

Gloucester Commission to review Race Relations

Terms of References – October 2020

1. Background and introduction

The killing of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 has captured the world's attention.

It unleashed a tremendous expression of anger and frustration felt but those experiencing racism and seeking change within our society. It highlighted the depth of feeling that equality does not exist for all, but for black people in particular.

On Thursday 9th July 2020, the following motion was unanimously passed at a meeting of Gloucester City Council:

'Council is appalled by and condemns the recent killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA.

Council recognises and supports the 'Black Lives Matter' efforts to raise awareness of racial inequality and institutionalised racism within the United Kingdom, however, deplors any violence and damage in the name of the campaign.

Council notes that black people in the United Kingdom are:

- *8 x more likely to be stopped as part of 'stop and search laws' than white people*
- *More likely to be in low paid jobs or unemployed*
- *More likely to live in poor housing conditions*
- *Less likely to have good educational opportunities*
- *More likely to die from the COVID-19 pandemic*

Council recognises that whilst we have generally good community relations in the City, and these are reinforced by our cross party equalities working group we remain committed to tackling racial discrimination and working with our BAME community to address issues of racial discrimination.

Council resolves to:

1. *Write to the American Ambassador on behalf of the City setting out our deep concerns and condemnation at the killing of George Floyd.*
2. *Set up a Commission with partner organisations in the City including the Police & Crime Commissioner, County Council, NHS, the Civic Trust and representatives of BAME community to review race relations in Gloucester with a view to producing recommendations to improve the lives of and enhance opportunities for BAME communities within the City.*
3. *Undertake a review of all monuments, statues and plaques including Bakers Quay within the City connected with the slave trade/ plantation ownership and for Cabinet and Scrutiny to consider its recommendations, taking advice from the Commission, and further resolves to review the way in which the contribution of minority communities is presented as part of the City's history, including at the Museum of Gloucester.'*

This paper outlines the draft Terms of Reference for part 2 of the motion.

2. Purpose and Scope

The Commission will be a forum to: -

- Reflect and gain a better understanding of experiences of racism and inequality in Gloucester.
- Identify actions that will create the conditions to improve the lives and opportunities for those who experience racism and disadvantage because of their colour
- Create a strategy to achieve the required outcomes

3. Chairperson and Membership of the Commission

The Commission will be chaired by Rupert Walters, a businessman and social entrepreneur with strong cross sector relationships within Gloucester. He is personally and professionally invested in creating a better environment for BAME communities to succeed.

Commissioners will be a cross-section of those representing major institutions and BAME communities within the City. Whilst commissioners will draw on their institutional and personal experiences they will act in the interest of the City as a whole. Their roles will be to:

- determine and review the work programme of the Commission
- prepare, participate, and contribute to the individual events, drawing on their own and their organisations' resources where appropriate
- listen to, review, challenge and reflect on evidence
- identify actions to create opportunities to reduce institutional racism and the disadvantage that brings
- identify possible actions that start to tackle the underlying causes of institutional racism

Overall accountability for the Commission rests with the Corporate Director (Partnerships) at the City Council. Project support will be available through members of the Democratic Services and Policy & Performance teams.

4. The work programme

The work programme will have to be agreed by the Commissioners. It is likely to consist of 5-6 focused events that will explore or investigate a particular issue, service, or experiences. The Commission will need to balance between breadth and depth of these sessions, taking into consideration existing resources and goodwill of partners/stakeholders to engage and participate.

It is likely that the first event will include a review of stories/experiences of racism and discrimination that individual organisations can share, together with an opportunity to listen to others' stories/experiences, which will influence the work programme.

Topics for other sessions could be:

- Exploring differences in educational attainment between White/BAME children
- Recognising and exploring organisational bias and institutional racism and the impact on our workforce. Strategies and plans to tackle this
- Creating better and more balanced ways of showcasing and celebrating the achievements of Gloucester's diverse communities.

One of the sessions will be for the Commission to receive the outcomes of the review of heritage assets and their connection to the slave trade.

5. Timescale and output

The Commission will initially operate for a period of 12 months with its inaugural meeting in November 2020.

The outputs will be determined by the Commission but will have a 'call to action'. The engagement process of the Commission, albeit a means to an end, will be an important end as it will enable reflection and challenge amongst the communities and institutions of Gloucester.

6. Reporting

The Commission will report its findings publicly, including a report/presentation to the City Council's Cabinet.

7. Budget

The work of the Commission will rely on Commissioners making available their time and other resources as appropriate. The City Council will contribute officer resource and will make available a budget of up to £5,000.

The scope of the work will need to match available resources.

Anne Brinkhoff
9th October 2020