Hilton referred to his own experiences of Diabetes management and asked for the Chair of the Commission's comments on how leaders could engage with communities about dietary and lifestyle changes to help combat the disproportionately high prevalence of Diabetes amongst racially minoritized groups. The Chair of the Commission responded that education was key and that further engagement with communities was needed. He expressed the view that leaders needed to encourage communities to engage with services early, so that Diabetes patients could receive advice on healthier lifestyles and the resulting impact on their quality of life.
- 87.18 In response to further comments from Councillor Hilton on Diabetes management, the Chair of the Commission noted that the Commission had received higher levels of engagement from older people in the community and that people aged between 40-50 years old were particularly difficult to reach. He suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to look at Diabetes awareness as a potential Task and Finish Group project.
- 87.19 Reflecting on his awareness of the difficulties experienced by people from Polish, Slovakian, Hungarian and Czech Republic backgrounds accessing the EU settlement scheme, Councillor Kubaszczyk asked whether consideration had been given to extending the review to include people from 'white other' backgrounds. The Chair of the Commission confirmed that during the Deep Dive sessions, the Commission received data purely relating to BAME communities however he suggested that this could be given consideration in future as the equalities issues identified in the report affected many different communities.
- 87.20 Councillor Padilla thanked the Commissioners for their report and asked whether the Chairmen of the various community groups in the city were consulted during the Call for Evidence. The Commission Support confirmed that the Commission had contacted local community leaders and has asked for the Call for Evidence to be distributed amongst their groups. She also confirmed that the City Council's Community Wellbeing team had been involved in the engagement strategy and that the Call for Evidence had been promoted in the press and shared with Councillors. She expressed the view that the Commission had tried their best with the resources provided. The Chair of the Commission further noted that it was a matter of taking time to develop trust with communities and to dispel the expectation that there would be no improvement after gathering views.

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- 87.21 In response to a follow-up question from Councillor Padilla regarding the independent legacy institution and whether it would be possible for community groups and outreach programmes to set up a base in the same building, the Chair of the Commission noted that since the Calls to Action were in such an early stage, he could not envisage the physical structure of the of the organisation but confirmed his expectation that the institution would work with and seek input from community groups and organisations.
- 87.22 Councillor Padilla queried whether there was funding available from the City Council for community groups, such as through the Cultural Development Fund. The Head of Culture responded that there was limited funding available and applications were open to all groups. He confirmed that papers were due to be considered by Cabinet and that it was likely that there would be two further callouts for cultural funding applications throughout 2022. The Head of Culture noted that organisations may wish to look to funding from other sources in addition to the City Council, such as the Arts Council where more funding was available. He agreed to circulate further information to Members about the various funding avenues available to community organisations.
- 87.23 In response to comments from the Community Representative regarding a cultural festival in Barton and Tredworth, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure noted that it was his priority to integrate communities and encourage all communities and groups to take part and engage with festivals and events in the cities. He emphasised that everyone would be welcome at all future events in the city.
- 87.24 Councillor Gravells referred to his experience of dealing with racist comments during a previous election campaign and expressed the view that Gloucester had come a long way over the past 10 years. He noted that lots of good work had been undertaken and suggested that an idea for a Task and Finish Group might be to look into the education element of the report and hold sessions with the University of Gloucestershire to establish how the University was encouraging young people from racially minoritized backgrounds to attend university.
- 87.25 Referring to Recommendation 2.2(2) in the report, Councillor Pullen expressed the view that it was important for the City Council to take a leading role in pushing the Calls to Action forward and to lead on next steps. He asked for clarification as to the costs and budgetary implications associated with the establishment of the independent legacy organisation. Councillor Pullen acknowledged that partner organisations very much needed to be involved but expressed the view that it was important for the City Council to have a leading role given that the majority of people from racially minoritized backgrounds lived in Gloucester city.
- 87.26 The Leader of the Council agreed with Councillor Pullen's comment that the city was home to the largest proportion of people from racially minoritized backgrounds compared with the other districts, but noted that in order to tackle the race inequality issues, the Council needed to work with bodies across the county of Gloucestershire, such as Gloucestershire Police, Care



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Quality Commission (CQC) and Gloucestershire Health Trust. He confirmed that the purpose of taking the report to Leadership Gloucester was to establish how organisations could work together to tackle the issues. He confirmed that costs would form part of the discussions, however the figures were still at a very early stage given the timing of the report.

87.27 In response to a further question from Councillor Pullen, the Leader of the Council confirmed that he would support the City Council taking a leading role if necessary, however it was his view that the issues needed to be tackled with a county-wide approach and that it was important that all relevant bodies needed to be part of those discussions. The Commission Support reiterated that investment was key as if communities were engaged with more effectively and earlier, it would avoid costs later down the line.

87.28 Councillor Durdey commended the Commission for what he felt was an excellent report and observed that the report primarily focused on race inequalities in the public sector workforce. He asked for thoughts on how leaders could engage with the private sector to encourage SMEs to tackle race inequality issues, noting his view that private sector businesses would be keen to be involved.

87.29 The Chair of the Commission confirmed that the Commission was aware of good practice within the private sector however it was difficult to capture the data. He expressed the view that the establishment of the independent legacy organisation would be key to fostering a relationship with the private sector to tackle race inequality.

87.30 The Chair thanked the Chair of the Commission, Commissioners and officer support for attending the meeting. He confirmed that the Committee was unanimous in endorsing the report and expressed the view that it should be a priority to keep the report at the forefront of the Council's future work.

**RESOLVED** – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the report.

**88. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours**

**Time of conclusion: 8.08 pm hours**

**Chair**